

LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PASTOR:  
HIS CALLING, CHARACTER, AND COMPETENCIES

A Thesis Project

Presented to

Dr. Frank Schmitt and the Faculty of

Liberty Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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By

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May 11, 2007

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## ABSTRACT

### THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PASTOR: HIS CALLING, CHARACTER, AND COMPETENCIES

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Liberty Theological Seminary, 2007

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This paper defines modern ministry utilizing timeless and unchanging biblical principles, thereby providing a guide that pastors can utilize in fulfilling their God given responsibilities. It discusses, outlines, and synthesizes the calling, character, and competencies of the twenty-first century pastor. Directives related to calling and character come primarily from biblical and historical research. Based on surveys sent to pastors of middle sized churches, the project researches how modern ministry is being practiced related to the competencies of preaching, pastoral care, and church administration. Directives are then given concerning how modern ministry should be practiced based on the Word of God.

Abstract length: 100 words.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

God's Word communicates compelling principles for pastoral ministry that are timeless and unchanging. In recent years there has been a considerable focus on the importance of pastoral ministry in the local church in the form of articles, books, and conferences on the subject. From this focus, principles have arisen for pastoral ministry, some of which are consistent with the Bible, and others that are contradictory. There is a great need to clarify what is biblically consistent and what is contradictory, so that servants of God who are called to pastoral ministry can be faithful to the biblical mandates. This chapter outlines the approach utilized to identify the biblical mandates for pastoral ministry. How pastoral ministry is currently being implemented, is compared and contrasted with the biblical mandates.

#### A. Statement of the Problem

This paper defines modern ministry utilizing timeless and unchanging biblical principles, thereby providing a guide that pastors can implement in fulfilling their God-given responsibilities. It discusses, outlines, and synthesizes the calling, character, and competencies of the twenty-first century pastor. Directives related to calling and character come primarily from biblical and historical research. Based on surveys sent to

pastors of middle sized churches, the project researches how modern ministry is being practiced related to the competencies of preaching, pastoral care, and church administration. Directives are then given concerning how modern ministry should be practiced based on the immutable Word of God.

### *The Author's Purpose*

This author is called by God to serve in the local church setting and has been doing so in a full time vocational capacity since January of 1998. Through practical experience and formal education, the author has recognized that there are many competing ideas in the marketplace attempting to clarify and set the agenda of the twenty-first century pastor.

This author is motivated by a desire to better understand God's calling and expectations from a biblical perspective, and to better facilitate the church's understanding of whom the pastor is to be, and what the pastor is to do. This in turn will strengthen pastors and churches, and lead to better relationships between pastors and churches.

Without a clear sense of purpose and direction it is easy for the pastor to fall prey to misguided priorities. The pastor cannot be all things to all people, and at the same time be faithful in following God's calling on His life. He must determine the expectations of God from a biblical perspective and minister accordingly.



### *Consideration of Pastoral Ministry Models*

Many of the models for pastoral ministry currently being promoted are based solidly on the Scripture. Others draw more from a business model and equate the pastor's role with that of a chief operating officer of a corporation. Still others attempt to blend the two models together as a formula for success. Unfortunately, much of the emphasis is less biblical than it should be, more anthropocentric than theocentric, and more performance driven than calling and character driven.

Due to a plethora of opinions on whom a pastor is and what he is to do, much confusion exists. With the fast paced, changing nature of the twenty-first century world, the ministry of the pastor needs to be clearly defined. Without a clear focus on what the assignment is, it is unlikely his ministry will be effective.

The focus must be on the biblical model for pastoral ministry. All directives for pastoral ministry must be tested by the Word of God. These directives should be biblically and not pragmatically determined.

### *Non-negotiable Biblical Ministry Principles*

The ministry of the pastor must not be focused primarily on a constantly changing and transitioning culture. The pastor's calling, character and competencies must be solidly anchored to biblical moorings that do not change with cultural shifts or the passing of time. This paper examines in-depth the non-negotiable principles for ministry that Jesus set forth that can never change regardless of cultural shifts. Based on these principles, conclusions are drawn as to what qualifies as a biblically consistent and timelessly relevant ministry.

These non-negotiable biblical ministry principles give confidence to the pastor. The culture is constantly changing. The God-called pastor can have confidence because he knows that He serves the One who is the same “yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8).<sup>1</sup>

### B. Statement of the Boundaries

The boundaries serve as the parameters of this paper. Boundaries serve to focus the study. They include: terminology; limitation of the ministry to ordained men; consistency of calling and character; denominational scope of the research; and a focus on the middle sized church.

#### *Terminology*

Terminology is the first boundary that is important to this paper. The most commonly used term for the leader of the modern church is pastor. In the New Testament, however, it is the term that is used the least. The term elder (*Gk. presbuteros*) is used most commonly in the New Testament, referring to an officer in the local church. There is a single reference to the office of pastor in Ephesians 4:11 in the listing of the spiritual gifts in the church.<sup>2</sup> Paul wrote, “He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.” The term pastor, “was

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version.

<sup>2</sup> Gerald Cowen, Who Rules the Church? (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 5.

probably not intended in Scripture to be a title, but to be descriptive of what an elder does.”<sup>3</sup> Pastor has roots in the Old French, *pastur*, literally meaning to act as a shepherd.<sup>4</sup>

Elmer Towns wrote:

The term ‘shepherd/pastor’ is descriptive of a gift or spiritual ability to look after the sheep of God. The noun, *poimēn*, is used by Paul in Ephesians 4:11 as a descriptive title of church leaders. It is translated in the King James as ‘pastor’. From this reference the title, pastor, has gained wide acceptance. The Greek word could better be translated ‘shepherd’. The work of the shepherd is familiar; he is the leader, guide, feeder (in the sense of leading the sheep into places of adequate forage), helper, and protector of the sheep. The title shepherd/pastor is reflective of the title that Jesus gave of Himself, ‘I am the good shepherd’ (John 10:11).<sup>5</sup>

Wayne Grudem wrote:

Although the noun pastor (*Gk. poimēn*) is not used of church officers elsewhere in the New Testament, the related verb which means to ‘act as a shepherd’ or to ‘act as a pastor’ (*Gk. poimainō*) is applied to elders in Paul’s address to the Ephesian elders. He tells them to ‘shepherd the church of God’ (Acts 20:28, literally translating the verb *poimainō*), and in the same sentence he referred to God’s people as ‘all the flock’, using another related noun (*Gk. poimnion*) which means ‘a flock of sheep.’ So Paul directly charges these Ephesian elders to act as shepherds or ‘pastors.’ The same verb is used in I Pet 5:2 where Peter tells the elders to ‘shepherd (*Gk. poimainō*) the flock of God that is your charge.’ Then two verses later Jesus is called the chief pastor or ‘chief shepherd’ (*Gk. archipoimēn*, I Pet 5:4), implying quite clearly that Peter also viewed the elders as shepherds or ‘pastors’ in the church. Therefore, although the noun pastor is only used once to refer to elders, the related verb is used twice in passages that explicitly identify the task of shepherding with the office of the elder.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas Harper, “Pastor”, Online Etymology Dictionary; available at <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?l=p&p=6>; Internet; accessed 12 June 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Elmer L. Towns, Theology for Today (Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2002), 686.

<sup>6</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 913.

Therefore, the term pastor, while literally meaning “to act as a shepherd”, is also commonly used in the twenty-first century to refer to the office of the elder in the local church. The pastor as the undershepherd, serves as he follows the leadership of Jesus as the “Good Shepherd” (Jn 10:11).

A third term commonly used in the New Testament is bishop (*Gk. episkopos*) or overseer. The three terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament in that “elders are also called pastors or bishops or overseers.”<sup>7</sup> It is the theological position of this paper that the terms pastor, elder and bishop all refer to the same office. The term pastor as set forth in the New Testament will be used consistently throughout, and is in keeping with the practices of the church throughout the ages until recent times.

#### *Limitation of Ordained Ministry to Men Only*

The second boundary relates to this author’s theological position that the ordained ministry is specifically reserved for men as defined in the Pastoral Epistles (I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). There will be a consistency of usage of the masculine gender to reflect this position. Many would disagree with this theological position regarding the ordained ministry being limited to men. It is in keeping however, with the strong theological and personal convictions of this author.

#### *Consistency of Calling and Character*

It is this paper’s position that the calling and character of the pastor remain consistent regardless of church size and setting. This foundational premise serves as the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 13.

third boundary. Only the functional competencies of the pastor varies significantly as church size varies. Research regarding calling and character is primarily drawn from a biblical, theological, and historical perspective. Applied research (in the form of surveys) relates to the area of competencies.

#### *Denominational Scope of Research*

The fourth boundary is the scope of research in terms of denomination. The author's background and sphere of influence are in the Southern Baptist denomination. Survey work is drawn strictly from pastors within this denomination. There are two reasons for this. First, evangelical denominations tend to vary significantly in terms of their culture and practices, while still holding to similar basic theology. For the purposes of researching the importance of competencies for the twenty- first century pastor, it is helpful to limit the scope of research for a more consistent study. Second, due to the author's commitment to the Southern Baptist denomination, it is more personally valuable to limit the research in this manner. For library research purposes, a variety of evangelical denominations are considered.

#### *Research Focus on the Pastor of the Middle Sized Church*

In this paper, the primary focus for the purpose of research is exploring the calling, character, and competencies of the twenty-first century pastor based on biblical foundations, and current practice. The pastor of the middle sized church is specifically utilized to determine levels of emphasis and implementation of competencies in the areas of preaching, pastoral care, and church administration. This is the fifth boundary. Survey

work is utilized for research in the area of the competencies of the pastor of the middle sized church.

Within the context of the survey responses, how pastoral ministry is being practiced in the twenty-first century will be discussed. Consideration will also be given to how the expectations of congregations have changed in the twenty-first century. How the responsibilities differ according to the size of the church will also be communicated. Particular attention will be given to the focus of responsibility for the pastor of the middle sized church. From an evaluation of the survey results, directives will be given for how pastoral ministry should be practiced based on unchanging biblical principles.

This paper defines the small church as having less than 200 in average weekly worship attendance, the middle sized church as having 200-600 in average weekly worship attendance, and the large church as having 600 or more in average weekly worship attendance. In order to more accurately define the middle sized church, reported annual undesignated budget receipts are utilized. The small church is defined as having \$250,000 or less in annual undesignated budget receipts, the middle sized church is defined as having \$250,000-\$750,000 in annual undesignated budget receipts, and the large church is defined as having \$750,000 or more in annual undesignated budget receipts.

### C. Profile of Survey Respondents

Five hundred and fifty surveys were sent to Southern Baptist pastors of middle sized churches in West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina. The surveys yielded a 17.2% return, for a total of ninety-five surveys. The surveys yielded important results from which conclusions are drawn and directives outlined.

#### *Average Budget and Worship Attendance of Churches Surveyed*

Pastors were surveyed and asked to list the previous year's undesignated budget receipts, along with the average worship attendance of the church they currently serve. The average budget of churches served by the pastors responding to the surveys is \$368,386. Average weekly Sunday morning worship attendance is 270.

#### *Education and Experience of Pastors Surveyed*

The majority of pastors, 86.8%, have at least completed seminary with 40.2% having completed post-graduate education. According to the surveys most pastors of middle sized churches are also experienced in the ministry, with 71.5% having been in ministry at least ten years or more. Of these pastors, 44% have been in ministry for twenty years or more. Less than 1% of pastors responding have been in the ministry three years or less. There is a connection between having experience in the ministry, and being afforded the opportunity to serve a middle sized church.

### *Tenure at Current Place of Ministry*

While pastors responding to the survey have been in ministry for a considerable amount of time, tenure at their current place of service is not very long on average. Almost half, 45%, have been in their current position for less than six years. Almost three quarters, 70.4%, have been in their current position of service for less than ten years. Only 14.6% have been in their current position for longer than 15 years. The majority, 58.2%, have served in three or more churches in their ministry.

In his book, *Breakout Churches*, Thom Rainer identified the tenure of the senior pastor as a significant factor in the health and growth of the local church. Rainer wrote, “The church in America is mired in unhealthy structures and traditions that cannot be reversed in a short period. These leaders must have a long-term view of ministry and are ever persistent in moving the church forward.”<sup>8</sup> The tenure of the pastor is very important for the middle sized church to be stable and healthy, and to have the opportunity to grow to be a large church.

### D. Statement of Scriptural Instruction and Methodology

The calling, character, and competencies of the twenty-first century pastor are examined in detail. First, an in-depth biblical and theological review is outlined. Second, each area is considered from a historical viewpoint. Third, a review of how pastoral ministry is currently being practiced is included. Finally, these three areas are synthesized to formulate a comprehensive guide for the twenty-first century pastor.

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<sup>8</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 56.



*The Call to Ministry*

The first subject examined in-depth is the call to ministry. H. Richard Niebuhr provides a classic definition of the call to ministry. He describes it as having four parts:

1) The call to be a Christian, which is variously described as the call to discipleship of Jesus Christ, to hearing and doing the Word of God, to repentance and faith, et cetera; 2) The secret call, namely, that inner persuasion or experience whereby a person feels himself directly summoned or invited by God to take up the work of the ministry; 3) The providential call, which is that invitation and command to assume the work of the ministry which comes through the equipment of a person with the talents necessary for the exercise of the office and through the divine guidance of his life by all its circumstances; 4) The ecclesiastical call, that is, the summons and invitation extended to a man by some community or institution of the church to engage in the work of the ministry.<sup>9</sup>

Niebuhr's four parts of the call include the general call that all Christians receive, the inner prompting for service to God, the equipping of a person to answer a providential call to ministry, and the specific call to serve a body of believers in an official capacity. These four parts of the call are sequential in nature, with each part dependent on the other, in order to constitute a call to ministry.

This paper takes the position that the call to ministry includes four primary components. First is the call to salvation that all Christians receive. The call to salvation comes through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, whereby a person recognizes his or her sin and need for salvation, and through repentance and faith enters into a relationship with God.

Second is the call to service and discipleship that all Christians receive. This is the call to follow Jesus Christ in a surrendered life of service. It is the call to follow Jesus

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<sup>9</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), 64.

without any reservation or hesitation. The call to follow Jesus involves every area of the disciple's life.

Third is the inner call to selected men to serve in a vocational role as pastors. It is an inner burning and longing to be used of God. David Fisher wrote, "The call of God to any form of vocational ministry is a combination of conviction about God's truth and concern for people."<sup>10</sup> The nineteenth century evangelist Charles Finney was a lawyer prior to entering the ministry. He put his call in graphic terms: "I have a retainer from Christ to plead His cause."<sup>11</sup> It is the inner call that provides motivation for the difficult task of ministry. The inner call is vital in pastoral ministry. According to Howard F. Sugden and Warren Wiersbe, "The work of the ministry is too demanding and difficult for a man to enter without a sense of divine calling . . . nothing less than a definite call from God could ever give a man success in the ministry."<sup>12</sup>

Fourth is the outer call to ministry that defines the inner call and serves as confirmation of it. God confirms the inner call to ministry through the circumstances of providing a place for ministry. A local congregation, by virtue of their calling a man to service after acknowledging his service and abilities, validates the inner call. The pastor has opportunity to utilize the spiritual gifts God has entrusted to him. These gifts in turn are used by God to produce spiritual fruit through the power of the Holy Spirit. This

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<sup>10</sup> David Fisher, The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pastor: A Vision Based on the Ministry of Paul (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 93.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Grandison Finney, Charles Grandison Finney: An Autobiography (Westwood, N.J.: Revell, 1876 reprint), 27.

<sup>12</sup> Howard F. Sugden and Warren W. Wiersbe, When Pastors Wonder How (Chicago: Moody, 1973), 9.

spiritual fruit, exercised in the context of pastoral ministry, is further validation of the call.

A renewed emphasis on calling out the called is much needed. Ministry is not a profession, it is a calling. There is a need to call out the called in a general sense, but also to help men determine what their outer and specific call is. The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, projects that from 2002-2012 there will be an increase in total clergy positions from 400,000 to 463,000, an increase of 15.5 percent. The total job openings due to growth and net replacements will be 144,000.<sup>13</sup> There is a definite need for additional clergy to meet the demand. God is still calling men to ministry, and will not allow His church to go wanting for leadership and shepherding.

#### *The Character of the Pastor*

The second subject examined in-depth is the character of the twenty-first century pastor. There is no substitute for godly character. If pastors do not have godly character as the foundation of their ministries, it will be revealed over the long term in failed ministries and damaged lives and congregations.

The Scripture includes what the pastor is to do, but first and foremost it outlines who he is to be in his character. The pastor profiled in I Timothy and Titus is not perfect, but he is to be considered “blameless” (I Tim 3:2). What the Apostle Paul is indicating in this passage, is that pastors must be people who are consistent enough in character, to

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<sup>13</sup> David E. Hecker and David S. Frank, 2004-2005 Occupational Outlook Handbook ; available at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>; p.85; Internet; accessed 14 June 2005.

earn the trust and respect of the people who know them.<sup>14</sup>

Personal integrity must be at the core of everything the twenty-first century pastor does. According to James E. Means, “Integrity comes from the Latin term *integritas*, meaning soundness . . . the quality or condition of being whole or undivided . . . . Integrity embraces uncommon devotion to truth, unyielding opposition to falseness, and unvarying commitments to ethics, morality and virtue.”<sup>15</sup> The integrity of the pastor must be unwavering and solid in every area of life.

God blesses the pastor who has good character. Means also wrote: “Effectiveness relates to individual character and competence, not to spectacular gifts or advantageous circumstances. God rarely blesses the ministry of those with dubious character, questionable behavior, and unremarkable spirituality. God’s blessing normally rests upon those who have their moral, spiritual, and intellectual act together.”<sup>16</sup>

God blesses steady character and faithfulness more than He does spectacular gifting and abilities. Stephen Olford said, “God is far more concerned with who we are than what we do. If who we are doesn’t satisfy His holy demands, then what we do is virtually worthless.”<sup>17</sup> The focus should not be so much on methodology in ministry, but on character that is unchanging and based on the Word of God.

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<sup>14</sup> Lynn Anderson, *They Smell Like Sheep: Spiritual Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Company, 1997), 159.

<sup>15</sup> James E. Means, *Effective Pastors for a New Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 17.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen F. Olford, “The Leadership of Christ,” in *Giving God the Glory*, ed. by David Porter (Bromley, Kent, England: STL Books, 1985), 32.

If good character is not present, good methodology is worthless. Pastors are to lead by character primarily and not by programs. Character is lacking in the twenty-first century as evidenced by a number of high profile pastors who have fallen and others who have been involved in questionable ethical situations. Tremendous character deficits lead to cynicism toward pastors, and ultimately toward the churches they serve.

The study of the pastor's character includes specific areas. These include his personal prayer and devotional life, study habits, private actions, family habits, and public actions and persona. Each of these is a reflection of who the pastor is, and what is important to his overall ministry.

While it is the author's position that calling and character must be consistent regardless of the size of the church, there are differences in the application of the functional competencies needed to pastor churches of various sizes. The basic areas of the functional competencies do not change, but the application of the competencies differs somewhat depending on the size of the church.

### *The Competencies of the Pastor*

The third subject examined in-depth are the competencies of the twenty-first century pastor. The ministry of the modern pastor is multi-faceted. In the words of Richard S. Taylor, the "concept of success must be expanded to cover the whole gamut of the modern pastors' functions. He is not only a preacher and a teacher, not only a liturgist, but he is the legal head of a corporation. As such he is a planner, promoter,

organizer, manager, advertiser, delegator, supervisor, and diplomat. Success in the pastoral ministry requires some degree of skill in every function.”<sup>18</sup>

*A Biblically Compelling Model of Leadership*

The biblically compelling model for pastoral ministry is a model that transcends time and culture. The model found most prominently in the Bible is that of shepherding. The common English word “pastor” has made its way to us through Latin and is simply the semantic equivalent of the biblical word for “shepherd.”<sup>19</sup>

Historically, “from very ancient antiquity, rulers were described as demonstrating their legitimacy to rule by their ability to ‘pasture’ their people. Hammurabi and many other rulers of ancient western Asia are called shepherds or described as pasturing their subjects.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the shepherding model of leadership has strong biblical and historical foundations.

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<sup>18</sup> Richard S. Taylor, Principles of Pastoral Success (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 19.

<sup>19</sup> John W. Frye, Jesus the Pastor: Leading Others in the Character & Power of Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 18.

<sup>20</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason Archer Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 853.

### *God as Shepherd in the Old Testament*

God the Father is described as the Shepherd of His people. According to The Blue Letter Bible,

*Jehovah* is translated as "The Existing One" or "Lord." The chief meaning of *Jehovah* is derived from the Hebrew word *Havah* meaning "to be" or "to exist." It also suggests "to become" or specifically "to become known" — this denotes a God who reveals Himself unceasingly. *Rô'eh* from which *Raah* derived, means "shepherd" in Hebrew. A shepherd is one who feeds or leads his flock to pasture (Ezek 34:11-15). An extended translation of this word, *rea'*, is "friend" or "companion." This indicates the intimacy God desires between Himself and His people. When the two words are combined — *Jehovah Raah* — it can be translated as "The Lord my Friend."<sup>21</sup>

This terminology is used to refer to God in Gen 48:15 and 49:24, Ps 23:1 and 80:1. God is understood as the Shepherd of shepherds in Jer 23:1-4, Ezek 34, and Zech 10:1-5. He appoints shepherds of the flock, and also judges unworthy shepherds for being unfaithful to their calling. He is the ultimate Shepherd.

God is responsible for, and cares for His children in meeting their needs. The description of God as Shepherd is a reflection of His character. In relating to His people as the ultimate Shepherd He knows the flock, leads, provides protection for, loves and encourages His sheep. He binds up the broken, and brings back the strays (Ezek 34).

### *Undershepherds in the Old Testament*

The terminology of shepherd is used to describe men throughout the Old Testament who had leadership functions entrusted to them. Abel is the first shepherd mentioned in the Old Testament (Gen 4:2). Abraham (Gen 12:16), Jacob (Gen 30:31),

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<sup>21</sup> The Blue Letter Bible, "Jehovah-Raah"; available at [http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/name\\_god.html#link6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/name_god.html#link6); Internet; accessed 28 December 2006.

Moses (Ex 3:1), and David (2 Sam 5:2) are each described as shepherding flocks. Each of these men had the responsibility to tend, guard, and guide their flock. God called each of these men to lead His people using the same guiding principles. The priests and prophets in the Old Testament also had spiritual shepherding responsibilities.

Shepherds in the Old Testament were to look to God as the ultimate Shepherd, and were to follow His directives in caring for the flock. They received their instructions from God, were to faithfully follow them, and were in turn held accountable by God for their service. The spiritual health and wellbeing of God's people was to be their chief concern.

#### *Undershepherds in the New Testament*

Pastors in the New Testament church were given explicit instructions regarding their duties as pastors. The pastor is charged to "shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Jesus came to earth to redeem His church with His own blood (Eph 5:25b-27). When He went back to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower, gift, and direct His church (Jn 16:5-11). He entrusted the leadership of His church to men, gifted by the Holy Spirit to equip the flock to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-12).

As I Pet 5:1-4 indicates, the responsibility of the shepherd is to provide oversight for the flock, be an example to the flock, lead according to the will of God, and be motivated and driven by the call of God. All the while, the shepherd of God's flock is accountable to the Chief Shepherd. "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly,



nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but by being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (I Pet 5:1-4). God will reward faithful pastors for their service in His kingdom.

### *Shepherds in the Twenty-First Century*

In a fast paced, twenty-first century world, the terminology of shepherding likely seems foreign to many. The people in Bible times fully understood the role of the shepherd. Ted H. Waller stated, “The family often depended upon sheep for survival. A large part of their diet was milk and cheese. Occasionally they ate the meat. Their clothing and tents were made of wool and skins. Their social position often depended upon the well-being of the flock, just as we depend on jobs, businesses, cars and houses. Family honor might depend upon defending the flock.”<sup>22</sup>

The imagery was very familiar in the context of biblical times. Today, there is largely a modern disconnect from an agrarian society. As a result, many have moved away from shepherding terminology, and have proposed other principles that are unbiblical in promoting the pastor as the chief executive officer of a corporation.

### *An Unbiblical Model for Pastoral Ministry*

Marva Dawn and Eugene Peterson described their angst in reading congregational descriptions of what churches desire in a pastor today: “With hardly an exception they don’t want pastors at all -- they want managers of their religious company. They want a pastor they can follow so they won’t have to bother with following Jesus

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<sup>22</sup> Ted. H. Waller, With the Sheep in the Wilderness: Shepherding God’s Flock in the World (Nashville: Twentieth Century Publishers, 1991), 9-10.

anymore.”<sup>23</sup> The pastoral role is now commonly viewed from a corporate perspective. The business model seems to have taken preeminence over the biblical model. In the words of John W. Frye, “Jesus is shoved into our shadows as we read our management books, do our cultural surveys, attend our leadership seminars, and applaud or criticize one another’s endeavors.”<sup>24</sup>

Carl F. George goes even further to describe whom the pastor is to be and what he is to do. He states, “The concept of pastor needs a broader, fuller definition than that of shepherd if we are truly to multiply disciples . . . . I will go one step further: Maybe the common stereotype of what it means to be a pastor is an imbalanced view.”<sup>25</sup>

George differentiates between what he defines as a “shepherd” and a “rancher” mentality. He describes the shepherd with ten characteristics: 1. Primary care giving; 2. Overestimated Significance; 3. Expectations Drivenness; 4. Availability; 5. Performance; 6. Role Comfort; 7. Poor Delegating Ability; 8. Poor Planning Ability; 9. Individualism; 10. Ignorance of Trends. He describes the rancher with ten opposing characteristics: 1. Emphasis on the Big Picture; 2. Take-Charge Competence; 3. One-Another Ministry Expectation; 4. Group Focus; 5. Flexible Supervision; 6. Outcome Objectives; 7. Large

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<sup>23</sup> Marva Dawn and Eugene Peterson, The Unnecessary Pastor (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 4.

<sup>24</sup> Frye, Jesus the Pastor, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Carl F. George, How to Break Growth Barriers (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999), 86.

Picture Focus; 8. Role Creation; Non-dependency; 10. Managerial Skills.<sup>26</sup> George advocates that shepherders become ranchers.

At first, George's analysis seems accurate, pragmatically. The major problem however, is that it is not biblical. It is solely based on a man's opinion. The fundamental flaw in the comparison is that the biblical model of shepherding is not portrayed accurately. Instead, a flawed model is outlined that has taken root in many churches. As an antidote to the flawed model, George proposes an alternative model rather than return to the root of what a shepherd truly should be according to the Bible. As George has, many others have left biblical foundations, and as a result are subject to error and to the whims of the world.

Seward Hiltner wrote: "Pastoral theology is . . . that branch or field of theological knowledge and inquiry that brings the shepherding perspective to bear upon all the operations and functions of the church and the minister, and then draws conclusions of a theological order from reflections on these observations." The shepherding model is comprehensive in nature and is a sufficient and timeless model. The idea that shepherding somehow limits the pastor in terms of the scope of his ministry is untrue.

*Jesus as the Model for the Twenty-First Century Shepherd*

One does not need to look any further than the ministry of Jesus to find what it means to be a shepherd. Jesus preached to thousands (Lk 12:1); worked with hundreds (Acts 1:15); sent out seventy for a special mission (Lk 10:1); focused on developing the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 96.

twelve disciples (Mk 3:14); had a few especially close disciples in Peter, James, and John (Matt 17, 26:36-46), and loved one disciple in particular (Jn 13:23).

In the New Testament, the model for the church leader is clearly that of shepherd, which is the dominant metaphor used. In Jn 10:7-30, Jesus describes Himself as the “Good Shepherd.” As the Good Shepherd, He is the one who offers salvation (v9); gives life (10); gives His life for the sheep (v11); knows His sheep by name (v14); and secures His sheep for all eternity (v29). In the description of Jesus there is warmth, security, strength, intimacy and hope. I Pet 5:4 describes Him as the “Chief Shepherd.” Heb13:20 describes Him as the “Great Shepherd.”

Jesus is a Shepherd full of compassion. “When he saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matt 9:36). Because of this transparent compassion, people wanted to follow Him. According to Lynn Anderson, “Most Christians will want to follow real shepherds who mentor and equip them--shepherds whose lives are credible, whose relationships are authentic and warm, and whose ministry is genuine and helpful.”<sup>27</sup> People are willing to follow shepherds who model themselves after the compassion of Jesus.

God charges the pastor with clear responsibility: “Equip the disciples to do the work of the ministry” (Eph 4:11) and to commit the truth to “faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). This is consistent with the shepherding model of ministry demonstrated in the life of Jesus. J. Oswald Sanders stated: “A leader must be willing to develop himself on many levels and in many capacities, but with a unity of

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<sup>27</sup> Anderson, They Smell Like Sheep: Spiritual Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 3.

purpose.”<sup>28</sup> It is the call to be a shepherd that provides the unity of purpose. The shepherding model provides the framework that all of the pastoral duties fall under.

The shepherd works more through the influence of example, rather than the application of power. People follow a shepherd not because they have to, but because they want to. Sheep are not to be driven, they are to be led. Many misguided pastors have caused damage to the churches they serve because they have wielded their power in attempting to convince people to buy into their agenda, rather than gently guiding people to the agenda of God for His church.

The authority of the shepherd comes from God. There can be no sense of entitlement in the ministry of the pastor as though the people that he serves owe him something special. He is ultimately to lead people to submit to God. In submission to God, people are to respect and follow the leaders in the church. The Bible directs the people of God: “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” (Heb 13:17). People respect and honor those who are servant leaders and watch out for their souls, not those who demand that they be followed.

Shepherding is rooted in a love of God and a genuine and sacrificial love for people. It is not founded in a desire to achieve prominence, power, or prestige. The life of the pastor-shepherd is to be lived out in humble service before God with great love for God and for His people. In speaking of the importance of the relationship of believers to

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<sup>28</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, Dynamic Spiritual Leadership (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1999), 48.

one another, Jesus said: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (Jn 15:13). This applies directly to shepherds who are following the Good Shepherd, in loving and leading the flock of God.

Clearly, the best model for pastoral ministry is Jesus, the Chief Shepherd. In the words of Edward C. Zaragoza, “As servants, pastors are somehow to be like Jesus. Servant leadership is a very attractive image for ministry to other people because it appears to blend what most churches look for in a pastor: a caring person who can also run a church.”<sup>29</sup> Much of the current focus in the area of leadership attempts to repackage the biblical principles to make them more acceptable to a modern audience. There is however, no need to repackage the biblical principles.

God’s leadership model for the Church is Jesus as the Chief Shepherd, the pastor of the local church as the undershepherd, the Deacons as servants to the Body, and the Body carrying out the work of the ministry. This is a timeless and sufficient model for the healthy functioning of God’s Church. The pastor should be careful to study what it means to follow the Chief Shepherd in order to lead and equip others to do the work of the ministry. It is from this foundation of loving and following Jesus that the pastor leads others.

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<sup>29</sup> Edward C. Zaragoza, No Longer Servants, But Friends: Theology of Ordained Ministry (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 10.

*The Three Primary Competencies of the Pastor Introduced*

This paper concludes that the competencies of the twenty-first century pastor fit primarily into three main clusters; preaching, pastoral care, and church administration. The basic responsibilities of every pastor in each area of competency will be outlined, not specific to any particular size of church. Consideration will then be given to differences related to the size of the church.

*Preaching*

Preaching for the servant shepherd includes feeding the flock, teaching, exhorting, correcting, encouraging, administering the ordinances, evangelizing, and discipling. C. Sumner Wemp stated: “Preaching and teaching the Word of God is a vital part of the ministry. To stand in the pulpit and preach in the power of the Holy Spirit and see God transform lives is just short of tasting heaven itself.”<sup>30</sup> An adequate preaching ministry is essential for the pastor to be faithful in ministry.

*Pastoral Care*

Pastoral care for the servant shepherd includes loving the flock, counseling, praying, visiting, crisis ministry, and more. The supreme example in caring for the flock is Jesus. John W. Frye wrote: “Deep felt compassion is one of the primary and controlling emotions of pastoral ministry. Jesus felt it and, as Chief Shepherd, modeled it for all who would pastor. This emotion is visceral and compels action. It is the heart of

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<sup>30</sup> C. Sumner Wemp, The Guide to Practical Pastoring (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 207.

God for people.”<sup>31</sup> The caring shepherd will be involved in the lives of the sheep in order to identify with and relate to them through a relational ministry. Caring requires a relational focus for ministry.

### *Church Administration*

Church Administration for the pastor includes oversight and leadership in the areas of mission (vision formulation and communication), manpower (staff and volunteer leadership), ministries (programs), management (church facilities) and money (finances). Church administration involves “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”, (Eph 4:12). Failure to effectively equip others will result in severe limitations on a pastor’s ministry. Equipping the saints leads to multiplication of the ministry and a greater degree of faithfulness in a particular ministry location and beyond. It is very important that the pastor be a good model in his calling, character, and competency due to the principle of multiplication. If the multiplier is flawed, he will multiply others who are also flawed and damage will be done to the work of the kingdom.

George Barna defined a Christian leader as “someone who is called by God to lead, leads with and through Christ-like character, and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place.”<sup>32</sup> The twenty-first century pastor must be capable of administrating the work of the church and coordinating it so the church maintains functional viability. While the church is clearly a spiritual organization,

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<sup>31</sup> John W. Frye, Jesus the Pastor (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 85.

<sup>32</sup> George Barna, Leaders on Leadership (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997), 25.



there are also basic business principles that can be applied in every church in order for it to run smoothly. The pastor needs a good working knowledge of how to implement basic business principles for the benefit of the organization.

A compelling vision for the ministry sets the tone for the direction of the ministry overall. James E. Means stated: “The art of pastoral guidance requires the ability to interpret the signposts about the future and to influence the church to prepare for it. Just as the historian takes piles of information about the past and constructs an interpretation of what must have happened, so must the leader select, organize, structure, and interpret information about the future in constructing a viable and credible vision.”<sup>33</sup> In order to be effective the pastor must know the direction that God is leading him to take the ministry and be capable of communicating that to his congregation in a compelling and motivating fashion.

#### E. Review of the Literature

A review of the available literature has been conducted in this paper, and is reflected in the bibliography which includes over three hundred-fifty resources. These resources include books, journal and magazine articles, and electronic resources. There are numerous resources and works available and in circulation that address the individual components of this paper. There are, however, very few resources available in a comprehensive format.

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<sup>33</sup> Means, Effective Pastors for a New Century, 141.

The original contributions of this paper to the field of ministry consists predominantly of research resulting in ministry directives regarding how the calling, character, and competencies of the twenty-first century pastor apply to the middle sized church. These conclusions are arrived at through evaluation of research drawn from among Southern Baptist pastors. The bulk of the research focuses on the competencies.

#### F. Conclusions

The conclusions arrived at through research and surveys, will be compared and contrasted, with the biblical principles regarding the role and function of the pastor. This paper answers the question, “Is modern ministry consistent with the timeless biblical mandate?” Results and conclusions of this paper will be utilized to inform, guide, and equip pastors. The goal is to assist and enable pastors to maximize their abilities and gifts where God has placed them in ministry for the greatest effectiveness. In doing so, pastors will be encouraged to be faithful, and through their efforts God will be glorified.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE CALLING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PASTOR

This chapter includes several elements related to the calling of the twenty-first century pastor. There is the call to salvation that all men receive. Then there is the call to service that all followers of Jesus Christ have the privilege of answering. Beyond the general nature of the call, God prompts selected men to serve Him in a special calling to the ministry. The call is then confirmed through several circumstances in the life of the pastor.

#### A. The Call to Salvation

It is clear in the Scripture that there is a general call to salvation. “Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other” (Isa 45:22). The call goes out to lost sinners, who are in need of God’s salvation, to enter into a personal relationship with Him. “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (I Cor 1:9).

According to Lewis Sperry Chafer:

The word salvation is the translation of the Greek word *sōtēria* which is derived from the word *sōtēr* meaning to savior. The word salvation communicates the thought of deliverance, safety, preservation, soundness, restoration, and healing. In theology, however, its major use is to denote a work of God on behalf of men, and as such it is a major doctrine of the Bible which includes redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, conviction, repentance, faith, regeneration, forgiveness, justification, sanctification,

preservation, and glorification. On the one hand, salvation is described as the work of God rescuing man from his lost estate. On the other hand salvation describes the estate of a man who has been saved and who is vitally renewed and made a partaker of the inheritance of the saints.<sup>34</sup>

In salvation God acts on the behalf of lost sinners who are incapable of obtaining righteousness on their own. Through the blood of Christ, and His resurrection power, God rescues lost sinners from death, hell, and the grave.

#### *A Call to All Men*

Scripture indicates that God “. . . desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim 2:4). The general call goes out through the proclamation of the Gospel. The Apostle Paul in the context of recounting how Israel had heard and for the most part then rejected the Gospel wrote, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom 10:14-17). The Word of God is the source of truth regarding salvation and eternal life.

#### *A Call From the Holy Spirit*

The call comes through the proclamation of the Word and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said the role of the Holy Spirit would be to “. . . convict the world of

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<sup>34</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, Abridged Edition, Vol. 2, John F. Walvoord, editor, Donald K. Campbell, Roy B. Zuck, consulting editors (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1988), 21.

sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged” (Jn 16:8-11). Apart from the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, the lost person cannot recognize the need for salvation.

George Eldon Ladd remarked, “The first work of the Spirit is to enable men to understand the divine work of redemption . . . This (the cross) was an event whose meaning was folly to the Greeks and an offense to Jews. But to those enlightened by the Spirit, it is the wisdom of God.”<sup>35</sup> The Spirit opens the spiritual eyes of the person under conviction to show the person the truth of eternal life and draw the person into a relationship with God.

*A Call to Faith in Jesus Christ*

God calls and invites men to accept His Son Jesus Christ by faith. E. Y. Mullin stated that this call is “sent forth through the Bible, the preaching of the Gospel, and in so many other ways. Nothing can be clearer from the teaching of Scripture than the fact that the call and invitation are universal and there is a free offer of salvation to all who hear and repent and believe.”<sup>36</sup>

Wayne Grudem noted that the Scripture speaks of God calling people, “out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Pet 2:9); He calls them into the fellowship of His Son (I Cor 1:9; cf. Acts 2:39) and into His own kingdom and glory (I Thess 2:12; cf. I Pet

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<sup>35</sup> George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 490-491.

<sup>36</sup> Edgar Young Mullins, The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression (Philadelphia: Roger Williams Press, 1917), 365.

5:10; 2 Pet 1:3). They are called to be saints (Rom 1:7, I Cor 1:2), and have come into a realm of peace (I Cor 7:15, Col 3:15), freedom (Gal 5:13), hope (Eph 1:15; 4:4), holiness (I Thess 4:7), patient endurance of suffering (I Pet 2:20-21, 3:9), and eternal life (I Tim 6:12).<sup>37</sup> It is a comprehensive call to enter into an eternal relationship with God.

Therefore, God calls people out of the darkness of sin and into the light of His Son. The Holy Spirit illuminates the heart of a man in order to open his spiritual eyes and lead him out of darkness and into light. The call is to a relationship with Jesus Christ and a walk in the kingdom of God for His glory. Saved people are referred to as saints as they have been set apart for the purposes of God. Wayne Grudem asserted, “This calling is rather a kind of summons from the king of the universe and it has such power that it brings about the response that it asks for in people’s hearts.”<sup>38</sup>

Salvation is the free gift of God to man, by grace through faith, apart from human works; (Eph 2:8-9). Salvation is provided by the Lord. In the words of Chevis F. Horne, “God calls us from darkness into light, from falsehood into truth, from alienation into reconciliation, from bondage into freedom, from separation into fellowship, from sin and shame into forgiveness, from lostness into salvation, from self-centered pursuit into service and from death into life.”<sup>39</sup> Every Christian is spoken of in the New Testament as called of God, chosen of God, and set apart by God (Rom 1:6; I Cor 1:1-2; Eph 1:1-6; 4:1; I Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 1:1).

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<sup>37</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 692.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 692.

<sup>39</sup> Chevis F. Horne, Forty Years in the Same Pulpit: What Makes For Long Pastorates (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 1995), 11.

*Elements of the Call to Salvation*

Elmer Towns outlines the call of God that results in conversion as appealing to the intellect, emotions, and the will. As the call of God relates to intellect, Towns wrote: “It is imperative to know both the content (doctrine) and the Person (Jesus Christ) of the Gospel to be converted . . . . While an individual does not have to understand the whole Bible to be saved, he must believe what he does understand.”<sup>40</sup> The intellect of a person is engaged when he is first presented with the facts about salvation. The simple truth of the Gospel is presented and challenges the intellect.

As the call of God relates to emotions, Towns wrote: “A person is not more saved or less saved, depending on the volume of his emotional outbursts; but when he is converted, it will affect his emotions.”<sup>41</sup> The emotions are engaged when a passionate invitation to personally respond to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith is offered.

As the call of God relates to the will, Towns wrote: “God created man with a will to choose or reject the work of God in his life. In order to be converted, a person must respond.”<sup>42</sup> The will is challenged as a person is asked to respond, to take action, to willfully turn from sin, turn to Jesus, and receive forgiveness and eternal life. When a person answers the call to salvation and enters into eternal life, he is entering into an eternal relationship with the only Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

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<sup>40</sup> Elmer L. Towns, *Theology for Today* (Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2002), 449.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 450.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 450.

## B. The Call to Service

Another part of the pastor's calling is the call to service that all Christians receive. Every person who trusts in Jesus Christ by faith is called to a life of service. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (Jn 10:27). Joseph M. Stowell asserted that following after Christ in service to Him, "leads us to embrace and experience the primal call of our Christianity as we learn both what it means to become fully devoted followers of Him and how we can actualize that desire."<sup>43</sup> To serve God is to follow Him in complete obedience to His ways. This is to be the first priority in the life of the believer. To be a Christian is to serve Christ as His devoted follower.

### *A Call Based on a Relationship*

The call to serve is within the context of the believer's relationship with Jesus. As the believer walks with Christ, he is transformed, and as a result reflects the character of Christ. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom 8:29). Christianity is "an adventure, a passionate pursuit of Christ."<sup>44</sup> Henry Blackaby and Joyce Mitchell reasoned, "All through the Bible, and especially in the New Testament, salvation is primarily being called by God to be in a saving relationship with Him. This relationship is a call to be on mission with God in our

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<sup>43</sup> Joseph M. Stowell, Following Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.



world.”<sup>45</sup> God has chosen to use those who follow after Him, His children, to accomplish His purposes. All who are saved are therefore called to serve in a general sense.

Donald E. Messer noted, “The Greek word for ministry is *diakonia* and is inclusive of both laity and clergy. The basic English definition of the word is simply service.”<sup>46</sup> The New Testament speaks of every believer as called, chosen, and set apart for service to God (Rom 1:6; I Cor 1:1-2; Eph 1:1-6; 4:1; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 1:1). It is one’s calling to utilize the spiritual gifts one has been blessed with in service to God.

According to J. Winston Pierce, “Every Christian should be called of God to the work in which he is engaged, not just the person engaged in some church related task.”<sup>47</sup> In Matt 20, Jesus indicates that greatness comes through serving Him. The mother of Zebedee’s sons came to him with her sons, and asked for special treatment for her sons. She asked that they be granted the privilege of sitting on the right hand and on the left hand of Jesus in His kingdom. Not understanding the suffering that Jesus was about to undertake, Jesus asked whether or not they understood what He was about to face. Jesus said, “Whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:27-28). The supreme example of sacrificial service is Jesus.

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<sup>45</sup> Henry Blackaby and Joyce Mitchell, What It Means to Be Called and Accountable (Birmingham: WMU Press, 1990), 5.

<sup>46</sup> Donald E. Messer, Contemporary Issues of Christian Ministry (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 28.

<sup>47</sup> J. Winston Pearce, God Calls Me (Nashville: Convention Press, 1960), 47.

*A Call to Complete Surrender*

In the Great Commission, Jesus gave explicit instructions for His followers to make disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20). The call to serve Jesus as His disciple is a radical call to surrender one’s entire being in service to the King.

Dallas Willard remarked, “Salvation as conceived today is far removed from what it was in the beginnings of Christianity and only by correcting it can God’s grace in salvation be returned to the concrete, embodied existence of our human personalities walking with Jesus in his easy yoke.”<sup>48</sup> In obedience to the Great Commission, there is a great need for the church to teach the sacrificial nature of the Gospel. When God calls a person to faith in Jesus, He lays claim to that person’s life for the building of His kingdom and for His glory.

Jesus taught that His disciples should give their loyalty to the kingdom of God. He said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt 6:33). Gene Mims defines the kingdom of God as “the reign of God in today’s world. The kingdom is the ultimate reality and sovereign movement of God in the universe. This is expressed in the transforming truth that Jesus Christ rules over all things and is evidenced by God’s supernatural work in and through believers in

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<sup>48</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 33.

local churches.”<sup>49</sup> The Christian life involves voluntary and joyful sacrifice of everything for the sake of God’s kingdom. Service to God means putting the kingdom of God first. For the pastor, the general call to a life of service is the foundation of his vocational calling.

### C. The Call to Selected Men

The next part of the pastor’s calling is the call that comes to selected men to serve God in a vocational capacity. The initial call clearly comes from God and not simply from a man’s desire to be used in a particular capacity. According to Derek Prime and Alistair Begg, the call is the “unmistakable conviction an individual possesses that God wants him to do a specific task.”<sup>50</sup> The call often comes to men who are busy serving God and they begin to sense an inner tug on their soul that God is calling them to a special ministry.

#### *A Special Call to Selected Men*

Henry Blackaby and Henry Brandt remarked that the pastor is called by God for “God’s purposes, in God’s time and place, and serves Him in God’s ways. God has chosen to change others and our world through pastors who are called by God, who

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<sup>49</sup> Gene Mims, The Kingdom Focused Church (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), ix.

<sup>50</sup> Derek Prime & Alistair Begg, On Being a Pastor: Understanding Our Calling and Work (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 18.

answer this call, and who obey God consistently.”<sup>51</sup> One does not choose the ministry! A pastor is chosen by God and in turn yields himself up for service to God.

J. Oswald Sanders wrote:

Just as He called persons to be leaders in biblical days, He still calls persons today to build His church through vocational ministry. If God has called you to the ministry, you must be ready to respond. It doesn't make you better than anyone else or more important, but it does magnify your responsibility. Imagine that the great God of the Universe has chosen you for the awesome responsibility and opportunity of leading His people. People who are not called should not be in the ministry; but, people who are called to the ministry will have a difficult time finding fulfillment in doing anything else.<sup>52</sup>

There is clearly a tension involved in the call, between God in His sovereignty choosing men He sets apart for service, and their willingness to surrender to the call. God issues the call, but men must be willing to surrender to the call. A man can resist and even deny the call of God on his life, but will suffer great spiritual consequences in his life that result in a lack of obedience to God. At a minimum, the spiritual suffering will consist of realizing that one has missed out on God's plan for his life.

### *Old Testament Examples of the Call*

The Old Testament is replete with examples of men whom God set apart for special service. The examples in the Old Testament are not God's call to pastoral ministry as defined in the New Testament, but they are God's call to serve Him in a particular way. The call that came from God included a call to be willing to leave people, places, and things in service to God. God called Abram and said, “Get out of your

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<sup>51</sup> Henry Blackaby & Henry Brandt, The Power of the Call (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 21.

<sup>52</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership: Responding to God's Call (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1994), 5.

country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:1-3).

Abram responded to God in obedience and the power of God worked through his life. Though he did not fully understand what the call involved or where it would lead him, he stepped out on faith, trusting God. "He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore, 'it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (Rom 4:20-22).

God called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt (Exod 3). Moses was tending to his father-in-law's sheep. He came to Horeb and an angel of the Lord appeared to in the flame of a burning bush. God identified Himself to Moses and explained the plight of His people in Egypt under bondage to the Pharaoh. God said to Moses, "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt" (Exod 3:10).

At first, Moses objected vigorously to the call with several excuses. He was concerned that the people would not believe that the Lord had appeared to him. He was concerned that He was not eloquent. Each time he offered up an excuse to God, God countered. At the end of his dialogue with God the Bible says very plainly, "Moses went" (Exod 4:18). He was obedient to God's call on his life. It is not unusual for truly God called men to feel inadequate. It is through people who may be considered inadequate

and ordinary by human standards that God often does His greatest work. God specializes in using the ordinary, to accomplish the extraordinary, to bring glory to Himself.

God called Joshua to be the successor to Moses and to lead the people in conquering the Promised Land. God said to Joshua, “Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them- the children of Israel” (Josh 1:2). Joshua obeyed God. Following a great leader who was revered by the people and used greatly by God could not have been an easy task. Joshua’s faith and trust in God outweighed any human concern he may have had about fulfilling the role that God called him to. In his obedience, he took on a significant role that he could not have fulfilled apart from the call of God on his life.

In the time of Judges, and the repeated cycles of rebellion, God raised up people to judge Israel. Samuel, the last judge, was dedicated to God by his mother Hannah before He was even born. As a young boy God called Samuel to service. God used him in the priesthood to prophesy and speak to His people. God said of Samuel, “Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me?” (I Sam 2:28). The call of God on Samuel’s life covered his life from before he was even born until he died. God still sets men apart for special service, and the call is present in their lives even before they recognize it. God knows exactly what He is going to do in and through a person’s life long before they recognize the nature of the call. Samuel remained faithful to God in the midst of dark times spiritually for Israel.

In the days when Israel demanded a king, God called out Saul to serve him. He used Samuel to anoint him as the King of Israel. The Scripture says, “Samuel took a flask

of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over His inheritance” (I Sam 10:1)? Samuel announced to the people that Saul had been chosen as the king, “Do you see him who the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people” (I Sam 10:24)? Saul reigned as the first King of Israel.

Following Saul’s disobedience, God instructed Samuel to anoint David as the King of Israel. After the parade of Jesse’s sons, David came before Samuel and God said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one! Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (I Sam 16:13). David was a man “after God’s own heart” (I Sam 13:14).

God’s hand was on David’s life and it was apparent from his calling, to his coronation as king, and then to the end of his life. His greatest failure came at a time when he had reigned as king for about twenty years. He selfishly committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband Uriah placed in a position to be murdered to try and cover his sins (I Sam 11:1-12:23). God used Nathan the prophet to expose David’s sins and David repented of his sin against God (Ps 51). God graciously forgave David and continued to use him throughout his life, though the temporal consequences of his sins followed him. David was at times a troubled and sinful man, but the call of God was apparent throughout his life.

Toward the end of King David’s life, Adonijah, the son of Haggith (I Kgs 1:5) presumed to be king and tried to put himself in King David’s position. David set the record straight and indicated that it was Solomon whom God wanted to be the next King of Israel. He said, “Just as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel, saying, ‘assuredly

Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place” (I Kgs 1:30). Following David’s death, Solomon established his kingdom in obedience to God.

Each of the prophets of God had similar, though unique experiences in receiving their call from God. Isaiah the prophet received a vision from God (Isa 6). In the vision recorded in Isa 6:8 he heard the voice of God saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Isaiah replied, “Here am I! Send me”. Isaiah’s call from God came in the form of a vision that God gave to him. The central theme of the vision Isaiah experienced was the holiness of God. When Isaiah encountered the holiness and grandeur of God, and realized the call that had been placed on his life, he answered in obedience.

Jeremiah received a word from the Lord that clearly told him his life had been set apart for God’s service. “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jer 1:5). Much like Moses, Jeremiah offered excuses and reasons why he could not fulfill God’s call on his life. God did not accept the excuses and reasons, and Jeremiah wisely responded obediently to the call.

Ezekiel received a vision from God and the Scripture says, “The word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was upon him there” (Ezek 1:3). He was overwhelmed in the presence of God when he encountered the glory of God. “Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord” (Ezek 1:28). Ezekiel responded by obediently proclaiming the Word of the Lord.



### *New Testament Examples of the Call*

In the New Testament, God's call to the Gospel ministry has similar components to the call of God that was placed upon men in the Old Testament. The call in the New Testament also includes a call to be willing to leave people, places and things in service to God.

God set the life of John the Baptist apart through the working of the Holy Spirit, while he was still in his mother's womb. His parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, were told by an angel that they would bear a son in answer to the prayer of Zacharias. They were told what to name him, and even what his service to the Lord would entail (Lk 1:11-16).

We are not told in the Bible how John the Baptist came to know of God's call on his life or how he initially responded to it. It was likely through the testimony of his parents that he learned from an early age that God had special plans for his life. John the Baptist burst forth on the scene proclaiming a message of repentance and the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand! For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight'" (Matt 3:2-3). John fulfilled a calling that ultimately would cost him his life, when he stood up for truth and righteousness against wicked Herod Antipas. God never issues the call without also preparing and empowering the one who is called.

When Jesus called His first disciples He said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt 4:19). They immediately responded to Jesus and followed Him, willingly surrendering life as they knew it in service for the kingdom of God. Jesus said of His future kingdom, "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or

mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life" (Matt 19:29). Jesus calls us to leave behind the temporal and focus on what has eternal value. The call is not answered in order to gain eternal reward. The call is answered in obedience to God, for the eternal glory of God. The call is answered in order to live a purposeful and faithful life in a love relationship with one's Creator and Redeemer.

Peter was one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus. His earlier name was Simon and the names are used together in Scripture (Matt 16:16). His brother Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist first (Jn 1:35,40), but became a follower of Jesus. Andrew found his brother Peter and told him of Jesus, and Peter began to follow. The Apostle Peter would become the leader of the twelve disciples.<sup>53</sup> He is listed first in the four lists of the twelve disciples in the New Testament (Matt 10:2; Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14-16; Acts 1:13).

Peter was eventually in the inner circle of Jesus along with James and John (Mk 5:37; Lk 8:57). When Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, Jesus replied, "I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). Jesus would be the builder of the church, but Peter would have a key role in that process. God's call on his life marked out the boundaries of service that he would walk in.

God also called out Saul, the Jewish persecutor of Christians, to serve Him. On his way to Damascus to find followers of Jesus that he might persecute and bring back to Jerusalem, Saul encountered a bright light. The Scripture records the words of Jesus

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<sup>53</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, Ed., Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Volume 4, M-P (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 733.

Himself to Saul when He said, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me” (Acts 9:4)? Saul was blinded, and subsequently led into Damascus where he met Ananias. The Lord told Ananias, “Go for he is a chosen vessel of Mine, to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Ananias obediently went to Saul, laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9:17). Immediately, Saul began to preach Jesus. He was also known by his Roman name, Paul (Acts 13:9).

Later, speaking of his own ministry, Paul repeatedly referred to his call as not being by the will of man, but by the will of God (Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1). The Apostle Paul said to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). It is a high calling.

Timothy was a constant companion of the Apostle Paul. The first reference to Timothy is found in Acts 16:1-3 at the beginning of Paul’s second missionary journey when he revisited Derbe and Lystra in Lycaonia. Later, Paul “suggests that certain prophetic utterances confirmed Timothy’s appointment (I Tim 1:18; cf. 4:14).”<sup>54</sup> Timothy was set apart by God to serve the church at Ephesus and would do so faithfully under the calling of God.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 752.

*Other Significant Examples of the Call*

The call that comes from God is a compelling one. Derek Prime and Alistair Begg reasoned, “There is the basic truth that God always gives a clear call to those whom He has chosen for the ministry.”<sup>55</sup> Men have described this call in remarkably similar terms through the years.

Martyn Lloyd Jones said, “It was God’s hand that laid hold of me, and drew me out, and separated me to this work.”<sup>56</sup> Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Georgia, came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ at the age of twelve. Immediately after his salvation he knew God was calling him to the gospel ministry. “To think that one day he would preach the gospel of Christ consumed his mind.”<sup>57</sup> Later, he obediently answered God’s call to ministry.

James (Jim) Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Florida, at the age of nine years, began to sense the call of God on his life. “After two years of discipleship by both family and church, James believed God was setting him aside for the ministry. James went through high school and college never truly dwelling on the call while being consistently reminded of it by the Lord.”<sup>58</sup> Henry surrendered his life to God’s call to ministry.

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<sup>55</sup> Prime & Begg, On Being a Pastor, 92.

<sup>56</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, God’s Ultimate Purpose: An Exposition of Ephesians 1:1-23 (Carlisle, Pa. Banner of Truth, 1978), 92.

<sup>57</sup> Emir and Ergun Caner, The Sacred Trust: Sketches of the Southern Baptist Convention Presidents (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 174.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, began to sense the call of God on his life to the gospel ministry as a teenager. As he wrestled with God, he knew that God was indeed laying claim to his life. Graham yielded to the clear call of God on his life.<sup>59</sup>

The example of each of these men, points to the compelling call of God on a man's life to serve him. It is a call that consumes the mind, the heart, and the will and leads up to the point of life surrender. This author came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ at the age of seven and followed Jesus in believer's baptism at the age of 8. At the age of 19, while serving in a local church as a layperson, the call of God became very evident. The author resisted God's calling and chose instead to pursue a different career path in business. An attempt was made to run from God, much like the prophet Jonah. God maintained His pursuit and claim on the author's life and at the age of 26, the author surrendered to the ministry. There was a sense of relief and for the first time in his life, the author clearly sensed God's purpose for him serving Christ in a vocational capacity.

#### *The Grace of God as the Foundation of the Call*

God's initial call to ministry does not so much concern ability, or natural skill, or expertise in the field. Instead it has more to do with availability and surrender to God, and is driven by the grace of God. Chevis F. Horne argued, "God does not call us because of natural gifts such as fine presence, good voice, attractive personality, speaking ability, or even spiritual sensitivity. Nor does God call us because we are good, deserving, and

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 209.

trustworthy. God calls us through grace, a mystery we can never understand.”<sup>60</sup> David Fisher stated, “Pastoral ministry whether in the first century or the twenty-first requires those of us who have been captured by Christ to lead God’s people by climbing up on an altar as a way of life.”<sup>61</sup> It is a life of full surrender.

The call forms for the servant of God, the core of knowing the will of God and His direction for life. H.B. London and Neil B. Wiseman noted, “A call invigorates the person who is called and makes him spiritually alive. It sharpens his focus on the meaning of his ministry. It makes him more noble and more in touch with God than he could have ever been without it. It vitalizes vision and fuels motivation. And a call reserves a front-row seat for a pastor at what resurrection life does for human beings.”<sup>62</sup> It is a unique role to experience the power of God working in the lives of people.

Nothing gives the pastor more personal security, hope, courage, motivation, and tenacity than knowing He has been called by God. Pastors should remind themselves regularly of their high calling and privilege, and never lose sense of wonderment over the fact that God has called them to shepherd His flock. Leslie B. Flynn commented, “An appropriate sense of calling will not only enable a pastor to better survive but also to accomplish so much more.”<sup>63</sup> The sense of calling is powerful.

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<sup>60</sup> Chevis F. Horne, Forty Years in the Same Pulpit: What Makes for Long Pastorates (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 1995), 18.

<sup>61</sup> David Fisher, The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pastor (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 103.

<sup>62</sup> H.B. London & Neil B. Wiseman, The Heart of a Great Pastor (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1994), 113.

<sup>63</sup> Leslie B. Flynn, How to Survive in the Ministry (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1992), 26.

### *Elements of the Call to Selected Men*

In both the biblical examples of the call and other examples of the call, there are consistent elements that stand out. First, the call is based on the wisdom of God, and rooted in the grace of God. God as Creator, knows best how His children can serve Him. He has a specific plan and purpose in mind for each person who receives the special call. Second, the call is described as being clear and unmistakable. The call can be resisted and a person can live in disobedience to God, thereby suffering the spiritual consequences of disobeying God. The call however, is clear and unmistakable. It outweighs any life circumstance or excuse that could be used as a barrier in resisting God.

Third, the call requires a response of faith and is a venture into the unknown. God provides no detailed roadmaps for ministry, He simply says “follow Me” (Matt 4:19). He leads and directs as needed. Fourth, it is a call to unconditional surrender and a willingness to leave behind anything that might hinder obedience to God. Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Lk 9:23). He said, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk 9:62).

### *Spiritual Gifting and the Call*

A key component of the call that selected men receive from God is their spiritual gifting. The ministry of spiritual gifts originates in the New Testament, and is commissioned by our Lord Jesus Christ. After He established His church on the earth and ascended into Heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to equip His church with power and

spiritual gifts to enable His disciples to carry out His ministry objectives. Every Christian at the time of conversion receives all the gifts that he will need for ministry (I Cor 12:11).

These gifts are listed primarily in Rom 12:3-8; I Cor 12:1-12, 28; and Eph 4:11. Eph 4:11 indicates that the pastoral office is empowered by the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. Pastor-teachers are God given gifts to the church. John MacArthur, Jr. stated, “Just as God called out men for specific tasks in the Old Testament, so in the New Testament God has His chosen ones to accomplish specific tasks during this church age.”<sup>64</sup> According to Charles Bridges, “The ability for the sacred office is very distinct from natural talent, or the wisdom and learning of this world.”<sup>65</sup> The gifting that comes from God is absolutely essential for a genuine call to pastoral ministry to be answered effectively.

Spiritual gifts are necessary for the pastor to be fruitful in his ministry. Spiritual gifting alone cannot be relied on as confirmation of the call. Gifting is simply one element. Many apparently gifted men have not remained faithful, thereby nullifying any potential they had. Spiritual gifts must be exercised in the context of good character. There are many spiritually gifted men who fall short in their character and derail the work of God in their lives.

No matter how gifted a person is, their gifts must be under the power and control of the Holy Spirit or problems will arise. This was evidenced in the church at Corinth where spiritual gifts were prevalent but misused and as a result the church had major

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<sup>64</sup> John MacArthur, Jr., Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995), 109.

<sup>65</sup> Charles Bridges, The Christian Ministry (reprint of 1830 ed., London: Banner of Truth, 1967), 101.



problems. People misused the gifts they had to draw attention to themselves rather than to do the work of God. The issue is not the level of gifting of the pastor. The issue is, can he be trusted to use the gifts that God has given him?

#### D. The Confirmation of the Call

The first three components of the pastor's call (the call to salvation, the call to service, and the call to selected men) are primarily inward in nature. The confirmation of the call comes through external factors. The outer call to ministry, defines the inner call and serves as confirmation of it.

##### *Confirmation Through Other Christians*

The first confirmation of the call comes as other Christians recognize and examine the call of God on a person's life. It is usually in the context of living the Christian life from day to day that the call from God comes. On several occasions in the Bible, the people that God used significantly, were in the midst of God's activity when the call of God came. For example, Amos, the prophet to be, was a layman shepherd and farmer when God called him (Am 7:14-15). The Bible is replete with such examples.

It is likely in the day to day service of God, that a genuine call on a man's life will become apparent not only to him, but also to those around him. The focus turns from an internal leading, to external confirmation by outside sources. This recognition at first usually comes informally by way of acknowledgment and encouragement of God's work in a person's life and service to Him by others. The informal acknowledgment by others

who have been impacted by a man's service to the Lord, serves as an initial prompting that God may be calling.

*Confirmation Through Trusted Counselors*

Following informal recognition by others, a man who is experiencing the leading of God, must further explore the possibilities of the call with those whom he is close to. Thomas C. Oden stated, "Having first engaged in such an inward self-examination, I must then consult with others concerning their perception of my potential gifts for ministry. In informal, but candid ways, I will submit my preliminary internal conviction of a call to ministry to the searching judgment of others whom I trust."<sup>66</sup> "In the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov 11:14). These counselors can provide clear direction for the path of ministry.

It is important that this early searching and examining take place to discern if a genuine call is definitely present. In the words of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "It is a fearful calamity to a man to miss his calling, and to the church upon whom he imposes himself, his mistake involves an affliction of the most grievous kind."<sup>67</sup> Leslie B. Flynn wrote, "Considerable weight must be attached to the estimate of godly men and women. In by far the majority of cases, their prayerful opinion will be an accurate one."<sup>68</sup> It is

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas C. Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1983), 19.

<sup>67</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), 25.

<sup>68</sup> Flynn, How to Survive in the Ministry, 27.

vitally important that this time of exploration of the call and confirmation by others not be taken lightly.

*Confirmation Through Licensing In The Local Congregation*

Further confirmation of the call comes as a local congregation formally acknowledges the apparent abilities of the potential pastor through the process of licensing. The licensing process is less formal and final than that of ordination. Robert C. Anderson defined licensing: “Licensing is the action of a single congregation and does not require the rigorous examination that is part of ordination, nor does it require a special ceremony. In licensing, the church recognizes that a person has specific ministerial capabilities, and, in effect, it gives formal approval of that person’s carrying out certain specific ministerial functions.”<sup>69</sup>

Licensing serves as approval from other Christians that there is apparently a calling by God on a person’s life. Licensing provides an avenue whereby a man can confirm the call of God on his life through public affirmation of his life and ministry. Licensing as practiced in Southern Baptist Convention churches is a “means by which a man’s calling is confirmed. Licensing is the church’s stamp of approval of the man’s

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<sup>69</sup> Robert C. Anderson, The Effective Pastor (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1985), 57.

preaching abilities, his soundness in doctrine, and his Christian lifestyle.”<sup>70</sup> Depending on further confirmation, licensing may or may not lead to ordination.

*Confirmation Through Ordination In The Local Congregation*

If there is further confirmation of the calling, the next step in formal recognition of a person’s calling is ordination. According to John MacArthur, Jr., “Ordination is the process of godly church leaders affirming the call, equipping, and maturity of leaders to serve God’s purposes in the next generation.”<sup>71</sup> Clifford V. Anderson reasoned, “The Bible indicates that the early church had a specific process whereby bodies of Christians chose and set apart leaders for service. Paul’s instruction that Titus appoint elders (Tit 1:5) exemplifies a number of passages that point to the idea.”<sup>72</sup> Although the process in the Bible is not identified as ordination, at least as far as the modern church understands it, there is a clear biblical concept of God’s appointment of men to full time ministry.

The setting apart of certain men for ministry and the subsequent laying on of hands has its roots in the Old Testament. It was used for commissioning to office, as a sign of blessings being given, and in order to offer gifts and sacrifices (Gen 38:14, Lev 24, Deut 34:9). The order of the Levites was set apart in this manner (Num 27:18-23). Moses laid hands on Joshua (Deut 34:9). The practice was continued in the New

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<sup>70</sup> Consolation Baptist Association, “Suggestions for Licensing a Minister”; available at <http://www.cobaptist.org/ministers%20licensing.htm>; Internet; accessed 9 December, 2006.

<sup>71</sup> MacArthur, Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry , 136.

<sup>72</sup> Clifford V. Anderson, Worthy of the Calling (Chicago: Harvest Publishing, 1968), 56-57.

Testament by Jesus and His disciples. Jesus called the twelve and sent them into ministry (Mk 3:13-19, Lk 6:12-16, 10:1-16).

Clifford Anderson noted, “From there on we can see a continuous flow of events in several stages: the twelve were called and commissioned by Jesus; the seventy were sent out by the Lord’s command to proclaim the kingdom; when Jesus’ earthly ministry ended, the church gathered to celebrate the resurrected Lord, to secure continuity between Jesus’ ministry and the apostolic ministry, and to receive the gifts of the Spirit (Acts 2); and the twelve commissioned others by ordination to continue the ministry intergenerationally until the end of time.”<sup>73</sup>

The principle of a formal setting apart for the purpose of ministry is well founded. Not in the sense of a line of unbroken succession, but in the principle of formally setting apart men to serve in vocational ministry. Ordination is the formal mark of approval and blessing by a local congregation, for a man to devote his life to vocational ministry.

Ordination in Southern Baptist Convention churches is for the purpose of identifying men who are truly called and equipped by God for the ministry and also for eliminating men who are not called by God or qualified for ministry. Furthermore, it gives affirmation to a man that his call is consistent with biblical qualifications.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry, 28.

<sup>74</sup> Consolation Baptist Association, “Pastor Ordination”; available at <http://www.cobaptist.org/pastor%20ordination.htm>; Internet, accessed 9 December, 2006.

*The Importance of Public Confirmation of the Call*

James M. George highlights the importance of public recognition to the ministry of the pastor:

Acts 16:1-2 gives a good idea of how important public recognition is in confirming the call to leadership and ministry. Timothy was probably a convert of Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6). Paul called him “my true child in the faith” (I Tim 1:2). As Paul started his second journey, he traveled through the regions he had visited on his first journey “strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:41). He arrived in Timothy’s hometown where he found that Timothy was “well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium” (Acts 16:2). The result was, “Paul wanted this man to go with him” (Acts 16:3). Timothy’s public confirmation made him a desirable asset to Paul’s missionary team. Later as Paul wrote Timothy, he reminded him of his public confirmation by referring to “the laying on of hands by the presbytery” (I Tim 4:14). Both Paul and the leadership in the local community had seen how God had blessed and used Timothy in local service, so they recognized and commissioned him to serve God in the ministry on a broad scale.<sup>75</sup>

Public recognition validates and lends credibility to the ministry of the pastor.

In early church history, the church fathers believed there was an orderly process that needed to be followed. Clement of Rome (c.95) was completely convinced that the Lord had set forth such an order. Clement wrote, “By his own supreme will, He himself appointed the place of ministers of their performance, that all might be done according to his good pleasure and so be acceptable to his will.”<sup>76</sup> The church fathers noted a clear connection between God’s calling and His will being carried out.

Therefore, ordination is a congregation’s approval that a man is qualified to serve God and His church. There are both objective and subjective elements in this recognition. The objective element includes whether or not a man has obvious abilities that would

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<sup>75</sup> MacArthur, Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry ,106.

<sup>76</sup> Henry Bettensen, ed., Documents of the Christian Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 62-63.

serve the body. The subjective element is that the church must prayerfully seek God's will through prayer as to whether or not a person is called. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "Churches are not all wise, neither do they all judge in the power of the Holy Ghost, many of them judge after the flesh; yet I had sooner accept the opinion of a company of the Lord's people than my own upon so person a subject as my own gifts and graces."<sup>77</sup> It is the responsibility of God's people to acknowledge and affirm what God is doing in a person's life. The formal ordination process of examining a potential pastor that culminates with a public service and laying on of hands, is a recognition of God's work in that person's life. The public confirmation of the call is vital.

#### *The Importance of Educational Preparation*

God is the One who extends the call to ministry, and gifts and equips His servants for it, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Educational preparation is important in the twenty-first century for effective ministry. Not all men are afforded the opportunity to complete formal education and it is not a requirement for serving God. However, it is extremely valuable for ministry and it is advisable that formal education be completed.

A traditional approach would be to attend Bible College or Seminary to obtain formal education in preparation for ministry or while in ministry. For those who cannot relocate to a traditional Seminary setting, there are many opportunities available through modern delivery methods focused on either online educational training opportunities, or distance learning.

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<sup>77</sup> Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, 30.

It is also important that men continue education beyond their foundational studies in order to grow and develop in the ministry. Surveyed pastors of middle sized churches responded in a way that reflects an emphasis on continuing education. More than 80% have participated in continuing education in preaching. More than 70% have participated in continuing education in pastoral care. Nearly 56% have participated in continuing education in church administration.

While education is not a requirement to serve God in a formal capacity, it is very valuable and the pastor must be a lifelong student of the Word of God. Formal education in a quality and conservative biblical setting, serves to form the framework of a man's ministry that will impact how he does ministry for a lifetime.

#### *The Call To Serve A Specific Local Congregation*

The third confirmation of the call comes as a person receives a call to serve a specific, local congregation. John R. Bisagno concluded, "When God leads us to serve and gifts us to serve, he provides opportunity to serve. Open and closed doors are important in reading the hand of God in our lives."<sup>78</sup> An open door of invitation from a local congregation to serve as their pastor, may serve as further confirmation of the call of God on a person's life. Open and closed doors are only one element of outward confirmation.

This will be coupled with the fact that the minister's abilities match the needs of the prospective congregation. According to Jay Adams, "A minister's call to his work should acknowledge the recognition by the church of Christ of his gifts for ministry and

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<sup>78</sup> John R. Bisagno, Letters to Timothy: A Handbook for Pastors (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), 35.



their peculiar suitability for the tasks required to meet the needs of a particular congregation.”<sup>79</sup> Ultimately, the call does not originate from within an individual, or from other people, the call originates with God and the authenticity of the call is confirmed and validated by a local congregation.

*Confirmation Of The Call Through Results In the Ministry*

The fourth confirmation of the call comes after a pastor begins serving formally in a local congregation. If there is indeed a genuine call present, the pastor’s ministry will bear results. Not all of the results will be obvious and apparent. There will however be noticeable results from his ministry. If God is really in the call, He will supply what is needed to do the job and subsequently bless the efforts.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon in *Lectures to My Students*, identified one noticeable result that should be evident as the conversion of souls. He said, “It seems to me, that as a man to be set apart to the ministry, his commission is without seals until souls are won by his instrumentality to the knowledge of Jesus.”<sup>80</sup> The volume of such results is not at issue, but it does seem reasonable to concur that if there is a genuine call present, the hand of God will be evident.

Results alone cannot be used as the final measure of a man’s calling. There are other valid questions that should be asked. Is the pastor’s preaching and delivery of the Word of God connecting with the people of God? Is he able to effectively manage the

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<sup>79</sup> Jay Adams, *Shepherding God’s Flock* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 59.

<sup>80</sup> Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 31.

Lord's church, and is there evidence of that? Is he able to offer biblical guidance to hurting souls? There are no perfect pastors or perfect churches, and each pastor should be growing and maturing in his capacity in each of these areas.

If a call from God is present, a pastor's preaching will connect with the congregation he is serving. He will be able to effectively manage the church. He will capably offer biblical guidance to hurting souls. Lost souls will be brought to salvation through his ministry. God's presence in his life and ministry will be evident. If a genuine call from God is present, evidence of the call will also be present.

#### *The Importance of Having Confidence in the Call*

It is a terrible thing to miss God's calling on your life. It is also a terrible thing to make the mistake of wrongly thinking that God has issued a calling on one's life to vocational ministry. It will result in continual frustration for the one who has misjudged the call, and for the poor people who are subject to his ministry. Therefore, it is very important that a man be certain of his calling.

There will inevitably be times in the ministry when the only security the man of God will have is in his relationship with God, and the security he finds in his calling. Steve Hayes wrote, "It is imperative that if we are going to finish the race safe and sound, with our ministries intact, we must know that God's call rests on our lives."<sup>81</sup> The race of ministry is long, and the stresses on the pastor and his family are significant. We must know that God's calling is certain on our lives.

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<sup>81</sup> Steve Hayes, Safe and Sound (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 15.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CHARACTER OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PASTOR

This chapter sets forth the importance of the character of the twenty-first century pastor. The character traits for the twenty-first century pastor are the same as those of the first century pastor. The biblical character traits are unchanging and consistent for pastors serving in any size church. The pastor's character affects how he lives out his faith, relates to his family, and leads the flock God has entrusted to him.

#### A. Character in Living Out His Faith

Beyond the call of God on a man's life, the greatest asset he can bring to the ministry is solid, biblical character. The pastor, above all else, must be a person of character. Character is defined as "the aggregate of features and traits that form the individual nature of some person."<sup>82</sup> It is the comprehensive nature of the person. Integrity is defined as "adherence to moral and ethical principles."<sup>83</sup> It is the place "where your

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<sup>82</sup> Laurence Urdang, ed., "Character", The Random House College Dictionary (USA: Random House, Inc., 1988), 225.

<sup>83</sup> Laurence Urdang, ed., "Integrity", The Random House College Dictionary (USA: Random House, Inc., 1988), 693.

beliefs meet behaviors.”<sup>84</sup> A lack of character and integrity cannot be hidden for long. The biblical admonition, “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Num 32:23), certainly applies to the pastor. One can hide weak character and a lack of integrity only for a season, and when the weakness is revealed there will be consequences for his personal faith, his family, his flock, and potentially the overall body of Christ.

Jack Hayford wrote:

By character in a leader, I’m referring to a man . . . committed to becoming a growing person who grows people, a person whose inner life draws from an eternal fountainhead, so their outer life begets the durable (more often than the colorful) and the dependable (more often than the clever). Thus, leadership is defined not by gifting, though leaders are usually blessed with much; not by intellect, though even unwise leaders are not stupid; not by opportunity, since true leaders aren’t produced by getting all the breaks; and not by their charisma or classiness. The latter may enable coming off the blocks quickly, but a fast start makes little difference in a marathon run. And leadership in that category isn’t determined by who wins, but who finishes- who ran by the rules, was still standing at the finish and is ready to run again on another day.<sup>85</sup>

Modern culture is openly sinful and debased in many respects. The effective servant of God will live and lead from a foundation of godly character and integrity, within a fallen culture. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Matt 5:8). Oswald J. Smith stated, “The men who have won souls and influenced other lives for God have been the men who have walked with God far above the masses, and thus from an altitude of spirituality have drawn others up to their level. The only way to win others is to be different ourselves and thus attract by something they lack, and by

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<sup>84</sup> Tommy Yessick, Building Blocks for Longer Life and Ministry (Nashville: Convention Press, 1997), 89.

<sup>85</sup> Jack Hayford, The Leading Edge (Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2001), VIII-IX.

prevailing with God prevail with men.”<sup>86</sup> The pastor is set apart by God for service, and then purposefully sets himself apart from the world, in order to be used by God to impact the world.

The biblical standards for the pastor’s character are outlined in 1 Tim 3:1-7, and Tit 1:5-9. These standards form the framework around which the pastor is to formulate his life and ministry. The pastor must understand that everything God has given to him, has been given that he might serve to the glory of God. There is coming a day when every pastor will give account of his life and ministry before a Holy God.

### *Blameless in Character*

The pastor is, first of all, to be ‘blameless’, *Gk. anepilēptos* (I Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6) in character. This word is also translated ‘above reproach.’ To be blameless does not indicate moral perfection because if this were the case, no man would qualify. It speaks instead to the moral fabric of the pastor and his example before others.

He is not to live a life of duplicity or hypocrisy. Instead, his speech and his behavior are to be in agreement with one another. His private life and public life must be consistent. Who he is when nobody knows what he is doing is just as important, if not more important, than who he is when he is front of the congregation.

It is also important that the pastor not only be blameless in his private life and in his public life in front of the congregation, but also in his dealings with those outside of the church. To be “blameless” is the key character trait, the underlying quality that serves

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<sup>86</sup> Oswald J. Smith, The Man God Uses (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1968), 24.

as the foundation for all of the others. Who the pastor is in his character, directly affects what the pastor does. If he fails at this point, the other character traits will not be attainable in his life.

### *A Steward of God*

The pastor serves ‘as a steward of God’, *Gk. hos theou oikonomon* (Tit 1:7). He is entrusted to manage the truth of God with integrity and effectiveness. This is a high and holy responsibility. The pastor will be held to a higher standard because of his responsibility to faithfully perform his ministry with integrity.

The Apostle Paul reminds us of the significance of ministry. “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one is found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord” (I Cor 4:1-4).

Pastors are servants of Jesus Christ, as stewards of the mysteries of God. The ministry of the pastor is not primarily to a congregation, but to God. According to Gordon Fee, the phrase ‘stewards of the mysteries of God’ communicates the idea that the pastor has no authority of his own. All of his authority is delegated by God, and he is to be a good steward of it.<sup>87</sup> Faithfulness is required by God, and judged by God.

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<sup>87</sup> Gordon D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians: New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 159.

### *Temperate in Lifestyle*

In order to live out his faith, internally he must be ‘temperate’, *Gk. nēphalios* (I Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7). Temperate is defined as being “of sound mind, sane, in one’s senses” and then “curbing one’s desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate.”<sup>88</sup> The pastor must guard against being enticed by the pleasures of the world. He should live a well balanced life spiritually, physically, and in every facet of his life.

A man must have control of his own life. If a man cannot control his life when he is alone, out of the public eye, he does not belong in God’s ministry. If a man wants to sin he can find a way to do it, no matter what others do to help him be accountable. If, at the root of his character he is self-controlled, he can manage all areas of his life satisfactorily.

The key element of this is a life that is surrendered to the Spirit of God. One of the key aspects of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control (Gal 5:23). To gain control, one must give up control to God.

His concerns are not the pleasures of the world that appeal to the flesh, but instead the pleasures of God that are characterized by spiritual sincerity. He is a calm, steady soul who is described as “temperate”, or “sober-minded.”

### *A Lover of What is Good*

Inner self-control will be manifested in an outwardly orderly life. The pastor is to be a “lover of what is good”, *Gk. philagathon* (Tit 1:7). He is said to be of “good

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<sup>88</sup> Ralph Earle, “Temperate”, Word Meanings In The New Testament (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendricksen Books, 1997), 390.

behavior”, *Gk. kosmios* (I Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8).<sup>89</sup> His life will not be one of confusion or chaos, but will be ordered in a way so that he can live with maximum effectiveness for the kingdom of God.

He is to live a respectable life that is outwardly under the control of the Spirit of God, because inwardly He has surrendered to God. The pastor is described as being “just”, *Gk. dikaion* and “holy”, *Gk. hosion* (Tit 1:7). Righteousness and holiness are characteristics that are rooted in a man’s standing in Christ. Because he has been declared righteous in Christ, he acts on the basis of who he is in Christ. God has “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph 1:3). The pastor is to love what is good because he is in Christ, who is pure and righteous in every way.

#### *Not Given to Wine*

With respect to consumption of alcohol, the Scripture says the pastor will not be “given to wine”, *Gk. paroinos* (I Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7). Literally, he will not be found beside wine, “lingering with the cup.”<sup>90</sup> The Bible condemns drunkenness for all believers. “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness” (Rom 13:13). Conversely, believers are to “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (Rom 13:14). Drunkenness is identified as a work of the flesh (Gal 5:21), and it is clear that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor 6:10).

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<sup>89</sup> Ralph Earle, “Good Behavior”, Word Meanings In The New Testament (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendricksen Books, 1997), 390.

<sup>90</sup> Frank E. Gaebelin, Ed., The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians-Philemon (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 364.



Drinking alcohol in moderation by a believer is not explicitly forbidden in the Bible. However, the dangers of the use of alcohol are clearly communicated. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise” (Prov 20:1). The Apostle Paul wrote, “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (I Cor 6:12). The concern is not how close a believer can come to the line of sin without going over it. The believer, and the pastor in particular as an example to the flock, should be concerned with avoiding even the appearance of anything that is evil (cf. Rom. 14:20-21).

The pastor also has the responsibility, as every believer does, to not do anything that would cause another to stumble. “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way” (Rom 14:13). What greater stumbling block could there be than for a man of God to indicate that drinking alcohol is acceptable, and lead someone down the path of temptation and destruction? Considering its destructive nature, it is best for the pastor, and all believers, to avoid partaking of alcoholic beverages under all circumstances, without exception.

### *Not Violent*

There are several characteristics that relate to the pastor’s temperament. He is described as “not violent”, *Gk. mē plēktēn*; “gentle”, *Gk. epieikēs*; and “not quarrelsome”,

*Gk. amachos* (I Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7).<sup>91</sup> The pastor should not have what is commonly referred to as a temper. He should be genial in his dealings with others and averse to fighting and quarreling. This is not to say that the pastor never has feelings of anger or distress when in conflict, but it relates directly to how he is to respond to those feelings in keeping them under control.

Due to the spiritual nature of the pastor's responsibilities, ongoing spiritual conflicts and battles are to be expected. The model for how to respond to conflict and persecution is Jesus. "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (I Pet 2:21-23).

Jesus could have struck down every person who reviled and persecuted Him. Instead, he committed Himself to God the Father and stayed focused on the mission that He came for. The pastor should respond in the same way, reflecting the One whom he serves.

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<sup>91</sup> Ralph Earle, "Not Violent", Word Meanings In The New Testament (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendricksen Books, 1997), 365.

### *Not a Novice*

The pastor should not be a “novice”, *Gk. neophytos* (I Tim 3:6; Tit 1:9). The word means “newly planted.”<sup>92</sup> He should not be a new convert, “lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil” (I Tim 3:6). There are many situations in pastoral ministry that a novice to the faith would not have the spiritual capability to handle, and at the same time avoid the pitfalls.

A novice in the faith does not have the maturity to handle spiritual difficulties, and guide others to strengthen their faith. A novice in the faith could be tempted to handle the Word of God carelessly. He could potentially allow himself to be in positions of great temptation without appropriate safeguards. Furthermore, he could be tempted to use the authority and influence that has been entrusted to him as an undershepherd of Jesus, in an inappropriate way.

He should have a level of spiritual maturity that enables him to do the work of the ministry effectively. Spiritual maturity does not automatically come with the passing of time. Someone could remain in effect a novice, if they have not grown in their faith. A period of testing and service is important before a man be placed into such an eternally significant role.

### B. Character in Relating to His Family

The pastor’s home and family life need not be perfect. This is not the standard God sets forth. However, his family must be guided by biblically sound principles, and

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<sup>92</sup> Ralph Earle, “Not a Novice”, Word Meanings In The New Testament (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendricksen Books, 1997), 391.

stand as a model for people both inside and outside of the church. The pastor's family can be an encouragement to other families seeking to follow after God's plan for their lives.

### *Husband of One Wife*

The pastor is to be the "husband of one wife", *Gk. mias gunaikos* (I Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6). Literally, this is translated "a one-woman man."<sup>93</sup> There are several common interpretations of this passage. One is that it is required for the pastor to be married. This view would seem to contradict 1 Cor 7:8 and 7:25-33, where Paul encouraged celibacy, as a gift from God.

A second view is that of one wife in a lifetime. This view eliminates any man who has married a second wife for any reason even after the death of his first wife. The Scripture makes it clear that a person is free to remarry following the death of a spouse (Rom 7:1-6), therefore this view is untenable.

A third view is that the passage is not referring primarily to the pastor's marital status, but instead to his moral behavior. "Most commentators agree that it means monogamy and that the overseer must be completely faithful to his wife."<sup>94</sup> A one-woman man devotes himself to the woman who is his wife. The idea is that if he is faithful to the wife that God has given him, he can be trusted to lead God's church.

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<sup>93</sup> John MacArthur, Jr., New Testament Commentary: I Timothy (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1995), 104.

<sup>94</sup> Frank E. Gaebelin, Ed., Expositors Bible Commentary: Volume II (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 364.

A fourth view prohibits divorced men from serving as pastors under any circumstances. This prohibition also usually extends to a man who is married to a divorced woman. Care should be taken not to treat divorce and remarriage as unforgivable sins, and go beyond the biblical guidelines. It would seem biblical and logical, that if a man has been divorced prior to his conversion, or has been divorced under the biblical grounds of adultery on the part of a spouse (Matt 5:31-32), or abandonment by an unbeliever (I Cor 7:10-16), and has subsequently remarried, that he should not be restricted from serving in the office of pastor.

Divorce when committed outside of the biblical provisions is sin. Like other sins however, divorce can be forgiven and the believer cleansed. It would be difficult to make the case for a man to serve as a pastor who has been divorced due to unbiblical circumstances for two reasons. First, he would not qualify as being “above reproach”, and his testimony would be compromised. Secondly, he would not qualify as having “managed his own household well.”

The pastor has a responsibility to love his wife and be faithful to her. This is the primary focus of the passage. The pastor must “be a man of unquestioned morality, who is entirely true and faithful to his one and only wife; one who, being married, does not in pagan fashion enter into an immoral relationship with another woman.”<sup>95</sup>

John Piper wrote, when pastors love their wives:

It delights and encourages the church. It models marriage for the other couples. It upholds the honor of the office of elder. It blesses the pastor’s children with a haven of love. It displays the mystery of Christ’s love for the church. It prevents our prayers from being hindered. It eases the burdens of the

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<sup>95</sup> William Hendricksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary: Thessalonians, the Pastorals and Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 122.

ministry. It protects the church from devastating scandal. And it satisfies the soul as we find our joy in God by pursuing it in the joy of the beloved. This is not marginal . . . . Loving our wives is essential for our ministry. It is ministry.<sup>96</sup>

There are many pressures on the pastor's marital relationship. H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman wrote, *Pastors at Risk*. One chapter in the book is entitled, "Warning: Ministry May Be Hazardous to Your Marriage."<sup>97</sup> They identify many of the pressures the pastor faces along with his wife: insufficient time together; use of money; income level; communication difficulties; congregational expectations; difficulty in raising children; differences over ministry career; and differences over spouse's career. Because of the changing climate and nature of ministry, these pressures are increasing. The pastor must have security in his marriage relationship, and love and nurture his wife to lessen the pressures and potential pitfalls.

### *Ruler of His Own House*

The pastor must "rule", *Gk. proistamenon* (I Tim 3:4), his own house well. The true test of what kind of leader a man is relates to his home life. If he is consistent and can model the truth in love and manage his home well, then he may be qualified to lead the church. He must be faithful in the most intimate relationships of his life. The people who live with him and know him best can attest to what kind of man he is. The Scripture says, "For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of

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<sup>96</sup> John Piper, Brothers We are Not Professional (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 245.

<sup>97</sup> H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, Pastors at Risk (Wheaton: Victor, 1993), 70-94.

the church of God?” (I Tim 3:5). For any man serving as a pastor, the overall leadership of his home and direction for his family must solidly be in his hands.

The home is a proving ground where many men have shown themselves unfit for the ministry. The requirement in relation to his children is that he is to have “his children in submission with all reverence” (I Tim 3:4). To be in “submission”, *Gk. hypotage*, “implies a responsive obedience to whomever or whatever one is subject to.”<sup>98</sup> The children of the pastor are to respect and honor the authority of their father. This authority is not to be administered with harshness, or in a dictatorial fashion, but instead in a loving, firm, and consistent manner. It should be built in an environment of love and respect for the father. In doing so, this points the children to their heavenly Father.

According to the Scripture, the pastor also needs to have “faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination” (Tit 1:6). The word translated “faithful”, *Gk. pista*, means to believe, to have faith. According to John MacArthur, Jr., the reference here is likely to believing children.<sup>99</sup> “Dissipation”, *Gk. asotia* indicates a rebellious, wild lifestyle. Therefore, one could draw the conclusion that this is not only referring to children within the household of the pastor, but also the grown children of the pastor.

MacArthur argues that “The pastor’s children are to live obediently under their father’s control when they are small, following their father’s faith until it emerges as their own faith. At that point they must live a faithful Christian life, not a wild, rebellious, out-

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<sup>98</sup> Lawrence Richards, “Submission”, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 584.

<sup>99</sup> MacArthur, Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry, 94.

of-control, wasteful life. If they do not, besides the damage they do themselves, they disqualify their father from pastoral ministry.”<sup>100</sup>

The pastor’s family is critically important to his overall ministry. Only the pastor’s relationship with God takes priority over His family. His devotion to His family reflects the level of His devotion to God.

### C. Character in Leading His Flock

There are several character traits in Scripture for the pastor, which fit best within the context of relating to and leading the flock, the body of Christ. These character traits impact how the pastor interacts with and leads the flock. It is crucial that the pastor guard himself against moral failure and character destruction. His character directly impacts the flock and its spiritual stability and growth.

#### *Hospitable*

The pastor must be “hospitable”, *Gk. philoxenos* (I Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8). Literally, this means, “loving strangers . . . or generous to guests.”<sup>101</sup> Generally, the idea is that the pastor is to make himself and his abilities available to people he does not know, and minister to them in the name of Jesus.

It is an attitude of serving people in the name of Jesus. Jesus said in Lk 14:12-14, “When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>101</sup> Ralph Earle, “Hospitable”, Word Meanings In The New Testament (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendricksen Books, 1997), 390.



you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” In being hospitable, the pastor models the principle of the Great Commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39). This demonstrates the love of Jesus, and provides opportunity for the message of Jesus to go forth, and for God to be glorified. He is to be unselfish with his life.

#### *Not Greedy for Money*

The pastor is not to be “greedy for money”, *Gk. aischrokerdēs*, (I Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7). He should be a good example and manage his money well, and pay all of his bills on time in order to maintain his witness both inside and outside the church. Many pastors through the years have given the church a bad name because of their irresponsibility with money.

The pastor must be certain that in his ministry, his goal is not to rise in the ranks of the profession in order to better himself financially. There is nothing wrong with a pastor being blessed financially. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain’, and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages’” (I Tim 5:17).

The pastor’s primary goal however, is to be in the will of God and be faithful wherever God places him. Earthly treasures should not be his desire. The parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:20) is a good example of what happens to the one who makes money his

idol. The pastor is to vigorously avoid the attitude of Judas (Jn 12:6) who tried to enrich himself dishonestly.

He should always leave the handling of the church's money to others who can be trusted, and ensure that he is always above reproach in his dealings with money, so as never to draw questions or accusations about any perceived preoccupation with money or mishandling of it. The Bible states: "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim 6:10).

Furthermore, in his attitude toward money, if the pastor is to lead his flock to be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to them in terms of the giving of their time, talents, and treasures, the pastor has to set the example. While the details of his financial stewardship are usually confidential and known only by a few people, they are not confidential to God. God knows exactly how a man is using what has been entrusted to him. If he expects his flock to be faithful and receive the blessings of God, he too must be faithful.

#### *Able to Teach*

The pastor is to be "able to teach", *Gk. didacticos* (I Tim3:2). He is to be a skillful teacher of the Word of God. Every man will not have the same capabilities in this area, but the requirement is that every man be capable. He has to be able to communicate the Word of God in a way that people can clearly understand it, so God can use it in their lives to bring about change. Teaching the Word of God represents the highest degree of spiritual commitment.

The man of God is to have a God-given combination of conviction, consecration, and clear communication abilities. There should be no major impediments on the part of the pastor either by way of physical hindrances, or presentation abilities. The pastor as teacher does not teach his own thoughts or desires. He teaches the Word of God, so that others might know God and understand what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

### *Guardian of Truth*

The pastor is to “hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict” (Tit 1:9). The pastor is the guardian against error in the church. He must cling to the truth that he has been taught, and exhort others to do the same.

The faithful teaching of right doctrine within the church will grow the church in its spiritual health, and protect it from false teachings and from false prophets. Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves” (Matt 7:15). There are many false teachers today who are confusing people and destroying spiritual lives with heresies. The pastor of God’s church is to vigorously proclaim and defend biblical truth.

It is the responsibility of every Christian to, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15). It is also the responsibility of every Christian to, “Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (I Pet 3:15). It is a greater responsibility for the pastor who has been entrusted to proclaim and guard the truth.

In his private study habits, the pastor should diligently study the Word of God and prepare himself with integrity, to proclaim the truth to God's people. It is a holy thing to be given the privilege to stand before a congregation and proclaim the truth of Scripture. To do so in an unprepared or sloppy manner would be an offense to God.

*A Good Testimony With Outsiders*

The pastor is to have "a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Tim 1:7). People outside of the church who observe the pastor, should observe a man of godly character. Much irreparable damage has been done to the church, and to the cause of Christ, by men who have fallen morally or otherwise hurt people outside of the church. William Hendricksen and Simon J. Kistemaker concluded, "It is immediately clear that according to Paul's inspired teaching the prospective overseer must have a favorable testimony from two groups: a) insiders, that is, church members, and b) outsiders, that is, those who are outside the church."<sup>102</sup>

The devil desires to ensnare and destroy all of God's children, but especially God's chosen servants. Pastors have the ability to impact multiple lives through proclaiming the message of the Gospel. When the devil wins a battle and brings down even one pastor, the damage is many times greater than it is with an individual believer who falls, because of the pastor's sphere of influence.

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<sup>102</sup> Hendricksen and Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary: Thessalonians, the Pastorals and Hebrews, 119.

*The Root of Moral Failures in Service to God*

Failure in service to God is rooted in man's sinful and selfish nature. Pride in the Bible is linked strongly with moral failure. Pride was the root of the first rebellion that we know of, because it was through pride that Lucifer fell, and angels fell with him (Isa 14:12-21). At the Fall of Man, the serpent tempted Eve with the thought that she could "be like God" (Gen 3:5). Pride is so dangerous that the Bible indicates God hates it (Prov 16:17).

Pride can cause serious difficulties for the pastor who ignores and denies it. "A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor" (Prov 29:23). Pride leads to accompanying destructive and deadly sins such as selfishness, self-deception, wrong motives for service, deceit, misplaced ambition, abuse of power, sexual misconduct, misuse of finances, questionable ethical behaviors, and a host of other sins.

*Publicized Moral Failures Among Pastors*

Regrettably, there is no shortage of pastors whose failings are well known publicly. Pastors have frequently fallen because of sexual sins. Recently, Ted Haggard, who served as the president of the National Association of Evangelicals, representing more than 45,000 churches with 30 million members, and also pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, was fired for sexually immoral conduct with another man as well as drug use.<sup>103</sup> Not long after the details of Haggard's indiscretions came to light, Paul Barnes, who served as founding pastor of Grace Chapel in Douglas County,

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<sup>103</sup> Delia Gallagher, "Church Forces Out Haggard for Sexually Immoral Conduct", Cable News Network, 3 November 2006; available at <http://www.cnn.com/2006/US/11/03/haggard>; Internet; accessed 15 December, 2006.

Colorado, a 2,100 member church, admitted to a homosexual relationship and subsequently resigned.<sup>104</sup>

Larry Reynolds, pastor of Southmont Baptist Church in Denton, Texas and Dale Amyx, pastor of Bolivar Baptist Church near Sanger, both settled lawsuits with women whom they allegedly sexually molested in separate incidents while the women were teenagers. Both men subsequently lost their churches due to these sexual sins that happened nearly two decades ago.<sup>105</sup> Well known Evangelist Rick Ousley, admitted to moral and spiritual indiscretion related to an extramarital affair with a woman. He subsequently was suspended from his ministry. Ousley was the founding pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Alabama, and chaplain for the Samford University football team.<sup>106</sup>

A growing problem among pastors in the category of sexual sins is the use of online pornography. An article by the Safe Families Organization stated, “51% of pastors say cyber porn is a possible temptation. 37% say it is a current struggle and over half of evangelical pastors admits viewing pornography last year.”<sup>107</sup> Pastor Kevin Ogle of

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<sup>104</sup> Eric Gorski, “Rev. Barnes, Ex-Church Chart Future”, Denver Post, 12 December 2006; available at [http://www.denverpost.com/rapids/ci\\_4822576](http://www.denverpost.com/rapids/ci_4822576); Internet; accessed 20 February 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Donna Fielder, “Suits Allege Clergy Misconduct”, Dallas News, 17 December 2006; available at <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/new/localnews/stories/122106dnMetreynolds.2bd318c9.html>; Internet; accessed 7 January 2007.

<sup>106</sup> Greg Garrison, “Evangelist Ousley’s Ministry Suspended”, The Birmingham News, 23 March 2007; available at <http://www.al.com/printer/printer.ssf/base/news/1174639279160590.xml&coll=2>; Internet; accessed 5 April, 2007

<sup>107</sup> Safe Families, “Statistics on Pornography, Sexual Addiction and Online Perpetrators”; available at <http://www.safefamilies.org/sfStats.php>; Internet; accessed 24 February 2007.

Northgate Colonial Baptist Church in Camden, Georgia was arrested for sending pornographic message and pictures over the internet to a person he thought was a teenage girl, but in fact was a police officer operating a sting operation.<sup>108</sup> Exposure to use of internet pornography can have drastic and serious consequences.

Pastors have fallen because of illegal use of drugs and general disregard for the law. Derrick Aldrige, who served as pastor of Foss Avenue Baptist Church in Flint, Michigan was fired after an arrest and conviction for cocaine possession, as well as improper possession of a firearm in a vehicle.<sup>109</sup> Jerry Wayne “Dusty” Whitaker, of Mount Airy, North Carolina, who served as pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Mount Airy, was charged with possession of a firearm by a felon. Information came to light that he had a criminal history that dated back several years. When he used a gun for a prop in a sermon, he was reported and legal action was taken against him.<sup>110</sup> He was promptly fired.

Pastors have fallen due to misrepresenting and lying about their credentials. Stephen Flockhart, who served as pastor of First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach, Florida lied about his academic credentials. An investigation revealed that he had

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<sup>108</sup> Marjorie Riddle, “Pastor’s Online Porn Arrest a Total Shock”, Charlotte Observer, 22 February, 2007; available at <http://www.charlotte.com/mld/charlotte/16752120.htm?template=contentModules>; Internet; accessed 24 February 2007.

<sup>109</sup> Dawn Jones, “Derrick Aldridge No Longer Pastor at Foss Avenue Baptist”, ABC12, 14 September 2006; available at <http://www.abclocal.go.com/wrjt/story?section=local&id=4562716>; Internet; accessed 15 December 2006.

<sup>110</sup> Associated Press, “Gun-Waving Sermon Gets Pastor Arrested”, 30 November 2006; available at <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20061130/23757.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 December 2006.

purposefully misrepresented his academic credentials to further his pastoral career.<sup>111</sup> To make matters worse, Flockhart's problems ran much deeper. He left a Georgia church more than eight years before the scandal related to his academic credentials, having wrongly used church credit cards for personal use and having incurred significant unauthorized debts.

Pastors have fallen because of plagiarism, stealing the intellectual material of others. A high profile example of this is E. Glenn Wagner, who served as pastor of Calvary Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. He resigned after admitting that he plagiarized sermons over a two year period.<sup>112</sup>

One would like to think these are isolated incidents and not cause for great concern. Sadly, they are all too common occurrences, among men who profess to be called by God to serve in the office of pastor. They are supposedly keepers of the flock, yet have themselves fallen prey to the devil. The Apostle Peter warned God's people, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet 5:8).

### *Keys to Safeguarding Character*

What is a servant of God to do in order to prevent himself from being a statistic in the spiritual graveyard of clergy who have fallen morally? First, the servant of God must

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<sup>111</sup> Hannah Elliott, "West Palm Megachurch Pastor Resigns Amid Debt, Résumé Exposé", Associated Baptist Press, 28 August 2006; available at <http://www.abpnews.com/1328.article.print>; Internet; accessed 15 December 2006.

<sup>112</sup> Associated Press, "Pastor Admits to Stealing Sermons", 6 September 2004; available at [http://www.news14charlotte.com/content/local\\_news/?ArID=73648&SecID=2](http://www.news14charlotte.com/content/local_news/?ArID=73648&SecID=2); Internet; accessed 15 December 2006.



understand who God expects him to be in his character. He must understand the biblical standards for his life. Second, the servant of God must never, under any circumstance, believe that he is incapable of falling. The Bible states, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (I Cor 10:12). Third, the servant of God must understand that apart from the righteousness of Christ, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, he cannot live up to the biblical standards. It is God’s desire that His servants remain faithful, and it is God’s power that makes it possible. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (I Cor 10:13).

#### *The Importance of Private Prayer and Devotion*

In the early church the apostles were weighed down by the task of ministry, and subsequently led God’s people to choose men to serve as deacons to take on some of the ministry needs. They instructed the church, “Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:3-4). The first responsibility of the man of God is to seek to know God. According to H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, “To ripen his soul, a pastor must build a basic presupposition into his practice of ministry. To cultivate a sturdy soul, he

must view ministry as a colossal opportunity for personal spiritual growth”<sup>113</sup> Private spiritual fitness is essential to faithful public ministry.

The key component for the pastor in developing his character and level of integrity, is his relationship with God through private prayer and devotion in the Word of God. A study conducted in 2005 by Ellison Research (Phoenix, Arizona) revealed the following:

Among a representative sample of 868 Protestant church ministers nationwide, asked pastors about their personal prayer lives, including how much time they spend praying, and what they are praying about. The average Protestant minister prays for thirty-nine minutes a day, although twenty-one percent typically spend fifteen minutes per day or less in prayer . . . The typical pastor spends thirty-two percent of his time making requests, twenty percent in quiet time or listening to God, eighteen percent giving thanks, seventeen percent in praise, and fourteen percent in confession.<sup>114</sup>

The depth of the pastor’s prayer life will determine the breadth of his ministry and impact for God. If his walk with God is shallow, his ministry will be shallow as well. If his walk with God is strong and developed, his ministry will be strong and developed as well. The Puritan John Bunyan once said, “You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.”<sup>115</sup>

Research by Donald A. McGavran, indicates that the church growth movement has had a considerable impact on modern methodologies that are utilized in the church

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<sup>113</sup> H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, The Heart of a Great Pastor: How to Grow Strong and Thrive Wherever God Has Planted You (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997), 178.

<sup>114</sup> Ellison Research, “How satisfied are ministers with their personal prayer life?”; available at [http:// ellisonresearch.com/ERPS%20II/release\\_16\\_prayer.htm](http://ellisonresearch.com/ERPS%20II/release_16_prayer.htm); Internet; accessed 10 Feb 2006.

<sup>115</sup> I.D.E. Thomas, The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 210.

and has without a doubt impacted the church numerically.<sup>116</sup> With that influence however, there has also come an unhealthy focus on securing results that are numerically oriented, rather than a healthy focus that emphasizes the process of spiritual health and growth. Just as the church has been affected by this way of thinking, so have many individual pastors.

There is significant pressure to produce results, and the pastor's affections are sometimes swayed in unhealthy directions. It is a temptation for pastors to focus on what works pragmatically, and not focus on what their primary duties are before the Lord. If spiritual health is emphasized through personal time with God, spiritual growth and practical performance as a pastor will be produced as a by-product. The pastor's ministry will yield results naturally, because he is in the best possible position to be used by the Spirit of God.

Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, "noted that pastors seem to have provided a pretty clear roadmap for a fulfilling and satisfying prayer life. The study clearly showed that what drives a satisfying prayer life for a minister is spending less time asking God for things and more time listening to what God has to say."<sup>117</sup> It is God's plan to develop the character of a man through time spent with Him.

E.M. Bounds asserted, "God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than anything else. Men are God's methods . . . . What the Church needs today is not more

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<sup>116</sup> Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 5.

<sup>117</sup> Ellison Research, "How satisfied are ministers with their personal prayer life?"; available at [http://www.ellisonresearch.com/ERPS%20II/release\\_16\\_prayer.htm](http://www.ellisonresearch.com/ERPS%20II/release_16_prayer.htm); Internet; accessed 10 Feb 2006.

machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use -- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men-- men of prayer.”<sup>118</sup> God works through men who are dependent on and walk in close proximity to Him.

Jesus asked Peter:

Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord; You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord; You know that I love You. He said to him, Tend My sheep. He said to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep. (Jn 21:15-17).

According to Henri J.M. Nouwen, this is the most basic question that every man of God must answer. “The question is not: How many people take you seriously? How much are you going to accomplish? Can you show some results? But: Are you in love with Jesus? Perhaps another way of putting the question would be: Do you know the incarnate God?”<sup>119</sup>

Having been assured of Peter’s love and devotion to Him, Jesus gave Peter his ministry assignment. Many men seem to look for their ministry assignment, and are busy with the work of the ministry, before they ever settle the question that burns in their souls from God, “Do you love Me”? Not, are you in love with the ministry? Or, are

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<sup>118</sup> E.M. Bounds, Preacher and Prayer (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1963), 7-8.

<sup>119</sup> Henri J.M. Nouwen, In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), 37.

you in love with what the ministry brings to your life? Not even, are you in love with the people, but are you in love with God?

The busy pastor must guard himself so that he does not spend all of his time nourishing the souls of others, in neglect of his own soul. No man is fit to assist others until he has been in close contact with God. There are challenges to maintaining a consistent devotional life. The duties of the church and also personal duties press in on the pastor. He must purposefully make time for God so that he doesn't drain spiritual vitality and power from his own life. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Take heed to yourself" (I Tim 4:16).

There are several keys to the pastor having an edifying daily time of prayer with God. First, the daily time alone with God must be a definite priority. If the time is not scheduled and closely guarded, other responsibilities will crowd it out. It is best that the pastor's time with God take place at the start of the day. Once the busyness of the day begins for the average pastor, there are multiple duties that can crowd out a time alone with God.

Second, there must be a definite place to meet with God. For some, that place is at home. Some pastors maintain a place for prayer and study in their homes. For other pastors, it is best for their time alone with God to be in the study provided at the church. This is a particularly difficult place for many pastors to maintain focus however, since the study at the church is also a place of work for administrative duties in the church and interruptions are likely. Unless one can discipline office staff to carefully guard this time, it is unwise for the pastor to spend his time alone with God in the study at the church.

Third, there must be a definite plan. There are many things that can distract the mind and the body and keep the focus from God. If a pastor is well studied in the subject of prayer, and has a definite plan by which he prays, and allows the Spirit of God to speak to him, it will prove to be immensely valuable. Rather than aimlessly wandering in one's prayers, the prayer time can be focused on seeking the person and power of God.

Study in God's Word, and preparation for the ministry of the Word, go hand in hand with prayer. Homer A. Kent remarked, "Feasting on the manna from Heaven will cause the man of God to grow strong, and continuance in this practice will inevitably result in his becoming like the Book in his daily ministrations."<sup>120</sup> Conventional wisdom among preachers has typically been that a pastor's personal devotional time with God, should have nothing to do with the message that is to be delivered in future preaching engagements.

While the logic of this thinking is essentially good, that a man should not always view the Word of God related to how he is going to deliver it, it is inherently flawed. It is impossible for a pastor to present the Word of God to the people of God with sincerity and passion unless it has taken hold of his life in a very real way. Therefore, the study of God's Word for devotional purposes, should not be limited to what will be delivered in future worship services, but there is nothing wrong with it being included for personal devotion.

A reasonable plan for any minister would be to read through God's Word in its entirety at least once a year. It is helpful to read concurrently through the Old Testament,

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<sup>120</sup> Homer A. Kent, Sr., The Pastor and His Work (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1982), 14.

the Psalms and Proverbs, and the New Testament. By following a disciplined reading plan, the entirety of God's Word is covered, and the man of God can continue to grow in His understanding of it. One of the well known preachers of the past, Dr. Harry Ironside is said to have "followed this plan with the result that his pulpit expressions and his writings were permeated with the Word of God."<sup>121</sup>

The goal is not spiritual discipline as an end to itself. The goal is to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom 8:29). In His time on this earth, Jesus lived in daily, constant communion with God the Father. John W. Frye noted, "As His part in that relationship, Jesus practiced the spiritual disciplines. As a man, he waited before and listened to the Father. The Father, in turn, did his part, and the Spirit empowered the entire process."<sup>122</sup> When the pastor looks to Jesus, he can learn the lesson of what it means to authentically relate to God. Only as we discover God and His plan for us, can we impart His wisdom to others. Frye added, "Pastoral ministry is first received before it is achieved."<sup>123</sup>

Richard Baxter wrote:

When your minds are in a holy, heavenly frame, your people are likely to partake of the fruits of it. Your prayers and praises and doctrine will be sweet and heavenly to them. They will likely feel when you have been much with God. That which is most on your hearts is likely to be most in their ears . . . . When I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold; and when it is confused, my preaching is confused; and so I can often observe also in the best of my hearers that when I have grown cold in preaching, they have grown cold too; and the next prayers I have heard from them have been too much like my preaching . . . . O Brethren,

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>122</sup> John W. Frye, Jesus the Pastor (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), 108.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 108.

watch therefore over your own hearts; keep out lusts and passions of worldly inclinations. Keep up the life of faith, of love, of zeal. Be much at home and much with God . . . . Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine . . . lest you unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labor.<sup>124</sup>

Private devotional time with God shows up in a public demonstration of depth and power in the ministry. The pastor, who has been much with God, will be made much of by God. His ministry will be permeated with the presence and power of God.

### *The Importance of Maintaining Priorities*

The pastor must be proactive about safeguarding his character in order to maintain faithfulness. He should prioritize his life for maximum effectiveness. With the heavy demands of ministry, it is easy to fall into a pattern of misplaced priorities which can lead to trouble. The first priority in the pastor's life must be his walk with God. Before anything else, this must come first. If his walk with God is strong, his ministry will be strong. If his walk with God is weak, his ministry will be weak.

The second priority must be his life with his family. The family is a proving ground for the ministry and the health of a pastor's family has a significant impact on his ministry. The pastor's relationship with his wife and children should be diligently cultivated and guarded. The quality of these relationships is directly impacted by the quantity of time he spends on each. The pastor must not allow the church to become his mistress to the neglect of his wife and family. If the pastor fails in this area, his ministry will follow.

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<sup>124</sup> Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor (London: Banner of Truth, 1983 ed.), 61-63, 65.



The third priority must be his ministry to the church. Many churches seem not to realize the importance of this order of priorities, and are perfectly willing to take as much as the pastor is willing to give. Churches that do so, fail to realize that if a man does not walk with God and nurture his family, he either will not be long for the ministry, or at a minimum his ministry will suffer greatly. The challenge is in ordering these priorities and maintaining a sense of balance. Each of these priorities affects the others.

*The Importance of Walking in Humility and Contentment*

The pastor needs to cultivate a spirit of humility and contentment. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (Jam 4:10). Humility maintains a proper perspective of oneself in light of who God is. The humble pastor should see himself not as a professional, but as a servant of God, yielded to the purposes of God for his life. He should be careful not to clamor for the glory and attention that belongs to God alone.

A spirit of humility leads to an attitude of contentment. The Apostle Paul wrote, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content; I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:11-13). The focus is not on climbing up the professional ranks, it is on humbling oneself at the foot of the cross, content with the calling of God.

### *The Importance of Knowing Your Weaknesses*

The pastor must know himself. He needs to know the weak spots in his character, and the objects and situations that bring the most temptation. He must be aware of the constant reality of spiritual warfare and the nature of the battle. If he searches his own heart and asks the Holy Spirit to do so, he can guard against common temptations that would destroy his ministry if they were yielded to.

### *The Importance of Standing Firm*

The pastor should determine ahead of time not to succumb to the temptations that are inevitable. He should realize the high calling God has placed on his life, and consider the inestimable damage that would be done to his relationship with God, his relationship with his family, to the local body of Christ that he serves, and to a watching community were he to fall into sin. God has already provided the victory and deliverance. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (I Cor 10:13).

### *The Importance of Maintaining Accountability*

Lastly, the pastor should maintain a high level of accountability. The Bible encourages accountability among believers. “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor . . . a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccles 4:9, 12). “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2). Accountability is

powerful because it involves at least two persons walking together, who have the common bond of the Holy Spirit.

The pastor in making his daily walk with God a priority can maintain accountability with God. He should maintain open communication with his wife, who should be the human being who knows him the best. The Holy Spirit often uses the pastor's wife as a voice of reason, and also a voice of caution in the pastor's life. His wife should be aware of where he is, and what he is doing. Not so that she can maintain control over him, but so that he might avoid the snares of the devil by placing himself in potentially compromising situations. He should also maintain accountability with brothers in the ministry who are serving in similar capacities. To be accountable, is to be humble and honest with those around you for your own good.

Safeguarding one's character is paramount in the ministry. Without biblical character, the pastor has no ministry. He must maintain his priorities, walk in humility and contentment, know his own weaknesses, determine ahead of time to stand firm, and walk in accountability. These steps will go a long way toward preventing difficulties and failures in the ministry.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COMPETENCY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

#### PASTOR IN PREACHING

This chapter considers the entire process of preaching including; the foundations for preaching; the elements of preaching; and sermon delivery. Preaching survey conclusions and directives are included, along with the non-negotiable core components of preaching. Proclaiming the Word of God faithfully is central to the ministry of the pastor.

##### A. Foundations for Preaching

Faithful preaching is rooted deeply in the Word of God. Preaching is not man's opinion. It is proclamation of the objective truth of the Word of God. The preacher must work from a proper foundation, or the entire structure of his preaching will be faulty.

##### *Old Testament Focus of Preaching*

In considering preaching, the question must be asked, 'What is preaching biblically?' The biblical concept of preaching focuses on one word in the Old Testament. "The basic Hebrew word for 'prophet' in the Old Testament is *nabi* which means 'spokesman' or 'speaker'. Essentially, a prophet is a person authorized to speak for

another (Exod 7:1-2; Num 12:1-8).”<sup>125</sup> He is the representative of the one whom he is speaking for.

The Old Testament prophets represented God and spoke forth His Word. There are several key supporting terms used to describe Old Testament prophets. *Hb. Hozeh* and *roeh* both mean ‘seer’ (I Chron 29:29; Isa 30:10). Prophets are also referred to as messengers, *Hb. malak*, and men of God.<sup>126</sup> According to Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, “Hebrew prophecy gave preaching its roots in the divine with regard to both message and motivation.”<sup>127</sup> It is not a message of human origin, but divine origin, ordained by God. The message carries with it the authority of the One it came from and the messenger is simply the mode through which the message is delivered.

#### *New Testament Focus of Preaching*

The biblical concept of preaching focuses on several words in the New Testament. The term *Gk. kēruσσō*, is used predominantly in specific reference to preaching and is found sixty times. It means to be a herald, or to proclaim (Matt 3:1; Mk

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<sup>125</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, “Prophet”, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words (Grand Rapids: MI: Zondervan, 1991), 505.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 505.

<sup>127</sup> Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 18.

1:45).<sup>128</sup> *Gk. Euangelizō*, is found fifty times, and is used of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 13:32; Rom 10:15; Heb 4:2).

*Gk. Didaskō*, to teach, is found ninety seven times. It is used in the context of giving instruction (Matt 4:23; 9:35; Rom 12:7; I Cor 4:17).<sup>129</sup> C.H. Dodd argued in favor of a clear difference between preaching and teaching saying that “preaching, *Gk. kērussō*, had to do with the *kērygma* (that is, the basic gospel as found in I Cor 15:3-4), while the concept of teaching, *Gk. didaskō*, had to do with the didache (that is, the body of doctrine and ethics meant for believers).

Therefore, preaching includes proclaiming the gospel, as well as teaching those who have already come to faith in Christ. It serves to point people to the gospel, as well as disciple those who have received the gospel. New Testament preaching must always be cross centered preaching. It must communicate the work of Jesus, as well as the call to follow Him.

### *Preaching Defined*

Phillips Brooks gave a classic definition of preaching: “It is the communication of truth by man to men.”<sup>130</sup> Warren Wiersbe defined preaching as “the communicating of

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<sup>128</sup> W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 481.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 619.

<sup>130</sup> Phillips Brooks, The Joy of Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1989), 3.

God's truth by God's servant to meet the needs of people."<sup>131</sup> There are numerous commandments in the Scripture to preach: (Matt 28:19-20; I Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 2:2; 2 Tim 4:2; Tit 2:1). The command essentially means to communicate the truth of God. Austin Tucker stated: "Biblical preaching is not preaching about the Bible, nor is it merely preaching from the Bible. It is the faithful interpretation and effective application of Scripture in proclamation."<sup>132</sup>

The Apostle Paul declared to Timothy, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim 4:1-2). In the words of C. Richard Wells and A. Boyd Luter, "Paul seems to be saying, Tim, you have to take responsibility for what the Lord has called you to do and preach. But remember, you are not up there representing yourself, and you are not proclaiming your own message, expecting it to make all the difference in people's lives. You are heralding the God-breathed message, which packs divine authority and has the power to transform your hearers, even as it has you."<sup>133</sup> It is a sacred responsibility to represent God to people and communicate His message.

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<sup>131</sup> Warren and David Wiersbe, The Elements of Preaching (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986), 17.

<sup>132</sup> Austin B. Tucker, A Primer for Pastors (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004), 53.

<sup>133</sup> C. Richard Wells and A. Boyd Luter, Inspired Preaching: A Survey of Preaching Found in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman, 2002), 9.

## B. The Elements of Preaching

Preaching involves a preacher, a message, listeners, and the Holy Spirit. These four elements work in concert with one another. The preacher receives a message from God through His Word. He delivers that message to listeners. The Holy Spirit then applies the message to the hearts of the listeners, and the listeners in turn respond.

### *The Preacher*

The preacher as an element of preaching must be prepared to proclaim God's message at all times. He is to remain ready, faithful, and steadfast in his God given responsibility of proclamation. G. Campbell Morgan stated, "The supreme work of the Christian minister is the work of preaching. This is a day in which one of our great perils is that of doing a thousand little things to the neglect of the one thing, which is preaching."<sup>134</sup>

One component of the contemporary church is that preachers are encouraged to accommodate worship services, including the preaching, to the desires of the culture to meet their needs. Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, suggests, "Unchurched people today are the ultimate consumers. We may not like it, but for every sermon we preach, they are asking, am I interested in that subject or not? If they aren't, it doesn't matter how effective our delivery is; their minds will check out."<sup>135</sup> Robert

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<sup>134</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, Preaching (Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), 11.

<sup>135</sup> Bill Hybels, Mastering Contemporary Preaching (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1989), 27.



Walsh takes this line of thinking a step further in his criticism of the church. He stated, “The church still swims in the fish bowl of modernity. Traditional churches advocate a carefully constructed and rational system of belief . . . . Worship is well ordered and devoid of spontaneity . . . . The focus of the church is on force-feeding propositional truths about God to an American public that is crying out for an experience with God.”<sup>136</sup>

God’s Word warns of the danger of this kind of philosophy. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires” (2 Tim 4:3). The Apostle Paul called first and foremost, for consideration of a Holy God and His revealed Word. Everything else is secondary to this. Paul wrote, “Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification” (2 Cor 12:19). If God is pleased with the message, then He will use it and apply it appropriately to the hearers, with whom God ultimately desires the message to connect with for the purpose of transformation.

The Scottish preacher James Stewart stated that the aims of all genuine preaching, “are to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.”<sup>137</sup> It is the Lord God whom the preacher must primarily be concerned with. God either approves or disapproves of the preacher and the message. He hears every word spoken, and knows every thought and motive of the

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<sup>136</sup> Robert Walsh, An 8 Track Church in a CD World: The Modern Church in a Postmodern World (Macon, GA: Smith and Helwys, 1997), 18.

<sup>137</sup> James Stewart, Heralds of God (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 73.

preacher. God, not a congregation, is the ultimate audience of the message. He will hold the preacher accountable for words spoken, and for the sacred trust given to him.

### *The Message*

The herald of God delivers important news, a message from God. The preacher is a messenger, as though God Himself is speaking directly to the people to “convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim 4:2). It is critically important that the message be delivered accurately. Preaching always involves the Word of God explained and applied to people. It is important that the whole counsel of God be presented. Alistair Begg stated: “Young men beginning pastoral ministry are besieged by members of their congregations wanting them to begin their sermons with man and his need instead of God and His glory. Paranoid preoccupation with a new millennium is due more to a preoccupation with ourselves and our needs than to a humble dependence upon the unerring truth of the Bible. The antidote to such a virulent disease is biblical preaching that allows the Scriptures to establish the agenda.”<sup>138</sup>

Bill Whittaker, former President of Clear Creek Bible College, outlines six major objectives for preaching:

Evangelistic-- sermons which seek to bring the unsaved to Jesus Christ and into the fellowship of the church; Devotional-- sermons which seek to move people to love, adore, and worship God; Doctrinal--sermons which explain specific Bible doctrine; Ethical--sermons which apply Bible teachings on morality

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<sup>138</sup> Alistair Begg, Preaching for God’s Glory (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 21.

and daily life; Consecrative-- sermons directed to believers asking for a deeper commitment to Christ and His word; Pastoral--sermons that minister to people in crises and suffering, by giving hope, comfort, and encouragement.<sup>139</sup>

God's Word is the source for all faithful preaching. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). The message in preaching is not primarily about the opinions and experiences of the preacher. It is to be first and foremost a message from God, founded on His Word.

### *The Listeners*

The listeners of the message include both non-believers and believers, and they come from a variety of perspectives. Because New Testament preaching is always cross centered preaching, there is the consistent element of the preaching of the Gospel in every message. Even if a message is primarily for believers, there will be the clear element of the good news that points to Christ for non-believers.

As Jesus made clear in the Parable of the Soils in Matthew 13, the preacher will encounter listeners to the message who represent various types of soil. Sometimes the message will fall by the wayside and not be received. At times it will be received readily but it will not take root. Other times it will fall among the thorns and be choked out by the cares of this life. Then at other times it will fall on good ground and be readily

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<sup>139</sup> Bill D. Whittaker, Preparing to Preach (Franklin, Tennessee: Providence House Publishing, 1999), 73-74.

received and take root. Some who are believers will hunger for the Word, and be engaged with the message in a desire to grow in their faith and obedience to God.

The preacher must concern himself with the listeners, to the degree he understands the variety of those to whom he is speaking, and the challenge before him. Calvin Miller stated, “The preacher stands between two worlds and speaks. If he takes either of these worlds lightly, then, of course, he is not preaching in the most effective manner. If he takes the world at hand lightly, then his sermons will be unusable and of little interest to the hassled, contemporary parishioner. If he takes too lightly the world of the Spirit, then he will not have furnished his listeners with the real firepower required in handling life in the now.”<sup>140</sup> The preacher has the responsibility to communicate the Word of God, in an effective manner, to bring a clear message to his hearers.

### *The Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit plays a key role in preaching. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, “He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn 16:8). The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God as a tool. The Word of God is “living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

Preaching is a divine appointment. God uses the words that are spoken to connect with the souls of men in order to convict of sin, draw them to Himself, and bring about eternal change in their lives. In the process, God is glorified.

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<sup>140</sup> Calvin Miller, Spirit, Word and Story (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 26.

The Holy Spirit brings all of the elements of preaching together to accomplish His purposes. Jack Taylor wrote: “Since the Word of God is alive by the same Holy Spirit who first breathed it, only a Holy Spirit anointed minister can retain its life. If the living Word is to be productive, the one who ministers it must be both illumined by and filled with spiritual life.”<sup>141</sup> The preacher is dependent on the Holy Spirit. He has no power on his own to implant the Word of God in the hearts of men, or bring about life transformation.

### C. Preaching Styles

Preaching can generally be placed in four categories; expository, topical, textual, and narrative. In biblical preaching, each of these styles should focus on the Word of God. There are significant variations in the way the content of messages is arranged, which necessitates defining the styles of preaching.

It is unlikely that any preacher will be a purist, solely utilizing one category over another in all preaching efforts. Effective preachers will however, devote themselves to learning and preaching in a consistent, biblical manner that draws those who are lost to Christ, and disciples, strengthens, and encourages those who are saved.

#### *Expository Preaching*

Stephen Olford defined expository preaching as: “The Spirit empowered explanation and proclamation of the text of God’s Word with due regard to the historical, contextual, grammatical, and doctrinal significance of the given passage, with the specific

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<sup>141</sup> Jack Taylor, The Word of God With Power (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1993), 138.

object of invoking a Christ-transforming response.”<sup>142</sup> It begins and ends with God’s Word. Haddon W. Robinson defined expository preaching: “The communication of a biblical concept or an extended portion of Scripture arrived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applied to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.”<sup>143</sup>

Merrill Unger remarked:

No matter what the length of the portion explained may be, if it is handled in such a way that its real and essential meaning as it existed in the mind of the particular Biblical writer and as it exists in the light of the overall context of Scripture is made plain and applied to the present day needs of the hearers, it may properly be said to be expository preaching. It is emphatically not preaching about the Bible but preaching the Bible. What saith the Lord is the alpha and the omega of expository preaching. It begins in the Bible and ends in the Bible and all that intervenes springs from the Bible. In other words, expository preaching is Bible centered preaching.<sup>144</sup>

Expository preaching is solidly centered on the authority of God’s Word. John MacArthur, Jr. argued, “You have to believe that the power of God’s Word will be more effective than any human drama or communication gimmick. Nothing is as dramatic as the explosion of truth on the mind of a believer through powerful preaching.”<sup>145</sup> It is through the Word and the Spirit that God brings about change in the hearts of men.

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<sup>142</sup> Stephen F. Olford, Anointed Expository Preaching (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 69.

<sup>143</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 20.

<sup>144</sup> Merrill F. Unger, Principles of Expository Preaching (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955), 33.

<sup>145</sup> John MacArthur, Jr., Rediscovering Expository Preaching, 345.

John Stott further defined expository preaching:

If by an “expository” sermon is meant a verse-by-verse explanation of a lengthy passage of Scripture, then indeed it is only one possible way of preaching, but this would be a misuse of the word. Properly speaking, “exposition” has a much broader meaning. It refers to the content of the sermon (biblical truth) rather than its style (a running commentary). To expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view. The expositor pries open what appears to be closed, makes plain what is obscure, unravels what is knotted and unfolds what is tightly packed. The opposite of exposition is “imposition,” which is to impose on the text what is not there . . . . The “text” in question could be a verse . . . a sentence, or even a single word. It could equally be a paragraph, or a chapter, or a whole book.

The size of the text is immaterial, so long as it is biblical. What matters is what we do with it. Whether it is long or short, our responsibility as expositors is to open it up in such a way that it speaks its message clearly, plainly, accurately, relevantly, without addition, subtraction or falsification. In expository preaching the biblical text is neither a conventional introduction to sermon on a largely different theme, nor a convenient peg on which to hang a ragbag of miscellaneous thoughts, but a master which dictates and controls what is said.<sup>146</sup>

All truly biblical preaching therefore is expository preaching. The obvious strength of true expository preaching is that it maintains a determined focus on God’s Word, and relies on the power of the Holy Spirit to apply it. The preacher makes God’s Word known in an understandable way. In an age of Bible illiteracy, this is critically important to the life and spiritual health of individuals and the church. In order to effectively communicate the Bible to a biblically illiterate culture, expository preaching must be the core of the preacher’s ministry.

According to researcher George Barna, “The Christian body in America is immersed in a crisis of biblical illiteracy. How else can you describe matters when most churchgoing adults reject the accuracy of the Bible, reject the existence of Satan, claim that Jesus sinned, see no need to evangelize, believe that good works are one of the keys

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<sup>146</sup> John R. Stott, Between Two Worlds (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 125-126.

to persuading God to forgive their sins, and describe their commitment to Christianity as moderate or even less firm?”<sup>147</sup> In a day when absolute truth is a foreign concept to many, it important that the preacher of God speak forth the Word of God clearly, unashamedly, and unapologetically, and trust God for the results.

Expository preaching forces the preacher to sincerely study the Word, and be prepared to communicate it. It takes work to preach expositionally. It also lends itself to the preacher having to address difficult texts and not just his personal favorites. This helps the hearers grow spiritually. Warren Wiersbe stated, “People do not come to church to hear what we imagine. They come to hear what we know God has said in His Word. There are so many wonderful divine certainties in Scripture that it borders on blasphemy for a preacher to base his sermon on suppositions and assumptions.”<sup>148</sup>

There are potential weaknesses in expository preaching. The preacher must resist the temptation to unload everything he knows theologically on the hearer, and thereby overload his audience to the point that they stop listening. He must also be careful to answer questions that people are actually asking. While some specific information may be fruitful in the preacher’s study, it may not need to make it to the pulpit.

Many preachers also get caught in a rut of always preaching the same way with no variety. The Scripture is reflective of variety in genre and form particularly in the speeches and the sermons. It is important that the preacher vary his sermons to offer variety, and still remain faithful to the original intent of the passage. Expository

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<sup>147</sup> Barna Research Online, “Religious Beliefs Vary Widely By Denomination”; available at <http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=92&Reference=B>, Internet; accessed 22 March, 2006.

<sup>148</sup> Wiersbe and Wiersbe, The Elements of Preaching, 79.



preaching is much more than a running commentary on the selected passage. It involves faithfully interpreting the Word of God and presenting it passionately for the purpose of life change and conformity to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29).

### *Topical Preaching*

Topical preaching is defined by Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix: “The topical sermon is built around some particular subject. The idea for the subject may be taken from the Bible or elsewhere. Usually the preacher gathers what the Bible teaches about one particular topic, organizes those passages into a logical presentation, and then delivers a topical sermon.”<sup>149</sup>

True topical preaching focuses on a theme, a doctrine, a historical event, a character or a biography. It is built around a particular subject. The idea for the particular topic should be taken from the Bible first. The preacher studies what the Bible teaches about the subject and organizes it for presentation to his hearers.

Topical sermons are often useful in adding variety, addressing a pressing need, teaching doctrinally, addressing hot button issues, and communicating in times of crisis in a church. It also can be useful for preaching on special days and events of the year. This method is quite useful as long as it does not move the preacher away from solid exposition and the sermons become superficial in nature and lacking in biblical content.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Vines and Shaddix, Power in the Pulpit, 29.

<sup>150</sup> Merrill F. Unger, Principles of Expository Preaching (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955), 52.

Topical preaching clearly had a place in the ministry of Jesus. John MacArthur, Jr. wrote, “Jesus expounded the Scriptures powerfully (Mark 1:22), but not always verse by verse. As an expositor, He sometimes spoke topically, using many different Old Testament Scriptures as the basis of His teaching. Sometimes He touched on a specific theme or aspect of theology. Yet He always used the Word as the foundation and building blocks of His instruction.”<sup>151</sup> Since the method had such a prominent place in the ministry of Jesus, it is clearly an acceptable method for the twenty-first century preacher.

Topical preaching has also had a place in the history of the church. David L. Larsen stated, “Because the topical sermon can be more relentlessly unitary, one discovers that any list of the ten sermons which have most decisively influenced world culture and society consists mostly if not entirely of topical sermons.”<sup>152</sup> Topical preaching has been used extensively throughout the history of the church.

There are dangers in topical preaching. The topic should not be the starting point. The Word of God should be the starting point for the sermon. Often, the biblical text used for topical homilies is merely a springboard for launching a selected topic and has no inherent relationship to the topic of the message. When this happens the preacher draws from his own personal perspective, ideas, principles, and worldview to develop the subject. This type of preaching is based more on the preacher’s ideas and thoughts than it is on God’s Word. Sidney Greidanus stated, “Preachers are called to be ministers of the Word of God. This means that the sermon should be much more than ‘one man’s

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<sup>151</sup> MacArthur, Rediscovering Expository Preaching, 256.

<sup>152</sup> David L. Larsen, The Anatomy of Preaching: Identifying the Issues in Preaching Today (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 31.

opinion’; the sermon should be the word of God . . . . A sermon is the word of God only to the extent that it faithfully proclaims the Word of God in the Bible.”<sup>153</sup>

In preaching topically, the preacher should utilize a primary text and build the message on that, rather than a multitude of texts that lacks an overall focus. A scattered approach is confusing to the hearers, and will not typically accomplish the desired effect in connecting with the hearers and communicating the primary topic.

The preacher should take great care to ensure that His preaching is Bible based and true to the text, and not wrested out of context. Topical preaching that is not strongly focused on the Word of God will lead to ignorance among hearers and a lack of depth spiritually. Biblical fidelity is crucial in preaching. Topical preaching should be an occasional tool in the preaching ministry and not the core of it.

### *Textual Preaching*

Textual preaching is based on one or two verses from the Bible. The main theme and the major divisions of the sermon come from the text itself. This type of sermon seeks to expound what the text itself actually says. According to Bryan Chapell, “A textual message gets its main points from the text but its developmental components elsewhere.”<sup>154</sup> Textual preaching utilizes the Scripture as a springboard to develop and communicate a truth.

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<sup>153</sup> Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text (Chicago: Eerdmans, 1989), 123.

<sup>154</sup> Christianity Today, “The Truth About Expository Preaching”; available at <http://www.preachingtodayssermons.com/trutabexprea.html>; Internet; accessed 21 March 2006.

The strength of this type of preaching is that it is Bible driven. If a text cannot be utilized to make a point, then likely the point does not need to be made. R.C.H. Lenski argued, “Let us suppose I have a theme for which I cannot find a suitable text . . . then I ought to drop it as really not proper for the pulpit, or I do not know my Bible sufficiently to find the proper text readily.”<sup>155</sup> This type of preaching compels the preacher to study the text in context and compared to other texts of the same subject. His understanding of the Bible overall will improve through study for textual preaching. It also brings variety to preaching, and is interesting to the hearer who may want to know how to use and apply a particular text.

R. Ames Montgomery proposed the following advantages of textual preaching: “1. It will express the mind of God to your people. ; 2. It will preserve the balance of emphasis in your preaching. ; 3. It will produce the most opulent returns for your study. ; 4. It will save you from garrulous tendencies and aimless utterances. ; 5. It will supply pertinent subjects for your preaching. ; 6. It will often readily suggest the plan of treatment for your subject. ; 7. It will guarantee the Scriptural development of your people. ; 8. It will guarantee a blessing of God on your people and on your preaching.”<sup>156</sup> Utilized strategically, it can be a helpful method of preaching.

A clear disadvantage of textual preaching, is that a pastor may be tempted to preach only on select texts and avoid the difficult texts. This deprives a congregation of

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<sup>155</sup> Andrew W. Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), 104.

<sup>156</sup> R. Ames Montgomery, Preparing Preachers to Preach (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), 57.

the fullness of God's Word. It should be utilized strategically so as not to be overdone.

There is also a danger of the preacher taking the text out of context if careful study is not done, in order to superimpose his own views and opinions on the text rather than communicating the intent of God. There is the danger of the Scripture passage not being considered in unity with the overall Word of God.

Overall, textual preaching is a useful method. It offers a way to preach on some of the major passages in Scripture. It also provides an effective method for evangelistic preaching opportunities. When applied appropriately, textual preaching can present specific texts of Scripture, and still cover the overall scope of the Bible. In order to preach the whole counsel of God, the preacher should utilize textual preaching selectively, and rely primarily on expository preaching.

### *Narrative Preaching*

Narrative preaching has traditionally been considered as preaching that focused on a narrative passage. Narrative is a pervasive literary form in the Bible. It is also a popular sermonic form in the Bible. Stories are often used as metaphors of illustration in the New Testament. Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix wrote: "In recent days . . . some homileticians have defined it by sermonic form instead of literary genre. Thus, contemporary narrative sermons frequently encompass those messages that, from outset to conclusion, bind the entire message to a single plot as theme. Such a sermon may be better described as a story sermon."<sup>157</sup>

Fred Craddock, Professor Emeritus at Candler School of Theology at Emory

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<sup>157</sup> Vines and Shaddix, Power in the Pulpit, 29.

University, has been one of the more ardent proponents of this style of preaching. He asked the question, “Why should the gospel always be impaled upon the frame of Aristotelian logic when the preacher’s muscles twitch and his nerves tingle to mount the pulpit not with three points but with the gospel as narrative or parable or poem or myth or song?”<sup>158</sup>

Craddock stated: “One does not begin with the idea that we have in the New Testament verbal statements that are obscure into which we must introduce the light of understanding; rather, one listens to the Word hopeful that it will shed light on our own situation that is obscure. The Word of God is not interpreted; it interprets. Here a radical reversal in the direction of traditional hermeneutics occurs. The goal of biblical study is to allow God to address us through the medium of the text.”<sup>159</sup>

This method of preaching has grown in popularity. Advocates point to cultural shifts that necessitate narrative preaching. According to Kathleen Hall Jamison, we have returned to a culture of orality. She states, “The central claims of Madison Avenue, of prime time television, and of widely viewed films, have replaced those of the Bible, Shakespeare, and the great speakers as the lingua franca of contemporary oratory.”<sup>160</sup>

Literate cultures “are characterized by objective, analytical, formal, logical communication” while oral cultures “are marked by subjective, informal, narrative forms

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<sup>158</sup> Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2001), 35.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>160</sup> Kathleen Jamison Hall, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29.

of communication evident especially in personal and collective storytelling.”<sup>161</sup> Calvin Miller recalls the modern preacher to preaching that engages the marketplace. Miller states, “Marketplace preaching is a call to get outside the walls and find out once again what people are talking about and what their interests and needs really are.”<sup>162</sup>

The danger in too much emphasis on the culture, is a tendency to begin with the culture, and then go to the Bible for solutions rather than beginning with God’s Word, and then addressing the needs of the culture. While modernity has brought great change in many areas, the basic needs and concerns of people remain the same. The needs of people have not changed since the Bible was completed. They are still born into a sinful world, separated from God, in need of salvation. They still struggle with the “cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does” (I John 2:16). Thousands of years later, our temptations and struggles may take on a different form, but at their core they are still the same struggles as those presented in Scripture.<sup>163</sup> The Word of God speaks authoritatively and timelessly throughout the ages. The preacher should carefully consider this when approaching a passage of Scripture.

There is also the danger of communicating a biblical story for the sake of story. In other words, a good storytelling preacher may communicate the story, but not effectively address why God gave it. The preacher must be careful to determine the underlying

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<sup>161</sup> William H. Willimon and Richard Lischer, eds. Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 473.

<sup>162</sup> Calvin Miller, Marketplace Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 19.

<sup>163</sup> Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, Preaching with Bold Assurance (Nashville: Tennessee, 2003), 6.

theological principles of why the story is there, and how it relates to the overall scope of the Bible.

When communicated creatively, narrative preaching can engage listeners in a way that no other type of preaching can, and help them better understand the Word of God. People can think of themselves as experiencing the situations that the biblical characters experienced. They can evaluate their own lives in light of the way biblical characters responded in various situations. Narrative preaching can be very effective and useful while still maintaining faithfulness to the original intent of the Word of God. Narrative preaching is good for adding variety to the preacher's ministry on occasion, but expository preaching should be his mainstay.

#### *Comparison of Preaching Styles*

In summary, the preacher can be faithful to the Bible using a variety of methods. It would be the rare preacher however, who could effectively communicate utilizing a broad spectrum of methods week in and week out. It is best for the man of God to settle on his primary method of preaching, and then work to develop his skills utilizing that method to most faithfully communicate the Word of God.

In a comparison of the four categories of preaching, 'Which preaching method is the best?' Sermons come in many forms. The mystery of preaching is that God can use any form that is true to His Word. At the heart of any good preaching is a faithful exposition of the text. Therefore, all biblical preaching is expository preaching, though the packaging of the message may vary. The best method of preaching is consistent exposition of the Word of God that can be practically applied to the life of the hearer.



### D. Sermon Delivery

Once the sermon has been crafted, it must be delivered effectively in order to connect with the audience. There are four major types of sermon delivery: manuscript delivery; memorized delivery; free delivery, and extemporaneous delivery. Bryan Chapell stated: “Congregations ask no more and expect no less of a preacher than truth expressed in a manner consistent with the personality of the preacher and reflective of the importance of the message. Today’s pulpit excellence requires that you speak as you would talk, especially when fully convinced that God has charged you to deliver a life-changing, eternity-impacting message.”<sup>164</sup> Delivery of the message is important.

#### *Manuscript Delivery*

Manuscript delivery calls for the message to be written out in its entirety. The preacher then utilizes the manuscript word for word for delivery. A manuscript delivery allows for clarity of speech and communication. It ensures that the preacher clearly communicates what he intended to say from careful study, therefore leading to greater precision. It also provides a sense of confidence for the busy pastor to know that he is well prepared and ready to deliver the message.

However, delivering a message from manuscript also has drawbacks. It tends to minimize eye contact with the audience which is a key component of communication. Very few men have the ability to deliver well from a manuscript without sounding like the manuscript is being read. Written language tends to differ from spoken language and

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<sup>164</sup> Bryan Chapell, Christ Centered Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 313.

bridging the gap can be difficult. It is also a temptation for the busy pastor not to wrestle with the text in-depth, and as a result lean too heavily on the manuscript.

The preacher must remain flexible with a manuscript in the event that his time for delivery is shortened. If he has prepared a sermon to be preached for one half hour, and for some reason the service does not fit what he has prepared, he must know his subject well enough and be flexible to the point of adjusting his message.

Every preaching opportunity does not lend itself to use of a manuscript. At times the preacher will have opportunity to deliver a message outdoors where weather conditions may not cooperate for example. At other times, the preacher will have opportunity to speak to a very small congregation, in a more intimate setting and delivery from a manuscript is too rigid and impersonal. On other occasions, there may not be a pulpit or lectern available, and the pastor must be ready to preach with only his Bible in his hand.

Sermon delivery from a manuscript can be an effective method. The pastor must thoroughly prepare himself while in the study so that he knows intimately what he has written. Even if using a manuscript, it should never be read. The manuscript should be used with the major points and transitions highlighted, and the manuscript should serve as a prompter for the preacher. The preacher also should not be bound to the manuscript as the Holy Spirit brings other things to mind.

### *Memorized Delivery*

Delivery from memory calls for writing out the manuscript in its entirety or at least in detail and then memorizing it in full. There are a number of specific methods for memorizing. This method of delivery also aims at careful preparation and adequate time spent in the study. The idea is to thoroughly prepare to the point of having saturated one's mind with the message. The primary goal is not word for word perfection in reciting a memorized message. The goal is clarity in communication.

Delivery from memory enables the preacher to be free of notes at the point of delivery. This aids in giving a freedom of movement in the pulpit, and allows the preacher to interact more with the audience which enhances communication. The pastor is not bound to a pulpit or lectern. He is free to purposefully move around and deliver the message that he has prepared and memorized.

However, this method can be very time consuming and time is of the essence for the busy pastor. It is unlikely the typical pastor, delivering several messages a week in the same pulpit, will be able to find adequate time to memorize all of his sermons and at the same time stay faithful in his other duties.

It also requires the preacher to rely on his memory. Memories are subject to be unreliable with all of the other pressures of ministry that weigh heavily on pastors. Unless the pastor has an unusual memory, it is unlikely this would be an effective tool for weekly preparation. This method can be used effectively but it does require good memory skills and a great deal of discipline in preparation.

### *Free Delivery*

Free delivery relies on careful preparation in the study of what will be said, but there is not a reliance on written preparation at the point of delivery. A brief outline and notations regarding key words are often used in free delivery to keep the preacher on track. The Scripture itself serves as the outline and roadmap for delivery. Prompts within the text are often noted in order to maintain the flow of the message.

Free delivery includes the best part of manuscript delivery in that it requires thorough preparation. It also includes the best part of memorized delivery in that it frees the preacher up from his notes. It goes a step further than memorization in that the preacher at the point of delivery does not concern himself with reciting what has been memorized. Instead, because he has thoroughly saturated himself with the biblical text, he can freely communicate the truths of it, while at the same time articulating appropriate illustrations and applications.

This too, carries with it the potential for the preacher to forget what he intended to say. Not all men are equipped with accurate enough memories in order to clearly communicate the message in free delivery. The time pressures of ministry and the responsibility of preaching several times per week weighs heavily on many preachers and precludes them from consistent free delivery.

### *Extemporaneous Delivery*

Extemporaneous delivery is the least planned, and likely the least used method of all. It relies simply on preaching what the Holy Spirit brings to mind. The preacher stands up and presents whatever comes to mind at the point of delivery as it relates to the text at

hand. There is a freedom to this in that it minimizes preparation time. At the most basic level this method relies on God's Spirit, but it can also be an easy path for a lazy preacher. Deliveries of this sort tend to ramble and be very scattered in nature.

There will of course be times that the preacher is called on to deliver a message and he has not had opportunity to prepare beforehand. The wise preacher will offer remarks related to the situation he is in, and not ramble on unnecessarily until something spiritual comes to mind. It is also good practice for any preacher who may be called on to deliver on the spot, to keep several outlines in his Bible that could be used on such an occasion.

Extemporaneous delivery, though still used in isolated areas, is an unlikely method of delivery in the typical evangelical church. In order for solid exposition to take place on a consistent basis, there must be thorough preparation in the preacher's study. There is no excuse for poor preparation for such a high and holy task.

### *The Importance of Good Delivery*

In delivering a message, there must be a balance between careful preparation and passionate presentation. Alex Montoya asserted, "The conservative, biblical preacher has to be most aware of the balance between solid exposition and the passionate delivery of that exposition. How we deliver the sermon is as important as what we deliver."<sup>165</sup> No matter how good the information is, if the preacher cannot effectively communicate it, the message will be lost in transition.

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<sup>165</sup> Alex Montoya, Preaching With Passion (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Publications, 2000), 11.

W. A. Criswell commented, “The sermon is no essay to be read for optional opinion, for people to casually consider. It is confrontation with Almighty God. It is to be delivered with a burning passion, in the authority of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>166</sup> Good delivery is a tool to communicate the truth in the power of the Holy Spirit. A reliance on the Holy Spirit is the key to passionate delivery. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God delivered in an authoritative manner to penetrate souls. “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

The power is in the Word of God applied by the Spirit of God. The messenger must deliver the message effectively and passionately and not be a hindrance to it. According to Warren and David Wiersbe, “Good delivery does not attract attention to itself. It is simply a tool, wisely used, to get the truth of the Word into the hearts of the people.”<sup>167</sup>

God communicates the truth with clarity through the passionate presentation of the Word by the pastor. The pastor should recognize his own strengths and weaknesses and how he has been gifted by God. He should also recognize the expectations of the congregation he serves. With these things in mind, he should utilize the method that enables him to passionately and clearly deliver the Word of God most effectively.

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<sup>166</sup> W.A. Criswell, Criswell’s Guidebook for Pastors (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1980), 58.

<sup>167</sup> Wiersbe and Wiersbe, The Elements of Preaching, 91.

### E. Preaching Survey Conclusions and Directives

Survey results regarding the preaching ministry of pastors of middle sized churches reflect some important results. These results can be utilized to better understand how the ministry of preaching is being practiced. Directives related to preaching in the twenty-first century are given in order to assist the pastor in faithfully fulfilling the calling that God has given Him in this area of competency.

#### *Preparation for Preaching*

Of pastors responding to the survey, 94% indicated that they had basic sermon preparation and delivery courses in formal education. While 49.4% usually or always use what they learned in formal education, only 23.6% indicated that they believe they are “very prepared” educationally for the task of preaching.

When asked what the most helpful training was that they have received, 45% noted “on the job training” and 24.7% noted “observation” of more experienced preachers, while only 23.6% noted “education.” Formal education does not adequately prepare preachers for what is needed to effectively perform the task of preaching in the twenty-first century. A disconnect may stem from an emphasis on the proper preparation of sermons without enough emphasis on actually preaching the message in a way that practically connects. There is no substitute for putting into practice what one has learned. The preacher grows and develops in this area as he prepares and delivers sermons on a regular basis. It is wise for the inexperienced preacher to take advantage of formal education, but at the same time look for regular opportunities to exercise his gifting and learn to apply what he has learned.

Pastors of middle sized churches also reflect a need for continuing education in that 80.6% have participated in seminars, conferences, and classes beyond their formal study. Preaching is such a significant part of what the preacher does, that pastors recognize the need to continue to grow and develop the skill. It is the primary weekly connection that the pastor has with the congregation, and it is crucial to his ministry that he delivers the message as faithfully as possible. The pastor must make it a priority to continually evaluate his preaching and seek to improve it. Even the most experienced preacher likely has room for improvement and development.

Expository preaching was noted as the primary method of preaching by 80% of respondents. Only 10.4% identified topical preaching as their primary method, and a still smaller 3.2% identify themselves as narrative preachers. In middle sized churches it appears that expository preaching is the norm with the average length of sermons, 63%, in the 25-35 minute range. This is significant. Because of the increased biblical ignorance of society, it is important that the man of God systematically, clearly, and authoritatively preach the Word of God. He must concern himself with being faithful to the Word of God, and trusting the Holy Spirit to apply it to the hearts of the hearers.

Of respondents, 59.2% indicated that they spend between 9 and 18 hours preparing sermons each week, a significant amount of time. Pastors understand the serious nature of the task and prepare in earnest to preach to their congregations each week. In surveys, several indicated they do not have as much time as they would like to prepare for the preaching responsibility. The most important function of preaching was noted in 43.1% of the surveys to be “preaching the Word.”



### *Current Factors Impacting Preaching*

The task of preaching has been impacted in recent years with the transition from the twentieth century to the twenty-first century by several factors. Surveys show that 73.2% of pastors in middle sized churches believe it has changed “somewhat” or “significantly.” These pastors indicate that the task has not changed from God’s perspective, as far as what is expected out of the preacher, but external societal and cultural factors have changed that have impacted the preaching ministry.

Three significant changes stand out. First there is a growing biblical ignorance in society. This biblical ignorance is highly influenced by a culture that is dominated by the secular. Second is the attention span of listeners. Third is the impact of technology.

### *Growing Biblical Ignorance*

The growing biblical ignorance in society highlights and demonstrates the need for expository preaching. The culture is growing increasingly secular and ignorant of even the biblical basics. Marcia G. Witten, of Princeton University, identified “three forces of secularization: privatization, pluralization, and rationalization.”<sup>168</sup> Witten stated, “Pluralization refers to the shrinking sphere of plausibility of religion in the modern world and to the corresponding limitations on religious language in public conversation about morality, law, and economics.”<sup>169</sup> The preacher has the task of preaching to people who do not value the place of religion and the Bible as highly in public discourse as

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<sup>168</sup> Marcia G. Witten, All is Forgiven: The Secular Message in American Protestantism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 18.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 19.

people did just a generation ago. This complicates matters in that the preacher must determine how to bridge the gap between the faith and everyday life.

Witten described pluralization as “the proliferation of socially legitimated ideologies in the West and an open market understanding of religious affiliation.”<sup>170</sup> Churchgoers are not so much motivated by the message of right and wrong and absolute truth as they are the style of music, the quality of children’s programs, and other felt need issues. In a consumer, and marketing oriented society, the preacher must stay faithful to what God has called him to and not water down the message.

Witten defined rationalization as “the growth of practices . . . that calculate the efficiency or effectiveness of alternative means to a given end.”<sup>171</sup> This is simply pragmatism, the idea that the means justify the end result. The preacher obviously should desire fruit in his ministry, but not at the cost of truth. He should desire legitimate spiritual fruit, and not fruit that have been harvested through questionable or potentially unbiblical practices. The preacher must rely on the Holy Spirit to produce legitimate spiritual fruit and not in any way attempt to create desired results in his own strength.

Privatization, pluralization, and rationalization are rooted in biblical ignorance. A study by the Barna Group in 2000 revealed some startling statistics. A minority of born again adults, 44%, and an even smaller group of teenagers, 9%, are certain of the existence of absolute truth. Only 1% of born again adults in the study concurred with basic belief statements from the Bible. Furthermore, the study found that “large proportions of lay leaders in Christian churches hold a range of unbiblical religious views

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 23.

regarding the holiness of Christ, the reality of Satan, the existence of the Holy Spirit, the reality of the resurrection, and the means to salvation.”<sup>172</sup>

Due to cultural influences, a trend in the contemporary church away from biblical preaching and toward experience based and felt needs preaching is growing. Gary Gilley reflects this trend. He wrote, “If pastors have lost confidence in the power, authority and sufficiency of the Scripture it is no wonder that they have abandoned in droves the systematic, expository preaching of the Word. I rarely visit a church or attend a Bible conference anywhere in which the Scriptures are truly expounded. Story sermons, pop-psychology lectures, ‘Dear Abby’ style counsel, drama, musical productions, and interpretive dance are replacing true preaching.”<sup>173</sup>

This is an extremely dangerous trend. There is a great need for solid biblical exposition in the church for the church to be educated, and then in turn be able to impact society. The pastor must understand the culture in order to engage it. He must have complete confidence in the Word of God and the power of the Gospel to change lives. His preaching ministry should be built on consistent exposition of the Word of God that can be applied to the daily lives of his hearers. This will prevent the pastor from yielding to the temptation to preach “feel good” sermons in order to draw a larger crowd. Instead, he will boldly proclaim the entire Word of God to the glory of God.

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<sup>172</sup> George Barna, “The Year’s Most Intriguing Findings”, Barna Research Studies; available at <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=77> December 12, 2000, Internet; Accessed July 14, 2006.

<sup>173</sup> Gary Gilley, This Little Church Went to Market (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2005), 90.

*Impact of Attention Spans and Use of Technology*

The attention span of the listeners and the impact of technology go hand in hand. Our culture is an increasingly technology dominated culture. David Fisher argued, “The technological age, in particular television, works powerfully against reasoned oral discourse. Images and sound bytes characterize the electronic communication that bombards us day in and day out . . . . We preach to people young and old whose attention span is shortening.”<sup>174</sup> Along with technology there is an increasing influence of the entertainment factor in the culture that ultimately impacts the church.

Unfortunately, preachers in general are perceived as “clueless about popular taste in television, film, video, music, news, and web sites.”<sup>175</sup> Of pastors surveyed, 67.8% indicated that utilizing technology to communicate with the culture is at least “somewhat important” in twenty-first century preaching. There is a recognition that while the message of truth cannot change over time, the methodologies used to communicate truth can and must change to connect with the intended audience.

While the recognition of the need is there, it appears that pastors have been somewhat slow to respond to use this methodology with only 35.3% of pastors indicating that they “usually” or “always” integrate technology into their preaching. According to Michael J. Quicke, “Being heard in terms relevant to audiences has never been more critical than in this media-saturated, generational-sensitive, entertainment-oriented

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<sup>174</sup> David Fisher, *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 234.

<sup>175</sup> Michael J. Quicke, *360 Degree Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Books, 2003), 66.

popular culture.”<sup>176</sup> When utilizing technology to connect with a visually oriented culture, one must be careful to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit speaking to people through the Word of God, and not become dependent on technological wonders to keep the attention of the listeners. There must be a balance between implementing the technology without taking away from the message.

It is certainly appropriate and effective for the twenty-first century preacher to utilize technology to his advantage as long as it does not become a substitute for the Word of God. One must be careful to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit speaking to people through the Word of God, and not become dependent on technological wonders to keep the attention of the listeners. There must be a balance between implementing technology without taking away from the message.

### *Congregational Expectations*

The expectations that congregations place on their preachers has also changed. The key influencer in this change seems to be the media environment that we live in. In the early twentieth century, prior to the proliferation of radio and television, and the worldwide web, local congregations gauged the abilities of their preacher against those of predecessors and also against those of neighboring preachers in the community. Local influence was primary.

With the explosion of technology in the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century in terms of both television and the worldwide web, congregants have access to worldwide preaching. People can more easily identify what is good, effective, and

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 66.

relevant preaching by sizing up their preacher to others they hear and see. There are much higher expectations placed on the local preacher when he is compared to men who are prominently known.

Michael Quicke argued, “Celebrity preachers do not always help the cause of the pastor . . . . Their reputations for effective preaching, often developed through television exposure, raise congregational expectations while at the same time leave local preachers dazzled, envious, and dismayed at their own lack of skills and charisma.”<sup>177</sup> This can be a difficult environment in which to preach, particularly if the preacher views himself in competition with more well know preachers and their ministries. The pastor must resist the temptation to emulate the popular preachers of the day just for the sake of being like them, and must focus on being whom God created him to be. This necessitates a significant measure of faith and dependence on God, not to adapt to the sometimes fickle nature of the people in the congregation and be true to oneself.

#### *Differences in Competency Levels*

Does the competency level of pastors in different size churches vary in the area of preaching? At a basic level, the competency needed for the task is consistent regardless of the size of the church. The preacher has the responsibility before God, to live out the truth as an example to the flock that God has entrusted him with. The preacher has the responsibility to proclaim the truth of God to people. The truth is timeless, unchanging, and must be proclaimed consistently without regard to the size of the church. Truth is truth, and should be presented as such.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 42.

### *Consistency of Human Needs*

Human needs remain constant. Every person has the need to be forgiven of their sins and reconciled to God through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Jn 3:16-18). Every person has the need to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29). Every person has the need to live out a life of purpose in light of the grace of God (I Cor 10:31). All preachers therefore are preaching to people with the same basic needs.

Obviously, cultural context and setting make a difference in how truth is related in order to make a connection with people at their level of need. The man preaching to homeless people in a shelter in an inner city setting will not communicate truth in the same context that a man will preaching to an affluent congregation in the suburbs, but truth remains the same and human needs are basically the same. The essential task of the preacher is consistent in every size church.

### *Variations in Preaching Abilities*

Preaching ability varies from preacher to preacher. Some men have been given remarkable gifts that enable them to hold the attention of thousands, while others who are called by God are better equipped for hundreds or even for just a small congregation of God's people. Some are more natural and eloquent preachers than others.

The preacher is responsible to God for the depth of his preaching ministry and God is responsible for the breadth. If a man is reliant on his natural abilities in preaching, nothing of spiritual value to God will result from it. The Apostle Paul wrote, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the

weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are might . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence” (I Cor 1:27,29).

When the preacher is reliant on God’s power, he is a useable vessel for God. The Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (I Cor 2:1-2). The source of power is the Word of God, applied by the Spirit of God, magnifying the Son of God.

#### *Visionary Role of the Pastor*

One major difference that is important, and varies from the small to the middle size church, is the role of the pastor as visionary in his preaching ministry. Vision is defined by Aubrey Malphurs: “Vision is a clear, challenging picture of the future of the ministry as you believe that it can and must be.”<sup>178</sup> Carl F. George, in *How to Break Growth Barriers* cited this as being important for a church to transition through growth barriers from being a small, 200 member or less congregation, to becoming a middle sized 400 member or more congregation.

For the pastor of the middle sized church, rather than the majority of the vision casting occurring through informal relationships within the structure of the church, as typically occurs in small churches, the vision casting occurs more significantly in the context of the preaching ministry. George asserted, “The senior pastor becomes the primary person who articulates and communicates the vision and accepts responsibility

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<sup>178</sup> Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 41.



for the oversight of the staff. This leader paints the picture of the preferred future: what must be done in the long view for effective ministry.”<sup>179</sup> The larger the church, the more adept the preacher must be at vision casting and communicating through his pulpit work. His role changes from communicating vision primarily through multiple relationships, to communicating vision through the larger public forum.

The call to preach is a lofty calling. Preaching has a central role in the life of the church. Long ago, Richard Baxter reminded pastors of the central place of preaching: “We must be serious, earnest, and zealous in every part of our work. Our work requireth greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than any of us bring to it. It is no small matter to stand up in the face of the congregation, and to deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy matter to speak so plain, that the most ignorant may understand us; and so seriously that the deadest heart may feel us; and so convincingly, that the contradicting cavilers may be silenced.”<sup>180</sup>

No man is able to effectively accomplish this task apart from a dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit. Preachers are to preach not by our own authority, but by the authority of God and His Word. The Scripture tells us that when Jesus preached, people were amazed. On one particular occasion, following the preaching of Jesus, the Scripture indicates, “The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were

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<sup>179</sup> George, How to Break Growth Barriers, 155.

<sup>180</sup> Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, 117.

amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes” (Matt 7:28-29). The charge is to preach the Word, by the authority of God.

#### F. Core Components of Preaching

There are several core components of preaching. They include a reliance on the Word of God, a focus on the glory of God, a reliance on the Holy Spirit to apply the Word of God to the hearts of men, and a focus on practical application in the lives of the hearers. When these components are present, there can be faithfulness in preaching.

##### *A Reliance on the Word of God*

First, there must be a reliance on God’s Word and a preaching of the Bible and not preaching about the Bible. Exposition of the Scripture must occur in any method for it to be considered faithful preaching. Many have moved away from solid biblical exposition to methods that are highly questionable. Kent Hughes lamented, “Preaching . . . is often shortened to a 15 or 20 minute homily. Bible exposition is jettisoned as too heavy in favor of a lighter topical homily. And since the average TV- sotted American has a shrinking attention span, sermons become story-laden and sometimes a string of vignettes loosely related to a scriptural pretext. Moreover, there is often such a strained attempt to be relevant that anything that has not come out of the last 20 years is consciously avoided.”<sup>181</sup>

There is an effort to leave behind any connection with the past in the name of cultural relevance. The faithful preacher will unapologetically proclaim the entire Word

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<sup>181</sup> Kent Hughes, The Foundation of Our Vision: Vision 2000 (Wheaton, IL: A Publication of College Church, January 9, 1994).

of God. The Word of God will be his starting point, will formulate the structure for his message, and will be his ending point as he calls people to respond to a Holy God.

*A Focus on the Glory of God*

Second, there must be a focus on God and His glory from the beginning to the end, as the primary matter of all proclamation. God is to receive the attention and focus in the efforts of the pastor. Ultimately the pastor preaches to an audience of One.

Jim Shaddix stated, “Preaching should not be driven by a preference, a program, or even a purpose, especially that of answering all the questions people ask. Instead, preaching should be driven by a passion for the glory of God, a passion jointly possessed by both pastor and people. The Bible is the story of how God ultimately is glorified in His redemptive plan to re-create mankind into His image, and the Scriptures are the Holy Spirit’s primary agent for enacting that process.<sup>182</sup> The preacher simply delivers the message of God, with a focus on pleasing Him and doing His will, and God takes care of the results.

*A Reliance on the Holy Spirit to Effect Change*

Third, there must be a reliance on the Holy Spirit to bring about change in the hearer. It is God who brings about change in the hearts of men. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (I Cor 3:5-6).

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<sup>182</sup> Jim Shaddix, The Passion Driven Sermon (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 3.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones believed the anointing of the Holy Spirit on the life of the preacher to be critical to the preaching event. He stated, “It is God giving power, an enabling, through the Spirit, to the preacher in order that he may do this work in a manner that lifts it up beyond the efforts and endeavors of man to a position in which the preacher is being used by the Spirit and becomes the channel through whom the Spirit works.”<sup>183</sup> The preacher should concern himself with living a life of purity under the power of the Holy Spirit, dependent on Him for unction in delivering the message, and for the intended results.

*A Focus on Practical Application*

Fourth, each person who hears the Word of God faithfully proclaimed must be called upon to apply what he has heard. It is not enough to communicate the truth to people, they must also be called upon to respond to the truth. The lost who hear the message of the Gospel must be called upon to apply the Word of God to their hearts and follow Jesus.

The saved must be called upon to apply the Word of God to their hearts, and live a life of obedience. Every preaching event must culminate in a moment of truth, where the hearers are faced with a crisis of belief and must decide how God wants them to apply His Word to their lives. John R. Bisagno suggested, “Every Scripture has only one correct interpretation, but it may have a million applications. Regardless of how you apply it, the Holy Spirit will go beyond your words and explicitly apply it to the unique

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<sup>183</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Preaching and Preachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 305.

needs of each individual listener.”<sup>184</sup> The preacher should ask of the text, ‘what does it say, what does it mean, and how does it apply?’ Imparting information for the sake of information is useless. The Word of God is intended to be applied directly to the hearts of its hearers.

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<sup>184</sup> John R. Bisagno, Principle Preaching (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 15.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### COMPETENCY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

#### PASTOR IN PASTORAL CARE

This chapter outlines the competency of pastoral care which includes: loving the flock; praying for and with the people; relating to the people; protecting the flock and guiding them away from sin and danger; lovingly but firmly leading the church to apply discipline and correction as needed; bringing peace in times of conflict; pastoral visitation; crisis care; and biblical counseling.

Pastoral care is complex and at times can be overwhelming in its scope and depth. The needs of a congregation are physically, emotionally, and spiritually very demanding for the pastor. Pastoral care is where the shepherd's heart is clearly displayed.

#### A. Foundations for Pastoral Care

It is through sincere and devoted pastoral care, that the man of God demonstrates his love for God and for people. H.B. London stated: "The ministry is love at work: love God shows to the pastor by trusting him, love the pastor shows for God by serving Him and love that God and the pastor show to human beings in need."<sup>185</sup> The pastor should have the deep love of God flowing through his ministry. He serves as the key leader in

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the care ministry of the church and leads by example. This is the primary foundation for pastoral care.

*Emulating Jesus*

In his heart, the pastor should desire to be like Jesus. He is to love Jesus with a sincere and devoted love. He is to surrender himself to being filled with the Spirit of God (Eph 6:18), and with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23). The first aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is love, which enables the pastor to be obedient to his call in the area of pastoral care. A pastor cannot generate enough love from within himself to love people as he should. The love of God has to grip his life in a compelling and motivating way.

God-like love, *Gk. agape*, must rule and reign in his life. *Agape* love is absolute, unselfish, unconditional love. The central meaning of *agape* love in the New Testament is rooted in Jesus' death on the cross, Jn 3:16. Love compelled God to sacrifice His Son. Steadfast love, compassion, and delight are all part of God's love for us. Jesus loved the sinners He spent time with and steadfast love was His primary way of relating. Compassion for Jesus came naturally.

The key to the love of God being real and present in the pastor's life, is in his abiding relationship with Jesus. Jesus said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (Jn 15:4). Jesus followed that by saying "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as

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<sup>185</sup> H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, The Heart of a Great Pastor (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1994), 115.

I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (Jn 15:9). Abiding is followed by obedience that is willing to sacrifice for others. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

The love of the pastor is not a preferential love. It is not limited to those who are easy to love, or to those who return love. The love of the pastor is a special kind of love that models I Cor 13 in a practical way. Not all of the sheep are easily loved. All pastors who are faithful to the task will face storms, undergo personal attacks, and have their leadership challenged from time to time. Ministry dropouts due to conflict are not uncommon. The faithful disciple and undershepherd of Jesus will not be surprised by this, but instead will take up his cross and follow Jesus (Mk 8:34). His love for the Master, and his Master's love for him, will strengthen and support him.

When a pastor loves the congregation that God has entrusted to Him, his love will most often be reciprocated. He must take the lead in creating an atmosphere of love within the body of Christ. Others will in turn follow His lead and learn to love. As a result the ministry will be shared and multiplied.

### B. Elements of Pastoral Care

Faithful pastoral care is dependent on the pastor's spiritual walk with God. As he walks with God, he is in turn able to relate to the people effectively and offer helpful care. The pastor sets the tone for a caring congregation.



*Pastor's Prayer Life and Ministry of Prayer*

Pastoral care includes the pastor's prayer life and ministry of prayer. The pastor's ministry necessitates that he talk to God about the people, and not just talk to the people about God. The great Scottish preacher Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843) said, "What a man is on his knees before God, that he is and nothing more."<sup>186</sup> Unhurried time alone with God is significant in releasing the pressures of ministry. No matter how energetic or capable a man is, he is finite and limited in his ability to meet the needs of others. The larger the congregation is, the more overwhelming the needs are. The pastor must come to the realization that God alone is able to meet the greatest needs of man and that the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, Advocate, and Helper (Jn 16:7), can do far more than he can do in his own strength and effort.

Prayer time alone with God the Father is modeled in the ministry of Jesus. His praying covered the usual times of prayer, morning and evening, but His prayer life on behalf of others, as an intercessor, went far beyond that. On several occasions He prayed on behalf of His disciples. He prayed for Simon Peter that even though he would deny Christ, his faith would not fail. Jesus prayed that after Peter came back to the Lord in repentance, he would be able to strengthen his fellow disciples (Lk 22:31-32).

In the famous prayer that Jesus prayed for His disciples and for those who would follow Him later (Jn 17), He went to the Father on their behalf. The Bible says that even now, Jesus as the faithful High Priest is praying on behalf of others. "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). As the "Good Shepherd" (Jn 10:11), Jesus is

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<sup>186</sup> Sherwood Eliot Wirt and Kersten Beckstrom, Living Quotations for Christians (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 177.

the model for how to pray for those who are entrusted to us as His undershepherds.

Thomas Oden noted, “Since the life of prayer holds up before God all dimensions of the nurture of the soul, it is a crucial activity of the care of souls.”<sup>187</sup> When we talk to God on behalf of others, it is an act of love.

Two extremes can commonly be observed in the ministry. One is for the pastor to have a desire to be a people pleaser. The pastor with this mindset tries to meet the needs of everyone and ultimately neglects his responsibility to go to God in prayer for them. The other is for the pastor to close himself off from the people in the name of prayer and ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4).

E.M. Bounds addressed this problem and wrote:

The monk, the hermit were illustrations of this; they shut themselves out from men to be more with God. They failed, of course. Our being with God is of use only as we expend its priceless benefits on men. This age, neither with preacher nor with people, is much intent on God. Our hankering is not that way. We shut ourselves to our study; we become students, bookworms, Bible worms, sermon makers, noted for literature, thought, and sermons; but the people and God, where are they? Out of heart, out of mind. Preachers who are great thinkers, great students must be the greatest pray-ers, or else they will be the greatest of backsliders, heartless professions, rationalistic, less than the least of preachers in God’s estimate.<sup>188</sup>

Separation from people does not lend itself to a healthy pastoral care ministry. It isolates the pastor from people and hinders his effectiveness.

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<sup>187</sup> Thomas C. Oden, Classic Pastoral Care: Volume Two, Ministry Through Word and Sacrament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1987), 58.

<sup>188</sup> Bounds, Preacher and Prayer, 20.

According to Bounds, when the preacher errs in spending all of his time with the people:

He is no longer God's man, but a man of affairs, of the people. He prays not, because his mission is to the people. If he can move the people, create an interest, a sensation in favor of religion, an interest in church work- he is satisfied. His personal relation to God is no factor in his work. Prayer has little or no place in his plans. The disaster and ruin of such a ministry cannot be computed by earthly arithmetic. What the preacher is in prayer to God, for himself, for his people, so is his power for real good to men; so is his true fruitfulness, his true fidelity to God, to man, for time, for eternity.<sup>189</sup>

Neither of these extremes is a healthy model for pastoral care ministry. There must be a balance between prayer and incarnational ministry. The man of God goes to the Father on behalf of the people to intercede for them, and to gain strength in order to care for them. In turn, he imparts the love of God to the people of God in real, practical, and caring ways.

Not only is the pastor to pray for his people, he is to pray with his people. Whether people need wisdom for decisions, peace in the midst of crisis, healing in times of sickness, or need to offer thanksgiving in times of joy, they naturally look to the pastor to lead out in prayer on their behalf. Going to God on behalf of people, for the purpose of seeking wisdom, can be a time of partnering together to seek the face of God and a demonstration of dependence on Him. God has all of the answers to life's problems and decisions.

In times of crisis, the pastor can be particularly helpful by utilizing the tool of prayer to call out to God, to seek the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit, and to ask for the peace of God to reign. At times of uncertainty and unrest, the man of God can help focus people through prayer to depend on the peace of God to reign. God's Word

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 21.

says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6-7).

The Scripture specifically directs people to call for the elders of the church in times of sickness and request prayer. “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up . . . . The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (Jam 5:13-16). The pastors of the church are privileged before God, along with the other spiritual leadership in the church, to intercede on behalf of people in times of sickness.

In times of rejoicing, such as the birth of a baby, or the marking of a rite of passage such as graduation, the pastor has special privilege to rejoice with people and publicly thank God for His blessings. The pastor has the joy of taking part in many different families in a very personal way. All Christians are to “Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:15). This is true for the pastor at a more personal level than for others.

### *Relating to People*

The faithful pastor must know how to relate to people. John R. Bisagno, Pastor Emeritus of The First Baptist Church of Houston, Texas stated, “Perhaps the best place to start in relating to others is to put yourself in their shoes . . . . Treating others as you want

to be treated, caring enough to know where they are coming from, and respecting it, is the heart of getting along with people.”<sup>190</sup> The pastor should empathize with the people and work to know as many people as possible on a personal level in order to understand their trials, tribulations, joys, and triumphs. Relating to the people is a help to the pastor’s preaching ministry, pastoral care ministry, and overall leadership and administration of the church. Through caring relationships, the pastor is reminded of the personal nature of ministry.

It is important in relating to people that the pastor have high visibility. He should be visible not only in the public preaching time, but also at other opportune times. Before and after public worship times, it is helpful for the pastor to move among the people. Not in a mechanical way, but simply to have a presence with the people, relating to a variety of people and being available to minister to needs. The pastor should also have a good level of visibility at major events involving the congregation. These will include church dinners, special events and the like. These are excellent opportunities for the pastor to get to know the people at a more personal level, with less time constraints than the weekly service schedule.

The pastor should maintain approachability. The people should never feel that he is an unapproachable professional, but instead that he is a compassionate shepherd who cares about them as individuals. One temptation for the busy pastor is to always look busy and in a rush. The pastor has to consciously slow himself down, and not make much of his busy schedule, but instead intently focus on people when they do approach him.

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<sup>190</sup> Bisagno, Letters to Timothy: A Handbook for Pastors, 54.

This involves being a good listener in not only hearing what people are saying, but also processing it and offering feedback.

Bisagno offers further insight into the important subject of relating to people: “Perhaps no element contributes more to developing good people skills than a true love for people. Ask yourself this question: Do I see people as an object, a prize to be won, a statistic to be added that my denominational paper might write an article about my growing church, enticing a larger church to call me as pastor? Or, do I see people as sheep in need of a shepherd?”<sup>191</sup>

If there were no people in the congregation, there would be no ministry. Relating to people as individuals created in the image of God, rather than as a number, is infinitely important. It takes time to shepherd people.

#### *Guiding and Protecting the Flock*

The responsibilities of pastoral care include guiding and protecting the flock. The shepherd is to watch over the flock and lead them away from spiritual dangers. The imagery of God as the Great Shepherd in Psalm 23 is indicative of this. The Great Shepherd provides food, peace, restoration, guidance in righteousness, guidance when approaching death, comfort, fullness, goodness and mercy, and an eternal dwelling place. The undershepherd, as a servant of God, is to lead people to the Great Shepherd.

The Shepherd in “Psalm 23 comforted the sheep with His rod and staff. . . . The ‘rod’ protected the flock against immediate, encroaching danger. The ‘staff’ served to assemble the sheep, to guide them, and even to rescue them if they wandered away. Likewise, the shepherd of Christ’s flock--the church-- must be vigilant. The spiritual

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 56

health and integrity of the flock depend on his devotion to this phase of his responsibility.”<sup>192</sup>

God charges pastors with the responsibility of protecting the flock and guiding them away from personal sin. God instructed Ezekiel in his task as the watchman. “So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me . . . . Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand” (Ezek 33:7,9).

The words of the Apostle Paul to the elders at Ephesus, clearly indicate the responsibility of God’s man to warn against doctrinal error. “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:27-29).

In guarding against doctrinal error, he is to specifically protect against those who are propagating wrong teachings. Jesus warned of “false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matt 7:15). The false teachers are also referred to by Jesus as thieves and robbers (Jn 10:1). It is a primary concern of the pastor to lead the flock away from danger. The man of God is to be vigilant in serving as a sentinel to protect God’s people and guard them from danger.

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<sup>192</sup> Richard L. Mayhue and Robert L. Thomas, Eds., The Master’s Perspective on Pastoral Ministry (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002), 110.

*The Pastor's Role in Church Discipline*

The Bible teaches that God lovingly guides and directs His children, and disciplines them as necessary for their own godliness and for His glory (Heb 12:5-11). Mark Dever wrote: “In its broadest sense, church discipline is the whole complex of teaching, preaching, structures, practices, and censures which clarifies acceptable behavior from that which is unacceptable for members of a local church.”<sup>193</sup>

Church discipline includes formative discipline to encourage, practice, and instruct to show people what is right and good. It also includes corrective discipline to restore and redeem in a spirit of love. Matt 18:15-20 and I Cor 5 are foundational passages in understanding the steps and process of corrective church discipline.

The pastor has the responsibility to lovingly, yet firmly guide the flock to apply the Word of God as it directs in this area. For the spiritual health, wellbeing, and purity of the church body, church discipline must be practiced and the pastor must have the courage in the twenty-first century to stand for truth. It is also important because the purity of the church is a witness to a lost world. The pastor is not chiefly responsible for church discipline in the church, but he is responsible to lead the church to be an environment where the body of Christ responds to sin and to people going down the wrong path in a godly manner. The authority to apply church discipline lies with the congregation as a whole.

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<sup>193</sup> Mark Dever, “Biblical Church Discipline”, *9Marks*; available at <http://www.9marks.org/Mark7/LessonD/Slide1of3>, Internet; accessed February 18, 2007.



### *Pastoral Visitation*

Pastoral visitation is another duty of the pastor. The Bible does not include a systematic model for pastoral visitation that explains in detail how it should be done. There are principles however in God's Word that indicate it is a legitimate responsibility. In Jeremiah, the shepherds who did not personally attend to the needs of the people were admonished for being unfaithful in their duties. "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture! Says the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings, says the Lord" (Jer 23:1-2). God was displeased with the shepherds who failed in their duty to attend to the needs of the flock.

### *Visiting in Times of Need*

The Lord Jesus promised special blessings for people who visit in times of need. "I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me . . . . Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matt 25:36,40). While this passage has eschatological implications, it is obvious from it that Jesus taught the importance of Christians visiting and ministering in times of need.

Jesus made house calls personally. He called His followers His friends (Jn 15:15). David Hansen wrote, "Home visitation is an act of friendship . . . . A friend's visit is a parable of undeserved grace, an act of love, an unnecessary and lavish show of affection.

Whether the mission of the visit is to bring encouragement, to admonish, or to share joy or tragedy, it is the visit of a friend and is therefore enacted grace.”<sup>194</sup>

In contrast, he pronounced judgment on those who failed in this regard. “I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me . . . . Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me” (Matt 25:43,45).

When Jesus saw the leper and heard his request for healing, Mk 1:41 says that he felt pity, *Gk. splangchnistheis*, for him. This is a strong word that was used many times to describe Jesus’ response to the physical and spiritual needs of people.<sup>195</sup> He empathized with people and identified with their pain and suffering.

The Scripture indicates that in the early church there was generally much personal involvement among the body of Christ as they shared from “house to house” (Acts 2:46). In Acts 6 there was a perception that the Hellenist widows were being overlooked in favor of the Jewish widows. The apostles summoned the disciples and instructed them to seek out men of “good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:3).

The disciples would in turn focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). Acts 20:20 indicates Paul’s ministry from house to house was in the context of ministering the Word, not mundane matters. Acts 6 did not preclude the apostles from

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<sup>194</sup> David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry Without All the Answers* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 117.

<sup>195</sup> Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark: Black’s New Testament Commentary* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, reprint 1991), 79.

visiting, but it indicates their work had a specific focus to instruct and lead people in the Word of God both publicly and privately.

Visiting the sick and particularly hospital visitation is an important part of the pastor's ministry of care. Homer A. Kent concluded that visiting the sick and particularly hospital visitation, "is one of the most precious privileges of the pastor. During a time of illness, folks need sympathy and help in a very definite way. They are responsive."<sup>196</sup> Those visited will not so much remember what the pastor says during the time of need, but simply that he came. His visits should be spiritual in nature. Thomas C. Oden adds, "Ordained ministry has a special representative role in visiting the sick, which involves not just conversation, but teaching, praying, healing, and consoling in Christ's name on behalf of the whole community (Matt 10:1; Lk 9:1-2; Mk 3:13-14)."<sup>197</sup> The pastor is a representative of Jesus Christ, and his focus should be on the goodness, faithfulness, forgiveness, and love of God.<sup>198</sup>

### *Difficulties in Visitation*

The act of visiting from house to house in a systematic fashion has grown increasingly difficult in the United States in the twenty-first century. Neil Wiseman observed, "Keeping in touch with people is harder now than ever before. Vast changes in family, school, work, and culture cause scheduling problems. Husband and wife are both

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<sup>196</sup> Kent, *The Pastor and His Work*, 278.

<sup>197</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*, 249.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

employed outside the home. Evenings and weekends are full. Getting into most people's schedule is so difficult that it's easy to just give up trying."<sup>199</sup>

In years gone by when the United States was much more rural, visitation in a country setting was more easily managed. Beginning in 1950 there was a decided shift away from people living on farms and in rural areas. A recent study showed that only one percent of people in the United States now live on farms.<sup>200</sup> Several factors have changed the landscape of pastoral ministry in this regard as society has become more urban in nature.

First, society is much more mobile. With the convenient transportation modes that we have, people come and go with great frequency. Second, schedules are very busy. It is not unusual for both mother and father to work outside of the home and for the children to be involved in not only school, but also multiple extracurricular activities. Third, with the mobility of society and busy schedules, there also seems to be an increase in people withdrawing into their homes in their leisure time, and not being as open to visitors, even announced visitors.

Even though there are greater challenges in carrying out regular visitation, it is still a vital part of who the pastor is and what he does for people, particularly in their time of need. Neil Wiseman asserted, "Being a pastor is something you are much more than

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<sup>199</sup> William Willimon, Dallas Willard, Larry Burkett, Michael Slaughter, H.B. London, Dale Galloway, Jesse Middendorf, Neil Wiseman, Ron Blake, Wayne Schmidt, Jim Pettit, Darius Salter, Jeannie McCullough, The Pastor's Guide to Effective Ministry. (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 2002), 111.

<sup>200</sup> Allison Tarmann, "Fifty Years of Demographic Change in Rural America", Population Reference Bureau; available at <http://www.prb.org/Template.cfm?Section=PRB&template=/Content Management/Content>, Internet; accessed May 26, 2006.

something you do. Its loftiest responsibilities are speaking for God in the pulpit and representing God to folks in their times of need-- a presence, a caring, and a nearness rolled into comfort for the parishioner and satisfaction for the minister. The need for loving pastors has never been more urgent than now. In a high-tech and low-touch society, millions feel isolated, lonely, and hungry for closer human relationships.”<sup>201</sup>

Though it is not a reasonable expectation for the pastor of the middle sized church to do systematic in home visitation from house to house, he can still be undertake a ministry of visitation and stay connected with the people. The value of visitation is that it enables the pastor to better understand the people to whom he ministers and the environments from which they come. When he has the opportunity to connect on a personal level, it improves his preaching and helps him to better understand God’s people.

At a minimum, the pastor should make it a practice to lead out in the regular evangelistic outreach and visitation ministry of the church. Through this, he will have opportunity to have contact with new members, visit prospects for the church, and lead his people to reach out by his own example. Though he should not be expected to bear the full load, even the busiest pastor should also periodically take part in the church’s ministry to homebound people and those in nursing homes and long term care facilities. This is very meaningful not only to those who can no longer physically be a part of the church, but it is also a ministry to their families.

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<sup>201</sup> William Willimon, Dallas Willard, Larry Burkett, Michael Slaughter, H.B. London, Dale Galloway, Jesse Middendorf, Neil Wiseman, Ron Blake, Wayne Schmidt, Jim Pettit, Darius Salter, Jeannie McCullough, The Pastor’s Guide to Effective Ministry. 109.

In some areas, pastoral visitation is easier than others. Where traditional methods work, the pastor should utilize them. In settings where traditional methods are not as effective, the pastor can utilize the modern conveniences of email and telephone to stay in frequent personal contact with a larger number of parishioners. Periodically communicating with people in the congregation through birthday cards and recognition of other special days, is also a way to have contact, even though it is not physically visiting a person.

### *Developing a Culture of Nurturing*

The pastor should lead the congregation in developing a culture of nurturing. “Instead of the pastor conceptualizing the nurturing task as all his responsibility, the goal must be to mobilize the congregation to reach out in care and nurture to each other and to needs outside their community of faith.”<sup>202</sup> The ministry is then shared, and others besides the pastor learn what it means to touch lives and meet needs in personal ways.

### *Biblical Pastoral Counseling*

Another component of pastoral care is pastoral counseling. Counseling for the pastor, and giving direction in spiritual matters, is a significant responsibility. The question may be asked, ‘with all of the competing models for counseling that are available to the pastor, which one should he follow?’ Should he focus strictly on biblical counseling or take an integrationist approach? In order to answer the question, it is helpful to distinguish between the two.

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.,101.

What is biblical counseling? Jay Adams gives one definition of biblical counseling:

From biblical times onward, God's people have counseled nouthetically. The word itself is biblical. It comes from the Greek noun *nouthesia* (verb: *noutheteō*). The word, used in the New Testament primarily by the apostle Paul, is translated "admonish, correct or instruct." This term, which probably best describes biblical counseling, occurs in such passages as Romans 15:14: "I myself am convinced about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and competent to counsel one another." In that passage, the apostle was encouraging members of the Roman church to do informal, mutual counseling, something that all Christians today should learn, as well. On the other hand, the leaders of a congregation are to counsel nouthetically in a formal manner as a part of their ministry: "Now we ask you, brothers, to recognize those who labor among you, and manage you in the Lord, and counsel you."<sup>203</sup>

John Piper further defines biblical counseling: "Biblical counseling is God-centered, Bible-saturated, emotionally-in-touch use of language to help people become God-besotted, Christ-exalting, joyfully self-forgetting lovers of people."<sup>204</sup> Biblical counseling is founded on the basic presupposition that God's Word is not only inerrant, infallible, and immutable, but it is also sufficient to meet all the needs of man. "His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (2 Pet 1:3).

The Bible, God's Holy Word, is sufficient as the source of authority and direction for life. Jay Adams wrote, "The Bible itself provides the principles for understanding and

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<sup>203</sup> Jay E. Adams, "What is Nouthetic Counseling?", [The Institute for Nouthetic Counseling](http://www.nouthetic.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=8); available at [http://www.nouthetic.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=8](http://www.nouthetic.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=8); Internet, accessed May 27, 2006.

<sup>204</sup> John Piper, "God's Glory is the Goal of Biblical Counseling", [The Journal of Biblical Counseling](#), Volume 20, Number 2, 2002, Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, Glenside, PA.

engaging in nouthetic counseling and directs Christian ministers to do such counseling as a part of their life calling in the ministry of the Word.<sup>205</sup>

The biblical counselor understands that it is God who creates, redeems, and sustains His creatures. The most basic need of people is not happiness, or even satisfaction in this life. The most basic need that all men have is to be in a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ and to be conformed to His image (Rom 8:29).

A biblical counselor could be any person who uses the Word of God as a foundation for sharing truth with a person who needs to “escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Pet 1:4).<sup>206</sup> Therefore, the biblical counselor compares the person he is counseling with a fixed standard, God’s Word. His goal is for the counselee to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ through biblical change and sanctification.

It is inconsistent for a Christian to profess Christ and His adequacy, and on the other hand not believe that God can help with emotional and spiritual problems. The Bible is sufficient to answer and address every need and problem the Christian faces. There is no need to add to it, nor take away from it. God’s Word is either sufficient or deficient, one cannot have it both ways.

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<sup>205</sup> Jay E. Adams, A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), IX.

<sup>206</sup> Henry Brandt and Kerry L. Skinner, The Word for the Wise: Making Scripture the Heart of Your Counseling Ministry (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 19.



The word psychology means “the study of the soul.”<sup>207</sup> Gary R. Collins argued that many Christian Psychologists who are integrationist in practice believe that “even though the Bible is all true, it does not follow that all truth is in the Bible. In mathematics, medicine, physics, geography, marine biology, and a host of other areas, there is much truth that is not mentioned in the Bible. God in His wisdom has allowed human beings to discover truths about the universe that are not discussed in Scripture.”<sup>208</sup>

Many integrationists argue that the best of psychology can be integrated with the truth of God’s Word, as long as it is not contrary to God’s Word, in order to help bring healing to people in need. According to Ed Bulkley, “Integrationists see a categorical difference between psychological and spiritual problems and how to solve those problems. They say that the medical doctor should treat the body, the psychologist or psychiatrist should treat the mind, and the pastor should deal with the spirit.”<sup>209</sup>

The major problem with modern “Christian Psychology” is that historically, the study of the soul of man was approached from a spiritual standpoint. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) had a profound impact, not for good, on the approach. Freud, the father of modern psychology, was an unbelieving humanist who devised psychology as a

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<sup>207</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr. and Wayne A. Mack, Introduction to Biblical Counseling (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1994), 8.

<sup>208</sup> Gary R. Collins, Can You Trust Psychology? (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 94.

<sup>209</sup> Ed Bulkley, Why Christians Can’t Trust Psychology (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1993), 26.

substitute for religion. Before Freud, the study of the soul was thought of as a spiritual discipline. In other words it was inherently associated with religion.

Freud's chief contribution was to define the human soul and the study of human behavior wholly in secular terms. He utterly divorced anthropology (the study of human beings) from the spiritual realm and thus made the way for atheistic, humanistic, and rationalistic theories about human behavior.<sup>210</sup>

From Freud's work have grown a multitude of theories and psychological systems. It is estimated that there are more than "250 competing and contradictory psychological systems in America alone."<sup>211</sup> Not all that integrationists have to offer is bad. Some of it is helpful where it lines up with biblical truth. The major problem is with the foundation of the system. It rests on psychological principles that came to prominence through men like Sigmund Freud who were godless secular humanists.

One of the unfounded, major arguments against utilizing strictly biblical counseling is that it does not take into account physiological problems that could cause legitimate psychological problems and mental illnesses. This is not a well founded objection. Even early on in the movement to restore true biblical counseling to the church, physiological causes for problems were recognized. D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, the great preacher, was educated as a physician. He noted, "Depression and certain mental illnesses often have causes that are physical rather than spiritual. Pernicious anemia,

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<sup>210</sup> MacArthur and Mack, Introduction to Biblical Counseling , 8.

<sup>211</sup> Bulkley, Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology , 32.

atherosclerosis, porphyria, and even gout are physical diseases than can produce dementia or produce depression.”<sup>212</sup>

The wise biblical counselor will always, as a first step, encourage counselees to rule out legitimate health concerns as sources of their problems by consulting with their medical doctor. Once physiological problems have been confidently ruled out, the biblical counselor can deal with the spiritual issues. The wise biblical counselor will work in partnership with a person’s medical doctor, and yield to the expertise of the medical doctor in all matters of legitimate physiological illness.

Another area where this applies is in the area of physiological addictions to certain drugs where a person’s body has become addicted to and dependent on a drug whether legal or illegal. In these cases, medical care must be involved to detoxify the body and prepare the person to receive spiritual and biblical counseling, to help break the addictive behavior that led to the physical problem.

At its heart, biblical counseling is discipleship. It involves encouraging and helping the counselee to see things from God’s perspective, to rely on God and His Word for their peace and direction, and to seek true change from the inside out, rather than from the outside in, by the Spirit of God. The pastor relies on the Bible as his textbook, and the Spirit of God as the change agent, to bring about life transformation. According to Richard Ganz, many depict Biblical counselors as “unfeeling, uncaring, insensitive Bible-thumpers who use a lead-plated Bible on the skulls of impenitent sinners.”<sup>213</sup> Nothing could be further from the truth. It is the Biblical counselor who best communicates the

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<sup>212</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Healing and Medicine (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1987), 144-145.

<sup>213</sup> Richard Ganz, PsychoBabble: The Failure of Modern Psychology and the Biblical Alternative (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1993), 73.

love of God, the hope and compassion of Jesus Christ, and real answers that are founded in the Word of God.

Biblical counseling should take place within the context of the ministry of the local church and under the authority of the local church. Churches should not think in terms of starting counseling ministries, the church needs to understand that it is a counseling ministry. God has commanded the pastor to use the Bible to faithfully oversee and train people in righteousness and godliness (Tit 1:9). People who are struggling should see the church as a place to find answers. Christians should counsel one another (Gal 6:1), and there should be ongoing teaching and counseling (Col 1:25).

It is in the context of the church that good theology is taught and maintained and that people are equipped to help others. To refer counseling out to para-church agencies and stand alone counseling ministries as a first response is contrary to the Word of God. The Body of Christ can be the source of blessing to countless hurting individuals. Pastoral care without biblical pastoral counseling is an oxymoron. The pastor, as the undershepherd of Jesus Christ, is the lead counselor in the Body.

#### *Premarital Counseling and the Wedding Ministry*

Preparing and counseling couples for marriage is a significant part of the pastor's ministry. A wedding ministry should be viewed within the framework of the local church. It is not wise for churches to offer stand alone weddings apart from the congregation that has been entrusted to them by God. As part of his ministry, the wise pastor will require basic marriage preparation counseling prior to performing a wedding.

As a part of marriage preparation counseling, a couple should be expected to be a part of a local church upon marriage, if they expect God's blessing on their union. The couple will of course not always continue to be a part of the church they are being married in. Due to the mobile nature of modern society, people often return to the church of their childhood and teenage years for marriage, and then ultimately be part of another body of believers where they live due to their vocation or other factors.

The primary issue is if a pastor is going to perform a legitimately Christian wedding, the marriage must be between professing believers in Jesus Christ. A believer and an unbeliever should not be yoked together (2 Cor 6:14) and there is no reason to yoke together two unbelievers in a Christian wedding if they are not willing to surrender themselves to God.

One of the most significant issues the pastor faces in the twenty-first century is couples who are cohabiting. Researchers estimate that as many as 50% of Americans cohabit at one time or another prior to marriage.<sup>214</sup> George Barna reported that 60% of Americans believe the best way to establish a successful marriage is to cohabit prior to marriage.<sup>215</sup> It is within this confused moral maze that the twenty-first century pastor must minister.

The pastor must determine ahead of time what his convictions are regarding sexual immorality outside of marriage, and resolve to approach the issue firmly yet lovingly. The Bible is clear that sexual activity unites two people as one flesh (Eph 5:31).

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<sup>214</sup> Larry L. Bumpass, James A. Sweet, and Andrew Cherlin, "The Role of Cohabitation in the Declining Rates of Marriage", Journal of Marriage and Family 53 (1991), 914.

<sup>215</sup> George Barna, The Future of the American Family (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 131.

To unite with another person sexually, outside of marriage, is sexual immorality. The Bible instructs the believer to “flee sexual immorality” (I Cor 6:18). Twenty five different New Testament passages condemn sexual immorality. God’s people are to be sanctified and avoid this kind of lifestyle (I Thess 4:3-5).

When counseling the couple who is engaged in sexual immorality and or cohabiting, the pastor should guide the couple to repentance based on the Word of God. The pastor should refuse to marry a couple who is cohabiting until repentance and a visible change has taken place, with the couple separating physically for a time. This guards the purity of the church and is a powerful testimony to a watching world.

This approach is not a popular one and the pastor risks losing couples from the church. The great likelihood however, is that a couple who is cohabiting and refuses the counsel of the pastor is unlikely to become faithful in the church anyway. The experience of this pastor shows that when this approach is taken, positive results outpace negative ones and it has a powerful impact on the couple being counseled, as well as on others in the church who are observing the situation from a distance.

Another significant issue the pastor must consider in premarital counseling and the wedding ministry in the twenty-first century is divorce. “The National Center for Health Statistics released a report which found that 43% of first marriages end in separation or divorce within 15 years.”<sup>216</sup> With the rampant rate of divorce, the pastor will be faced with the issue of divorce and remarriage. The Bible is clear that divorce is not God’s desire for His people. The biblical allowances for divorce are unfaithfulness by a spouse (Mt 10) and abandonment by an unbeliever (I Cor 7). It would seem that if these

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<sup>216</sup> Rose M. Kreider and Jason M. Fields, “Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces”, US Census Bureau, Feb 2002, 17.

are biblically permissible circumstances for divorce, remarriage would also be permissible under these circumstances.

Beyond these circumstances, there is a wide variation on the positions of pastors, related to whom they will and will not perform marriage ceremonies for. The pastor must decide where he stands on these issues biblically and how they affect his premarital counseling. This author does not believe that divorce is an unpardonable sin. If there is no possibility of reconciliation between a divorced couple (remarriage to another person has taken place, etc.) and one spouse desires to marry another person it would seem to be permissible. If there have been wrongs committed, the pastor needs to be sure that genuine repentance has taken place, and that there are no outstanding issues that need to be addressed.

There are typically additional complications when children from previous marriages are involved. Careful counsel needs to take place in order to prepare the couple for the unique challenges they will face. Ministering to blended families is a significant part of twenty-first century ministry.

The wedding is primarily a celebration of God and the institution of marriage. The pastor should maintain oversight of the planning of the wedding in order to ensure a worshipful service. In a time when individualization reigns, the pastor must utilize his authority so that the wedding maintains the proper focus of worship. The pastor is ultimately responsible for the entirety of the ceremony and it reflects on his ministry.

### *Marriage Counseling*

The pastor should be prepared to offer marital counseling as a significant part of his biblical counseling ministry as well. The health of the church is directly related to the health of the families in the church. Marriage counseling involves assisting couples with common difficulties in relationships related to communication, cooperation, and relationship building. It also involves more in-depth issues related to interpersonal conflicts and times of crises in the marriage.

The congregation should know in times of marital difficulties they can turn to the man of God for wise spiritual counsel and direction, rather than being turned aside to a para-church ministry or secular agency. An important component of marriage counseling is providing opportunities in the church for marriage enrichment and development. This includes offering discipleship studies on marriage, as well as marriage conferences and retreats. This gives couples the opportunity to anticipate problems and know how to deal with them appropriately, as well as how to maintain a healthy relationship.

### *Crisis Counseling*

Crisis care is also a major part of pastoral counseling. Jay Adams stated, “Much of the New Testament is crisis oriented. A number of the epistles, especially, were written to meet crises in the lives of individuals and churches. These crises involved all sorts of problems-- heresy, apostasy, congregational division, disorder, death, persecution, immorality . . . . Without a doubt, there is a rich lode of theoretical and practical ore available in the Bible to the crisis counselor.”<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Jay Adams, Coping With Counseling Crises (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, Co, 1977), 1.



A variety of situations may qualify as crises; death, domestic violence, family strife, child abuse, marital conflict, job loss, and more. When approaching crises, the pastor should prepare his own heart and soul by asking the Spirit of God for guidance and help as he ministers. Thomas Oden commented; “It is not surprising that individuals and families should in those times look toward pastoral wisdom, guidance and practical support. For the pastor is, after all, the one who has already been publicly speaking of meaning in life and death, of the providence of God amid trials, and of the incomparable value of the individual before God. Indeed, it is a rare and distinctive privilege of ministry to be welcomed into the small, quiet, broken circle of the family in such critical times.”<sup>218</sup>

The man of God has the opportunity to offer his presence and the hope and peace of God in the midst of crisis. Mel Lawrenz offered several suggestions for the pastor in being prepared for crises: “1. Remember that ministry in response to the unexpected is not an interruption; 2. Grief work is a central work of the church; 3. Help leaders develop a minuteman mentality; 4. Spread the task around; 5. Have plans to communicate clearly in a rapidly unfolding crisis.”<sup>219</sup> The larger the church is, the more important it is that the pastoral care of the church be shared because the number of crises is multiplied many times over. When the church has a planned method of response, crises will be much more manageable for the pastor and for those who are assisting him in the ministry of care.

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<sup>218</sup> Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry, 294.

<sup>219</sup> Mel Lawrenz, “Crisis Ready”. Leadership, Fall 2004, Vol. XXV, No 4, pg 62; available at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2004/004/7.62.html>; Internet, accessed May 27, 2006.

There are several keys to offering good pastoral care in times of crisis. The pastor should remain calm and be careful not to over identify with the fear, panic and insecurity of those in crisis. He should see crisis as an opportunity to minister and realize that his presence is usually much more important than his advice. He should go into the situation, clarify what is going on, do damage control as much as possible, and offer the peace of God to those who are suffering.

### *Death and Funeral Ministry*

Death and funeral ministry comprise a significant part of crisis care. The pastor is often called upon to come alongside families when loved ones are nearing death. Whether the death is expected or unexpected, it still serves as a crisis for the family involved. The pastor's presence is important during these times to point people to God, and the secure hope believers have in Him.

When death does come to a home, the pastor should not delay, but should place the call to that home at the top of his priorities. It is important that the pastor make contact with the family as soon as possible to offer a word of spiritual comfort and serve as a calming presence. It is a high and holy calling to be God's man, representing the peace of God to a family in crisis.

The culture of funerals varies by locale and tends to change and transition over time. This author has witnessed a significant change in funerals in recent years. In the not too distant past, the pastor was the central figure in the typical funeral, offering a message of hope from God's Word. God's Word was central to the process.

In recent years, the focus has shifted more and more away from the pastor and funerals have become much more personalized. Not all of it is bad, as it brings to the forefront positive aspects of the deceased person's life. The major problem is that the shift is significantly toward a greater focus on the person, and less focus on God and eternal matters. It is not uncommon for there to be several eulogies offered by family members and friends, as well as open opportunities for those present to speak if they so desire, thereby crowding out the opportunity of the pastor to offer a definitive word from the Lord.

This is a delicate area that the pastor must approach carefully. He should determine as the undershepherd of Jesus Christ to maintain the proper focus and guide the family to do what is appropriate for the funeral. The pastor should work to keep a worshipful focus rather than being sidetracked by too much personalization of the service. The pastor should know what he expects in a funeral service and not be afraid to firmly but lovingly direct the family.

A pastor's funeral ministry offers a tremendous opportunity to glorify God at a time when people's hearts and souls are most open to considering the realities of life and death. The pastor should always be gracious and kind, but firm, when speaking of these subjects scripturally and clearly preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At nearly every funeral there are lost people present who were somehow related to, or acquainted with the deceased, and it is a wonderful time to direct people to God.

*Shepherding Leadership and Pastoral Care*

According to Derek Prime and Alistair Begg, the shepherding model of leadership is “synonymous with pastoral care. It is the practical, individual, and spiritual care of Christ’s people as His lambs and sheep (Jn 10:14).”<sup>220</sup> The Good Shepherd knows His sheep, nurtures them, speaks to them, and cares for them in a way that inspires them to follow.

Ron Blake argued, “Being a pastor is something you are much more than something you do. Its loftiest responsibilities are speaking for God in the pulpit and representing God to folks in their time of need-- a presence, a caring, a nearness rolled into comfort for the parishioner and satisfaction for the minister.”<sup>221</sup> This defines the ministry of pastoral care. Shepherding leadership and pastoral care go hand in hand.

### C. Pastoral Care Survey Conclusions and Directives

Survey results regarding the pastoral care ministry of pastors of middle sized churches reflect some important results. These results can be utilized to better understand how the ministry of pastoral care is being practiced. Directives related to pastoral care in the twenty-first century are given in order to assist the pastor in faithfully fulfilling the calling that God has given Him in this area of competency.

#### *Preparation for Pastoral Care*

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<sup>220</sup> Prime and Begg, On Being a Pastor, 150.

<sup>221</sup> William Willimon, Dallas Willard, Larry Burkett, Michael Slaughter, H.B. London, Dale Galloway, Jesse Middendorf, Neil Wiseman, Ron Blake, Wayne Schmidt, Jim Pettit, Darius Salter, Jeannie McCullough, The Pastor’s Guide to Effective Ministry. 101.

Of pastors responding to the survey, 90.2%, indicated that they had at least a foundational course in pastoral care and counseling in formal education. More than 54% had two or more courses in pastoral care indicating an emphasis on the subject in the educational structure.

While the overwhelming majority of respondents were formally trained in pastoral care, only 5.3% indicated that they believe they were “very prepared” educationally for the task of pastoral care. Formal education apparently does not adequately prepare the pastor for the responsibility of pastoral care. Pastoral care is complex in its nature and depth and formal education is valuable as a foundation for ministry. A majority, 62.4%, indicated they at least “often” use the methods learned in formal training. There is clearly value in formal training, but it should serve primarily as the foundation and theological framework for ministry.

Of respondents, 70.9%, have participated in continuing education, primarily through conferences and seminars. There is a definite interest in more in-depth preparation for the task of pastoral care. When asked what the most helpful training was that they have received, 47.3%, indicated “on the job” training and 22.6% indicated “observing more experienced pastors”. Only 11.8% indicated formal education. There is no substitute for putting theory into practice. Because of the complexity of pastoral care needs, it is difficult if not impossible to be prepared for every potential situation that a pastor will encounter. Formal education can prepare one with basic principles and tools to use in pastoral care, but day to day experience is an invaluable teacher.

When asked to list five important functions of pastoral care, the most listed functions by survey respondents were: compassion; listening; prayer; encouragement and

hope; and presence with the people. Compassion and love for people is an extremely important motivator for ministry. Pastors must feel compassion for people and empathize with their needs. Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom and healed people and the Scripture indicates, “When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matt 9:36-37). The pastor must be a good listener, identifying with the people and not only hearing what they are saying, but listening with the intent of understanding their burdens and needs.

There was also a clear emphasis in the survey responses on the importance of “presence with the people” in times of need. In many ministry encounters, people do not look for specific answers, they instead seek the presence of someone whom they can trust and who represents God. This spiritual presence offers hope and encouragement to people. The pastor can bring calm to unsettled situations in a way that points people to their true hope in God.

Of respondents, 65.2% identified themselves as “Integrationists”, utilizing both the Bible and principles of psychology in their counseling ministries. Psychology has had a profoundly negative impact on the ministry, with many pastors utilizing psychological principles when they counsel, or neglecting the difficult task of counseling altogether and instead referring their people to others. Only 34.8% of pastors identified themselves as “Strictly Biblical” in their counseling ministries. Many pastors have been convinced that counseling should be left to the professionals because of the complexities, and as a result they have lost confidence in the sufficiency of the Word of God.

Ed Bulkeley wrote:

Fully persuaded that psychological training is necessary to counsel effectively, most pastors today refer their parishioners to psychologists and psychiatrists for treatment for serious emotional and behavioral disorders. Christian publishing houses pour out an endless stream of books written by psychologists to help believers solve their problems of living. These experts appear on Christian radio and television and produce film series to communicate their belief that pastors and churches can help parishioners with minor problems, but serious disorders must be entrusted to professional counselors.<sup>222</sup>

This raises significant questions as it relates to the pastoral counseling ministry. Is God's Word truly sufficient to meet the needs of the modern day? If God's Word is sufficient, how is it best applied in a counseling ministry? If God's Word is not sufficient, which of the two hundred-fifty competing therapy models that are based on secular ideology is a pastor to use?

Obviously, for legitimate, diagnosable medical problems that are based in physiological issues, the pastor should rely on the appropriate medical professionals to treat people. The vast majority of problems that the pastor encounters on a routine basis however, are not rooted in physical problems but spiritual problems. For all spiritual problems, God's Word is sufficient to meet the needs of man without supplementing it with psychological principles (2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12). It is time that pastors reclaim this area of ministry that God has entrusted to His Body, the church, and give people real hope and point them to lasting change that is brought about by the Holy Spirit.

More than half of respondents, 59.3%, spend between 9 and 18 hours on the pastoral care ministry each week. This is a significant amount of time each week indicating that this is a very important part of pastoral ministry. Several respondents also indicated that the amount of time dedicated to pastoral care varies from week to week depending on the needs of the congregation.

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<sup>222</sup> Bulkley, Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology, 23.

### *Current Factors Impacting Pastoral Care*

Of respondents, 79.7% indicated that the task of pastoral care has changed significantly with the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. This necessitates the pastor understanding the changing nature of the ministry in order to offer effective pastoral care. The basic needs of people have not changed, but several key circumstances of life have changed in the twenty first century.

### *The Busy Pace of Life*

One significant change indicated is the increasingly busy pace of life in the twenty-first century. People are constantly on the go and keep full schedules. Richard A. Swenson, a medical doctor, noted, “Booked up weeks in advance, we are a busy people. In an attempt to squeeze more things in, we try to do two or three at the same time. Activity overload takes away the pleasure of anticipation and the delight of reminiscence.”<sup>223</sup>

Carl Honore commented: “Since the Industrial Revolution shifted the world into high gear, the cult of speed has pushed us to the breaking point. Consider the facts:

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<sup>223</sup> Richard A. Swenson, Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1992), 83.



Americans spend 40 percent less time with their children than they did in the 1960's; the average American spends seventy-two minutes of every day behind the wheel of a car; a typical business executive now loses sixty-eight hours a year to being put on hold."<sup>224</sup>

Americans are busy people and it impacts how and when we offer pastoral care to people. It is difficult to minister to people because it is often difficult to find them at home. It was also indicated in survey responses that people are not as open to receiving visitors into their homes, even if it is the pastor. This makes for a challenging environment of ministry and requires the pastor to connect with people not only in traditional ways, but in utilizing modern technologies such as email, phone calls and the like. It is not the ideal connection, but it is still a connection just the same.

### *The Breakdown of the Family Structure*

Another significant change is the breakdown of the family structure. There are many more broken homes. According to D. James Kennedy, "Since the end of World War II, the institution of marriage has declined and social conventions that depend on strong families, from child-bearing to the preservation of vital communities, have suffered grave harm."<sup>225</sup> He goes on to outline some startling statistics. "In 1960 there were 74 marriages for every 1,000 unmarried women and 9 divorces for every 1,000 married women. By 1991, there were just 54 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women and

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<sup>224</sup> Carl Honore, In Praise of Slowness: How a Worldwide Movement is Challenging the Cult of Speed (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2004), Cover.

<sup>225</sup> D. James Kennedy, "Issues Tearing Our Nation's Fabric", Leadership University (Coral Gables, Florida: Coral Ridge Ministries, 1991); available at <http://www.leaderu.com/issues/fabric/chapter03.html>, Internet; accessed June 3, 2006.

21 divorces per 1,000 married women. The marriage rate dropped a full 25 percent, while the divorce rate increased by 230 percent.”<sup>226</sup>

Richard Land, President of Ethics and Religious Liberties Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention cited some startling statistics related to the breakdown of the family:

Less than half of our children currently grow up in intact families; In 1960, 80 percent of our children were reared in homes where the father and mother were both in the home and were married to each other; More than a million children a year experience the pain of parental divorce; There has been in the last ten years a 400 percent increase in child abuse significant enough to require a doctor’s attention; Every hour our children watch 78 violent acts on television; Every day in America 2,795 teenage girls get pregnant; Every day in America 1,106 of those girls snuff out the lives of their unborn children through abortion; Every 78 seconds a teenager in America attempts suicide; In the last 30 years the suicide rate of teenage boys has quadrupled, the rate for girls has doubled; By the time they graduate from high school, 66 percent of American teenagers acknowledge they have used one or more illegal drugs.<sup>227</sup>

The breakdown of the family has not only been noted by the religious community, but by many others in society who are beginning to point to the value of strong families.

Patrick F. Fagan wrote: “Elected officials, social scientists, community leaders, and policymakers across the ideological spectrum are admitting that strong marriages are the key to improving social and personal well being. Increasingly, research is showing that children in married families are healthier, perform better in school, live in poverty less frequently, and are involved in crime or other destructive behaviors less often. But as

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid, Chapter 3.

<sup>227</sup> Richard Land, For Faith and Family (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 16-17.

marriages fail, social problems and social spending to deal with those problems increase.”<sup>228</sup>

This breakdown in family structure has complicated ministry needs, and made pastoral care more difficult. The twenty-first century pastor must be prepared to minister in a non-traditional environment and yet continue to point people to the ideal for the family that God has communicated to His people. The pastor cannot afford to be tempted to soften the message of the Bible and lower the bar of God’s standards simply because it is easier to accommodate society. He must stand firm on the Word of God and offer people hope and blessing if they will follow in God’s way.

#### *Significance of Congregational Expectations*

Expectations of pastoral care have undoubtedly changed somewhat with the transition into the twenty-first century. They tend to vary according to the size of the church, the culture in a particular area, the median age of the congregation, and the spiritual background of the congregation. Generally, the smaller the church, the greater level of expectation there is regarding the pastoral care ministry by the lead pastor. The larger the church is, the less expectation there is by the overall congregation on the lead pastor.

The culture in a particular area also tends to impact expectations. From this author’s experience in churches in the south, in eastern North Carolina and even deeper south in central Florida, pastoral care expectations are rather high. The culture tends to be

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<sup>228</sup> Patrick F. Fagan, ” Encouraging Marriage and Discouraging Divorce”. Backgrounder (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, March 26, 2001), 1; available at <http://www.heritage.org/library/backgrounder/bg1421.html>, Internet; accessed June 3, 2006.

open and personal in the interaction of people with others, and this impacts expectations for pastoral care. In West Virginia, this author has observed that people tend to be more reserved in the way they live their lives, and have a somewhat lower expectation for pastoral care. When it comes to expecting a response by the lead pastor, the level of expectation is lower.

The age of the congregation also impacts the expectations for pastoral care. Older congregations naturally have more health related personal needs which increases the crisis care ministry of the pastor. Older congregants may have a higher level of expectation of the pastor than younger people do as well.

The spiritual background of the congregation will have some impact on expectations as well. More spiritually mature congregations may have a higher expectation for pastoral care because they have a better understanding of the responsibility of the church to minister to the needs of the people. Those who have little or no spiritual background may not understand when it is appropriate to request care, or what level of care should be given when it is requested.

#### *Difference in Competency Levels*

Does the competency level of pastors in various sized churches vary in the area of pastoral care? At its foundational level as it relates to functional skills, the competency needed for the task is consistent regardless of the size of the church. The pastor as the undershepherd of Jesus Christ has a responsibility to shepherd the people and care for them while at the same time equip others to “do the work of the ministry” (Eph 4:11).

The needs of the people are similar in terms of what they need from basic pastoral care and counseling.

The size of the congregation significantly impacts how the pastor is to carry out the ministry of pastoral care. In the small church, of less than 200, the pastor is expected to offer a significant amount of personal ministry to the flock. In fact, this is often the dominate and most demanding part of his ministry. He typically knows the name of nearly everyone in the congregation. If he does not know the name, he at least can connect each person to a family in the church.

Much of this pastor's time is dedicated to offering personal pastoral care and counseling and his ministry is open to everyone in the body. These congregations usually expect to have their spiritual needs met through their personal relationship with the pastor. People in a church of less than 200 may tolerate sub-par preaching and church administration, but they will not tolerate sub-par pastoral care for long. Pastors of the small church often serve a chaplain role to a big family. In this setting, the pastor has the privilege of direct involvement in the highs and lows of people's lives.

If a pastor holds on to the absolute necessity of the level of pastoral care to all members that is often expected in the small church, he may become a hindrance to the church growing beyond 200. In the middle sized church of 200 to 600 in average worship attendance, the role of the pastor in pastoral care shifts dramatically. A larger amount of time in the middle sized church is devoted to preaching and church administration, and the pastor is forced by virtue of time limitations to step back from much of the direct ministry to the congregation at large, to coordinate and support the lay people who carry out much of the ministry.

The complexion of the ministry of pastoral care for the pastor in the middle sized church shifts to a greater focus on caring for the leaders of the ministry. The pastor bears the personal responsibility to care for the leaders of the body so they can in turn care for the body. He continues to minister to more peripheral needs as his schedule permits, but he cannot physically and spiritually bear the responsibility of personal care to hundreds of people. The needs are too great and the issues too complex.

The pastor of the large church with more than 600, almost exclusively transitions to pastoral care of his staff and their families, and of the primary leadership of the church. He continues to be the public figure who is still available for weddings and funerals and major crises within the body, but his ministry shifts to caring for the primary leadership of the congregation. People who value the large church experience are more willing to sacrifice a personal connection with the lead pastor. The pastor serves more in the role of maintaining congregational unity and stability than he does primary caregiver. He sets the standards for pastoral care to the congregation and takes the lead, but his role is lessened in relationship to the congregation overall.

#### *The Importance of Equipping the Saints*

The pastor of the middle sized church must be willing and able to equip the saints to “do the work of the ministry” (Eph 4:11) so that he is not overloaded to the point of spiritual and physical collapse. He still maintains his role as the undershepherd of Jesus to the body, and is the lead man in pastoral care, but the load of ministry shifts more and more to the congregation.

Moses faced this type of situation as leader of Israel. God had multiplied the people into a multitude (Deut 1:10). His father-in-law Jethro had noticed that Moses had taken the responsibility of ministering to the people himself, and was judging them without help from anyone else (Exod 18:14).

Moses asked the question, “How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints” (Deut1:12)? Jethro instructed Moses that he should “Select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times” (Exod 18:21-22). He told Moses, “If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all the people will also go to their place in peace” (Exod 18:23). Jethro recognized that two things would happen if Moses would do this. Moses would be able to endure and continue leading the people as God had called him to do. Then the people, by virtue of having their needs met, would be in peace.

This same kind of pattern can be noted in the ministry of Jesus. He preached to thousands, yet still found the time to minister to individuals as He went. The majority of His time on this earth, in day to day ministry, was spent with the twelve who in turn ultimately impacted an untold number of people. Jesus, though God in the flesh, saw the value of releasing the ministry to others so the impact could be multiplied.

The ministry of pastoral care is critically important to the life of a congregation. All people have trials, tribulations, and struggles and the body is to “stir up love and good works . . . exhorting one another” (Heb 10:24-25). It is only in an environment of mutual concern, love and encouragement, that a church can be spiritually healthy. In a healthy

environment, the needs of the people can be met, and others will be drawn to the body of Christ through it.



## CHAPTER SIX

### COMPETENCY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

#### PASTOR IN CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

This chapter focuses on church administration for the pastor, which includes oversight and leadership in the areas of mission (vision formulation, communication and implementation), manpower (staff and volunteer leadership), ministries (programs), management (church facilities) and money (finances). Though the church is to function primarily as a body and not a business, never has it been more important for the pastor to understand principles of good business and be able to apply them in a spiritual setting.

##### A. Foundations for Church Administration

Church administration is the structure around which the ministry is formed and around which the ministry functions. If a good structure is in place, the ministry can operate smoothly, and grow and develop according to its strengths. If a poor structure is in place, the ministry may be reactionary at its best and chaotic at its worst. A poor ministry structure is detrimental to the health and growth of a church.

### *Church Administration Defined*

Charles Tidwell defined church administration as, “The leadership that equips the church to be the church and to do the work of the church. It is the guidance provided by church leaders as they lead the church to use its spiritual, human, physical, and financial resources to move the church toward reaching its objectives and fulfilling its avowed purpose. It is enabling the children of God who comprise the church to become and do what they can become and to do what they can become and do, by God’s grace.”<sup>229</sup> At the core, church administration is organizing the church for the purpose of spiritual formation. It involves the whole church’s ministry.

### *Biblical Foundations of Church Administration*

The foundation for church administration is found in the Bible. According to James E. Means, “The basic Greek word for ministry, *Gk. diakonia*, has been translated ‘administration’ (I Cor 12:5; 2 Cor 9:12). The Latin prefix *ad-* adjoined to the word minister meant “toward ministry.” In the best understanding of Scripture and ministry, management refers to the wise ordering of the believing community so that its mission to individual members and to the world can be fulfilled.”<sup>230</sup> As the leader of the church, the pastor manages the resources of the church toward obedience to the God given purposes of the church. The Apostle Paul instructed the church at Corinth: “Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Cor 14:40).

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<sup>229</sup> Charles Tidwell, Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1985), 27.

<sup>230</sup> James E. Means, Effective Pastors for a New Century (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 56.

### B. The Mission and Motivation of the Church

The pastor leads the church to fulfill its God given mission. Aubrey Malphurs asserted, “The mission is what the ministry is supposed to be doing. Often the ministry’s vision will be an expansion of its mission . . . the strategy involves how a ministry will implement its mission and vision. Without a clear, practical strategy, a ministry will never realize its mission and vision.”<sup>231</sup> This segment of church administration therefore involves the mission, vision, and strategy.

The mission must be Scripture driven. The mission for all New Testament churches is the Great Commission, given by the Lord Jesus: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18-20).

This is the mission that God has given to the church. Every faithful church will embrace it. The authority for the mission comes from Jesus, and His power and presence give the ability to be faithful. He is the ruler over life, death, and eternity. The church is to go to lost people and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Bobby Welch stated the following in his book, *You the Warrior Leader*: “The quest is for souls. The Warrior Leader’s heart is preoccupied with souls. He believes that God’s focus is on souls, that God views all of humanity as souls-- either lost souls or saved souls. He believes that God’s passion is for all lost souls to become saved souls and

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<sup>231</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 14.

for all saved souls to win lost souls to Him. *The Warrior Leader* believes that he and others are to be consumed with fulfilling their mission. They are to equip a force-multiplying army to achieve this objective.”<sup>232</sup>

The charge of the mission is to go to where the people are, and God uses His witnesses to make disciples. People who surrender to Jesus are to be publicly obedient to Him in believers’ baptism and identify with the Lord and His church. Jesus said, “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Lk 14:23). The church has the privilege of partnering with God in His mission.

The motivation for the mission was given to the church by the Lord Jesus: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:37-39). The church is to be motivated by a deep love for God that is manifested in a love for others both inside and outside of the family of God. Love as a motivating factor is very powerful. The Christian life is not always easy, but when the church is compelled by love, it is a powerful force.

#### *Communication of the Mission and Motivation*

Once the mission is formulated and the underlying motivation is understood, it must then be communicated. The mission is what the church is to do and where the church is go, and the vision is how the church can get there. The communication of the mission is where vision is so critical. God’s Word indicates, “Where there is no vision,

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<sup>232</sup> Bobby Welch, *You The Warrior Leader: Applying Military Strategy for Victorious Spiritual Warfare* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004), 77.

the people perish” (Prov 29:18). Calvin Miller defined vision as “the photographic image that guides a pilgrimage to the goal it depicts.”<sup>233</sup> Vision has the effect of connecting the past, present and future. The servant leader who clearly communicates with his people will know where the church has come from in the past as a people, their current status in the present, and where they need to go in the future as well as how to get there. Haddon Robinson wrote, “A leader must have vision. We all see the shrouding mists, but leaders have seen the city. Leaders glimpse what others may not see and are captured by it. That’s why they risk everything to reach the city.”<sup>234</sup>

There are a number of excellent examples of vision connected to mission in God’s Word. In Gen 6, God gave Noah vision about what He was about to do. Wickedness had come upon the earth and God was preparing to destroy the earth by flood. God instructed Noah to build an ark and gave him specific instructions on what to do. Noah followed God’s instructions and in the leading up to the great deluge, Noah is described as a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet 2:4-10). He communicated the vision of what God was about to do. Only eight people in Noah’s family were saved and they ultimately replenished the earth. This is an example of a vision filled with the wrath of God, but also one that points to God’s grace. It is a good demonstration of how God communicates the vision to His man.

In Gen 12, God instructed Abram to get out of his country. He was instructed to go to a land that God would show him, and He would make him a great nation and bless

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<sup>233</sup> Calvin Miller, The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 63.

<sup>234</sup> Malphurs, Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 9.

all the families of the earth through him. Abram was obedient and communicated the vision to his family of what God was going to do.

God communicated the vision to Moses that He was going to give Israel the Promised Land. In Deut 8:7-9,10 God told Moses, “For the Lord your God is bringing you into a God land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey . . . . When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you.” Moses in turn communicated the vision to God’s people.

After Israel had been taken into captivity in Babylon, Nehemiah was given the vision by God to rebuild Jerusalem physically. He said to the people, “You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies in waster, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach. And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’ Then they set their hands to this good work” (Neh 2:17-18). The people were compelled by the vision of God communicated by Nehemiah to do the work God had given them.

The Lord Jesus in His ministry on this earth was a visionary. Throughout the Gospels there is a clear presentation of His vision. He communicated to the disciples that He would be crucified, buried, and raised again (Lk 24:7). He communicated His purpose for being on this earth (Lk 19:10). Jesus also outlined for His disciples what their role was in going out with the good news of the kingdom, and warned them of persecutions they would face and hardships they would endure (Lk 10:1-12).

Unfortunately, many servant leaders who serve as pastors apparently do not clearly understand the vision for the church they are serving. If the servant leader does not understand it, he cannot communicate it to the people. George Barna in researching pastors and vision found, “Only 2% could articulate the vision for their church . . . that’s one reason so many pastors are ineffective; they don’t know where they are going.”<sup>235</sup> If the people are going to be able to follow the vision, they must understand it.

Vision has the effect of focusing people. Rather than the efforts of the church being fragmented and haphazard, vision directs the people to focus on the mission that God has given them. According to Harold Westing, “The pastor and his staff must be pacesetters in the process of building a sense of common purpose in the congregation. That can be done in numerous ways, but the more people who can participate in the process, the more the congregation will own it, and the more unity there will be in its fulfillment.”<sup>236</sup> When a congregation understands the direction of the church and its major goals, there will be an increased and intense focus on staying on task.

Vision also encourages faithfulness. As people work around a unity of purpose, they are energized to be faithful in their particular area of ministry because they understand how it contributes to the overall mission of the church. There is a better understanding of how the individual’s work is contributing to the congregational effort. Each person is enabled to feel like part of the team accomplishing something of significance, and this encourages faithfulness.

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<sup>235</sup> John W. Kennedy, “The Man Who Brought Marketing to Church”, Leadership Magazine, (summer 1995), 125.

<sup>236</sup> Harold J. Westing, Church Staff Handbook: How to Build an Effective Ministry Team (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997), 19.

Furthermore, vision leads to a greater sense of fulfillment. As the church moves forward, people can see what is being done and how it fits into the overall mission. Service in their particular area of ministry as it fits with the overall mission brings personal fulfillment. Bobby Welch was once asked, “As a leader, what is your goal for your church staff and people?” He replied, “That when they come to the end of their earthly life they can look back to their days among us and say, those were some of my greatest days for the Lord because I was loved, appreciated, challenged, equipped, urged, trained, motivated, and stretched to my very best for Jesus and the winning of the lost.”<sup>237</sup>

When preparing to cast a vision, John Maxwell suggested that servant leaders should ask: “What do I want them to know, and what do I want them to do? And once you know the answer, keep communicating and filling in the blanks until you can sense that most of your people get it.”<sup>238</sup> The servant leader should be focused on constantly communicating the vision. Donald T. Phillips suggested, “Everywhere you go, at every conceivable opportunity, reaffirm, reassert, and remind everyone of the basic principles.”<sup>239</sup>

According to Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, every organization should ask: “What is your preferred image of the future? Is it one that inspires you or others to share it? If someone were coming to do a documentary on your organization, whom would they talk to, what would they say, what would be happening? How would you know if you are

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<sup>237</sup> Welch, *You The Warrior Leader*, 77.

<sup>238</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 360 Leader* (Nashville: Nelson Business Publisher, 2005), 249.

<sup>239</sup> Donald T. Phillips, *Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times* (New York: Warner Books, 1992), 169.



accomplishing the vision?”<sup>240</sup> This helps to clarify the vision and provides accountability in implementing it.

The strategy for implementing the vision will be outlined in more detail in the section on ministries (programs), and how they relate to fulfilling the particular vision that a church is following. A vision without a strategy for implementation is only a dream, not truly a vision. An effective vision will articulate not only the mission, but how it will be implemented.

### C. The Manpower of the Church

Manpower (staff and volunteer leadership), is the second segment of church administration that the pastor is responsible to oversee. Whether the pastor serves as a solo pastor or on a multiple staff, he has the responsibility to lead and be the primary point person in the church organization. There is a lot of emphasis on shared leadership and team building today, and it is certainly important to share the responsibilities and empower people so the organization can grow and flourish. However, every effective organization has a primary leader to whom people can point to as the leader.

Aubrey Malphurs wrote the following: “Today’s emphasis on co-leadership, especially in the church where it is known as lay elder rule, attempts to be biblical but most likely is an overreaction to leadership by a single tyrant or despot, or in some cases to weak or unskilled professional leadership. Not only is there a problem with finding a biblical foundation for co-leadership, the greater problem is that people cannot follow a

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<sup>240</sup> Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, The Servant Leader: Transforming Your Heart, Head, Hands, and Habits (Nashville: Countryman, 2003), 49.

group. It is imperative that there be a single leader or, on a ministry team a leader of leaders.”<sup>241</sup>

The pastor as servant leader has the responsibility to direct and manage the organization and to mobilize it to its greatest effectiveness. Jesus was and is obviously the leader of Christianity. As the Good Shepherd, He is the One who laid down His life for His sheep. In His ministry on this earth, Jesus knew what it meant to lead, and He understood what it meant to build a team around Him. In the words of Gene Getz: “What we see in Jesus Christ is an unequaled model. While he reached the multitudes, he was equipping a group of twelve men for an in-depth ministry. And he was equipping Peter and John for a more foundational ministry that would go beyond even that of the other apostles. This is obvious from the ministry of these two men as revealed in the Book of Acts, as well as by the New Testament literature they wrote.”<sup>242</sup>

George Barna reasoned, “Jesus called upon a group of uneducated, low-key, ill-trained, individuals whose character seemed pretty solid and who were willing to sacrifice whatever they had in order to be apprentices to the master leader.”<sup>243</sup> Jesus then poured His life into these men to help them become what God intended for them to become. The plan did not work to perfection, as there was one traitor in the group, Judas Iscariot, but Jesus exemplified what it means to build a team.

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<sup>241</sup> Malphurs, Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 44.

<sup>242</sup> Gene Getz, Sharpening the Focus of the Church (Chicago: Moody, 1974), 168-69.

<sup>243</sup> George Barna, The Power of Team Leadership: Finding Strength in Shared Responsibility (Waterbrook Press: Colorado Springs, 2001), 33.

Just as Jesus built a close knit group of followers in the inner circle of leadership, the pastor is to do the same thing. Calling, character, competency and team chemistry are all important factors in building the inner circle. The pastor must be certain, as much as he can be, of these four factors when building the church staff because these people serve as leaders of leaders. If leadership at the top is flawed, the organization will suffer the consequences. The larger the organization is, the more important the top down decision making is.

The inner circle of leaders set the tone for the overall organization. The number of the inner circle serving as ministry staff will depend on the size of the church. C. Peter Wagner reasoned, “You should have a program staff person (plus backup personnel such as secretaries) for each 100 active members.”<sup>244</sup> When applied to the middle sized church, this equates to as few as two and as many as six program staff that will need to be led by the pastor.

Harold J. Westing identified four leadership styles to help identify the type of leader a potential staff member is in order to try to match the needs of the congregation with the best leader.<sup>245</sup> The first type is the conceptual thinker who is a prophet-seer focusing on theology, philosophy, and rational thinking. This person is strongest in communicating vision and truth. The second type is the operational manager who is a steward. This person ensures everyone is doing their tasks in the proper sequence. The third type is the promoter who is an apostle of sorts communicating theology and

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<sup>244</sup> C. Peter Wagner, Leading Your Church to Growth (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1984), 213-214.

<sup>245</sup> Westing, Church Staff Handbook , 66-67.

encouraging the people. The fourth type is the negotiator who is a shepherd listening to bleeding hearts, bringing reconciliation in the body, and motivating the body.

The church staff needs to be well balanced in order to best facilitate ministry within the body. A well balanced staff complements the strengths and weaknesses of one another and meets the needs of the body in the most effective way. The trend in ministry staffing in recent years has been toward greater staff specialization. This is a business model that has been adapted to the church. In this model, a staff person is to find an area of specialty and excel at it. Some are advocating a return to more generalized ministry as a well balanced approach. Mark Dever stated, “What we want to work toward is a staff model that contributes to the integration of ministries, the evangelical camaraderie of pastors, and the unity of church members.”<sup>246</sup>

Rather than a fragmented ministry, this model encourages greater cohesiveness and balance in the church. Staff members still have responsibilities for specific areas of ministry but operate in their ministries more as pastor-shepherds than department managers in a corporation. Their concern is for the growth and health of the entire body and not only their area of ministry.

The pastor also has the responsibility to lead a larger group of volunteers that make up the larger circle of leadership. John Kramp explained, “Working with a team or working with people in an organization where they are paid for what they are doing is surprisingly similar. Leaders must enlist people to share in their vision. They must present a picture of a future that causes people to ‘sign up’ and volunteer their hearts to

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<sup>246</sup> Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2005), 165.

the efforts.”<sup>247</sup> Leading a voluntary army of workers is one of the greatest joys and one of the greatest challenges for any pastor. It is one of the greatest joys because typically, when people commit to serve as volunteers, they are motivated internally by the desire to be faithful to God and His kingdom rather than externally by money or other factors.

Their motivation often translates into a high level of personal effort being put into their ministry. It can be one of the great challenges because those who volunteer can also easily, and sometimes rather abruptly, resign their positions seeing them as expendable and expecting someone else to simply step up and fill the role that is being vacated. Volunteers can sometimes be very demanding also, due to the fact that they understand there is leverage in being a volunteer since their services are being donated. The efforts of volunteers are crucial to the life of the church. Robert E. Logan argued, “Any church that seeks to be effective must mobilize a host of leaders who will team with the pastor to fulfill the church’s goals . . . . Church effectiveness rises or falls on the quality and quantity of church leaders.”<sup>248</sup>

The pastor negotiates a fine line of leadership between leading and pushing. “Human resources aren’t manipulable like financial or physical resources. With a stroke of the pen, we can transfer funds from one bank to another, or reconfigure a floor plan to add an office. But we can’t just shuffle people like funds . . . so much more care is

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<sup>247</sup> Judi Slayden Hayes, “On Track Leadership: An Interview with John Kramp”, Leadership Magazine (Nashville: Lifeway, Winter 05-06), 34.

<sup>248</sup> Robert E. Logan, Beyond Church Growth: Action Plans for Developing a Dynamic Church (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989), 142.

needed.”<sup>249</sup> People who are serving in paid positions can be pushed and prodded more directly at times because their livelihoods and their ministry careers are on the line and dependent on their position performance.

Volunteers do not work from the same set of motivations and the pastor must carefully lead volunteers to a higher calling, and assist them in becoming all that God intends for them to become and his primary motivation must be founded in this. This also is the best and most healthy way to motivate paid staff as well, but it limits the scope of motivators the pastor can use.

### *Enlistment*

Administrating manpower involves enlisting, examining, expecting, equipping, empowering, evaluating, encouraging, and expanding. The process varies somewhat between paid staff and volunteers in ministry, but the basic principles of the process apply to each. Enlistment is the point at which people are brought into a ministry organization. Often, how a person is enlisted relates directly to how that person performs. Tom Mullins suggested, “Recruiting is the root system of your leadership. If your team is grounded in the hardy roots of top recruits, it can grow to the sky. On the other hand, if you are just plugging bodies into positions, your roots will remain shallow and weak, stunting your team’s growth.”<sup>250</sup> It is important in the ministry setting to constantly look for potential servants of God to fill particular needs within the organization.

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<sup>249</sup> James D. Berkley, Ed., Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 203.

<sup>250</sup> Tom Mullins, The Leadership Game (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 2.

Enlistment should involve a thorough examination of the person's calling, character, competency, and his background and experience in ministry. Pastors cannot afford to overlook this step. It is much easier to get a person into a position of ministry than it is to remove them from a position of ministry. Due diligence must be done in order to verify a person's suitability for a particular position, and to safeguard the church from the pain and consequences of hastily placing someone in a position.

### *Expectations*

Expectations for the job that needs to be performed should be clearly outlined and understood by the person being brought into the organization, and he should be in concert with the overall vision and direction of the body. The organization cannot anticipate that a job will be well done unless the person responsible for it clearly understands the expectations. The responsibilities of the job, the rewards of the job, and to whom the person is to be accountable are all important elements of expectations.

The church should not be hasty in enlisting someone just for the sake of filling a position, but should attempt to match people who are best suited for each ministry position. The importance of prayer in the enlistment process cannot be overstated. Jesus modeled this as He prayed for wisdom in selecting His followers.

Every Christian is uniquely gifted and qualified for service by the Spirit of God with the blessing of spiritual gifts (Rom 12; I Cor 12; Eph 4). Spiritual gifts should be considered when enlisting people for service. God abundantly supplies His church with the gifts needed to function and to fulfill His mission. It is within the context of spiritual

gifts that the pastor works to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:12).

The equipping ministry of the church has a direct impact on the potential of the church.

Carl Wilson explained:

This step of ministry training (equipping) is critical to the expansion of any movement. At this point most organizations and local churches reach their peak. If they do not train believers other than the pastor to evangelize and build disciples, their expansion stops. The maximum potential is reached without a continuing growth and broadening impact. True multiplication occurs only when disciples are trained in evangelism and disciple-building. No matter how dynamic the leader, no matter how financially stable and well organized the church, expansion will not continue if people are not trained to minister.<sup>251</sup>

A wise servant leader will not only teach his people about spiritual gifts, but will help them understand how to best use their gifts for the glory of God, and for the advancement of His church.

### *Empowerment*

Once a person has been placed in a position of service, they must be empowered to do the work that has been given to them. This means that the primary leader, the pastor, cannot micro-manage the organization. He must place his faith and trust in God and learn to not only delegate responsibilities but entrust the people to whom he has given the responsibility to do the work. Authority has to come with responsibility, otherwise the responsibility likely will not get done effectively. This is particularly important as an organization grows and expands.

One of the true tests of leadership is the ability to delegate and not control all things. There is no way that the pastor of the middle sized church can have control over

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<sup>251</sup> Carl Wilson, With Christ in the School Building (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 101.



every aspect of the ministry. Nor should he desire to. It is fulfilling to turn responsibilities over to leaders, who in turn involve others under their sphere of influence, to carry out the work of the ministry and to observe the organization as it expands and flourishes.

### *Evaluation*

The work that is being done must regularly be evaluated. People are much more likely to do that which gets evaluated. If a person knows he is accountable, and there will be ongoing evaluation, this provides motivation for the job to be done. Evaluation of ministry work should be done in a fair way and in an environment of open communication and feedback. Some of the ministry can be evaluated in an objective format, in matters such as attendance. Much of the ministry is objective in nature and is not as easily evaluated. That is why it is very important the evaluation be done in a fair way, and in a way that gives a true reflection of what the ministry is accomplishing.

### *Encouragement*

Those serving in ministry should be continually encouraged. After all, we are engaged in a spiritual battle (Eph 6) and it is easy to get discouraged. God's Word reminds us to "not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal 6:9). The church should be an environment of encouragement, where people serving in all facets of ministry know they are appreciated and needed. The pastor's attitude toward those in leadership goes a long way toward building a healthy environment.

### *Expansion*

The pastor has the responsibility to administrate the organization and lead in its expansion. Sometimes that expansion will be significant, such as when a church transitions from one size category to the next, at other times it will be more subtle, such as when a ministry is added to the church. Either way, the pastor as leader is responsible for directing the organization to negotiate the expansion.

One thing is certain, an organization will not grow beyond its leadership and if it hopes to expand, the leadership base must expand. Otherwise growth will be stifled. Therefore, the pastor in a growing church must always be looking ahead and anticipating what the needs of the congregation are and what the potential areas of growth are, and lead the church to expand its leadership on the front end of the growth curve, and not allow the organization to limit the growth. Mike Tucker suggested, “It’s a clear lesson that healthy leaders multiply themselves. When they take their multiplying responsibilities to heart, Eph 4:11-12 becomes a reality in their lives . . . . Healthy leaders multiply themselves and develop others for ministry and service.”<sup>252</sup>

### *A Team Environment for Leadership*

Though the pastor is the primary leader in the local church, his leadership is best implemented in a team environment. Harold Westing stated, “The pastor is to be chief of staff, which is a way of working not a way of showing power or preference. He becomes

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<sup>252</sup> Mike Tucker, “5 Vital Signs of Healthy Leadership”. Leaderlife : Practical Solutions for Pastors and Ministry Staff (Nashville: Lifeway , Spring 2006), 17.

a chief among equals. He takes on a burden, not a privilege, as team leader.”<sup>253</sup> Pat McMillan defined a team as, “A group of people committed to a common purpose who choose to cooperate in order to achieve exceptional results.”<sup>254</sup> There is strength in numbers. Team members complement one another’s strengths and weaknesses and partner together for the good of the organization and for the glory of God (Eccles 4:12).

There are numerous examples of teams in both the Old and New Testaments. A study of leaders in the Old Testament reveals that one of the reasons for their success was they worked with teams. Moses led the children of Israel with the help of Aaron, Hur, Joshua, and the seventy elders (Exod 4:14-16; 17:8-13; 18:13-23). King David was surrounded by Ittai, Zadok, Abiathar, Hushai, and Zibi supported him during exile (2 Sam 23:8-39). Nehemiah was joined by Ezra (Neh 8:1-9), Hanani, Shelemiah, Zadok, Pedaiiah, and Hanan (Neh 1:2; 7:1-2; 10:23; 13:13).

In the New Testament, teamwork is evident in the ministry of Jesus with the twelve disciples (Matt 10:1). Teamwork is also evident in the ministry of Paul with co-laborers: Barnabas, John Mark, Timothy, Luke, Erastus, Priscilla, Aquila, Silas, and others (Acts 15:40; 19:22; Rom 16:1-23; Col 4:7-14; 2 Tim 4:10-13).

In a study of Christian leadership in modern ministry, it would be difficult to overlook the effectiveness of the team that was built and implemented by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization. In the book, *The Leadership Secrets of Billy*

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<sup>253</sup> Westing, Church Staff Handbook, 29.

<sup>254</sup> Pat MacMillan, The Performance Factor: Unlocking the Secrets of Teamwork (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 29.

*Graham*, Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley stated:

Throughout his ministry, Billy followed. He was a highly effective leader with clarity of purpose because he was determined that nothing would short-circuit his responding to the nudges of the Holy Spirit. In facing ambiguous circumstances and hearing competing voices, the complexities pressed him to long hours of reflection, prayer, and seeking the applicable wisdom.

*The Team* is a term that has always permeated the Graham organization. It refers to the inner circle, the vitality of which radiates out to other key players and through the ranks. The team spirit extended to thousands of participants, even out to volunteers and local leaders who made the crusades happen.<sup>255</sup>

While the Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization is a parachurch ministry, the principles that have been applied in this ministry will translate to the local church. There has always been a primary leader, Billy Graham. In the effective church, the primary leader will be the lead pastor, called by God. There is an inner circle of leadership, paid staff to oversee the work of the ministry. In every middle sized church there is some level of paid staff who have the responsibility to lead leaders. There is a larger circle of volunteers who carry out a lot of the specifics for the crusades and these people are more behind the scenes. So it is with the local church. The larger circle of volunteers is crucial to the work being done.

All of this work is carried out in a solid, team environment where each person is encouraged to work to their strengths to accomplish the overall mission of the organization. The attitude focuses on what can be accomplished together rather than what can be accomplished individually. Don Cousins wrote, “A unified team of motivated,

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<sup>255</sup> Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley, *The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

well trained church workers can accomplish just about any ministry objective.”<sup>256</sup> Every effective church utilizes a team of people to carry out the work of the ministry.

#### D. The Ministries of the Church

The ministries (programs) of the church comprise the third segment of church administration that the pastor oversees. The pastor must avoid at all costs the temptation to chase after and implement the most popular ministries of the day, and instead submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in organizing and building the church. God spoke to the nation of Israel through the prophet Jeremiah and said, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer 29:11). Just as God had specific plans for the nation of Israel, He has specific plans for each local congregation. Rather than trying to emulate other congregations, each local congregation should model itself on what God outlines for the church in His Word.

#### *Founded on a Kingdom Agenda*

The church has the privilege of being involved in God’s kingdom agenda. Gene Mims in his book, *The Kingdom Focused Church*, defines the kingdom of God as: “The reign of God in today’s world. The kingdom is the ultimate reality and sovereign movement of God in the universe. This is expressed in the transforming truth that Jesus Christ rules over all things and is evidenced by God’s supernatural work in and through believers in local churches. The kingdom of God must be the central life focus that every

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<sup>256</sup> Don Cousins, “Overseeing Staff”, Christianity Today Library; available at <http://www.ctlibrary.com/print.html?id=6900>. Internet; accessed June 10, 2006, 1.

person should seek and align with in order to know the full and abundant life God created people to experience in Christ.<sup>257</sup>

James Stewart wrote in *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*:

Every new idea that has ever burst upon the world has had a watchword. Always there has been some word or phrase in which the very genius of the thing has been concentrated and focused, some word or phrase to blazon on its banners when it went marching out into the world . . . something to wave like a flag, to rally the ranks, and win recruits. The greatest idea that has ever been born upon the earth is the Christian idea. And Christianity came with a watchword, magnificent and mighty and imperial; and the watchword was ‘the kingdom of God’.<sup>258</sup>

The kingdom of God can be outlined in four distinct eras. The first era is pre-creation, before the world was when God ruled and reigned over this universe, pre-Genesis 1:1, in eternity past. The second era is the period of the Old Testament when God moved and worked among His chosen, covenant people Israel who was contrasted with the nations. The third era is the period of the Church from the incarnation of Jesus Christ to the present as God continues to unfold His plan through the obedience of His people to the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20). The fourth era is the period that will begin at Christ’s return to this earth and will culminate with His eternal reign.

It is within this overarching theme of the kingdom of God, that the Church does ministry and the pastor oversees and coordinates it. The question must be asked of every church’s ministries, how does this fit into our responsibility before God to impact His kingdom in a way that best honors Him? Anything that detracts from this major focus should be avoided.

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<sup>257</sup> Gene Mims, *The Kingdom Focused Church* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), IX.

<sup>258</sup> James Stewart, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1947), 47.

David Horner identified four fundamental resources for the church: “The headship of Jesus Christ, the authority of the Scriptures, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the oversight of godly leaders-- form the root system He has designed for every church to be firmly rooted and faithfully growing in Jesus Christ.”<sup>259</sup> These four form the foundation for ministries and give direction and focus to them.

Gene Mims formulated the *1-5-4 Principle for Church Growth* based on the eternal principles of God’s Word.<sup>260</sup> He outlines that there is one overarching reason that God has His people on this earth and that is the Great Commission. The Great Commission is then implemented through five functions: Evangelism; Discipleship; Fellowship; Ministry; and Worship. Each church should have ministries taking place under this cluster of five functions.

The goal of every church should be to reach people for Jesus Christ, to teach them God’s Word and how to live by it, and to care for the needs of one another and those they are reaching out to. Exactly how each church does that, and the ministries that each church excels in will be dependent on the spiritual gifts that God has given that particular congregation. Therefore, boxed ministries that are packaged in a one size fits all methodology are not particularly helpful to the overall mission of the body of Christ.

Every church in evaluating its ministries should have as its primary ministry goal to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20) and see them be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29). With the overabundance of ministries available in most middle sized churches, one would think that people would be experiencing life transformation as the

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<sup>259</sup> David Horner, Firmly Rooted Faithfully Growing: Principle Based Ministry in the Church (Raleigh, North Carolina: Providence Communications, 2003), 29.

<sup>260</sup> Mims, The Kingdom Focused Church, 75-100.

norm. Unfortunately this does not seem to be the case. The lives of many in the church are not distinguishable from the lives of people in the world. All of the ministries of the church should be evaluated in light of the goal of life transformation.

When these five functions are present in a church, the church can expect four results: Numerical Growth; Spiritual Transformation; Ministry Expansion; and Kingdom Advance.<sup>261</sup> When God's people are faithful to God's commands, His blessing follows and God grows the church and subsequently His kingdom (I Cor 3:6).

*Principle and Not Program Driven*

God's church should always be principle driven, and not program oriented. "The body of Christ functions best when it understands itself as a principle-based ministry. The church can never become what Christ designed it to be unless its identity is based on principles discovered in the Bible, a resource given to us by God for just that purpose."<sup>262</sup> Principle based ministry best accomplishes God's purposes and motivates God's people.

The busy pastor has the responsibility to balance multiple ministries at one time. Ministries are often added without pause to think how they fit into the overall direction of the church. They are not principle driven ministries, they are simply added to meet the desires of the people, regardless how small the requesting group may be. Ministries should be strategic, intentional, and performed with excellence.

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 75-100.

<sup>262</sup> Horner, Firmly Rooted Faithfully Growing, 21.



*Greatness Through Simplicity*

Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger wrote the book, *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*. They stated in the book, "Ironically people are hungry for simple because the world has become much more complex . . . . In the midst of complexity, people want to find simplicity. They long for it, seek it, pray for it, even dream of it. Simple is in. Simple works. People respond to simple. The simple revolution has begun."<sup>263</sup>

While the world has continued to grow more complex, and the church has followed suit, there needs to be a revolution back toward simplicity. This revolution should lead each church to evaluate its overall ministry related to its mission, and decide what it really important in light of eternity. Gary L. McIntosh stated, "As an expression of Christ's living body, the local church is to be a channel of life for both spiritual birth and spiritual growth. The early church experienced such balanced growth."<sup>264</sup>

Therefore, the pastor is the visionary and organizational leader of the ministry teams in the church. He equips the people to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11), and the ministry teams carry out the work of the ministry. The pastor as leader provides cohesiveness to the church and encourages the people to be faithful to God's calling on their lives. He is ultimately responsible for the effectiveness of the church and will stand accountable to God for it.

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<sup>263</sup> Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 8.

<sup>264</sup> Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work With God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 33.

*The Importance of a Strong Sunday School Ministry*

In the twenty-first century, there do not seem to be many proponents of Sunday School. Allan Taylor, Minister of Education at First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Georgia wrote:

Over scores of years, Sunday School has been championed by many. Her flag has flown high above the church-- like school colors flying over a college football stadium. But in recent years, some have attempted to take the flag down with a message that Sunday School is no longer relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Next to the personal commitment and involvement of her individual members, I believe Sunday School is still the best way to flesh out the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe we have left many of the fundamentals that made Sunday School the proud entity she once was in our churches.<sup>265</sup>

The Sunday School is a tool that is still alive and effective because it is based on biblical principles that are timeless. Sunday School is a wonderful tool for the pastor to lead his church to be faithful in reaching and teaching people for Jesus and caring about them. The church may call this approach by the traditional name Sunday School, or refer to it as Small Group Ministry, Bible Fellowship, etc. The key is not in what the approach is named, the key is in how it functions.

Bill L. Taylor wrote: “The work of the Sunday School is far-reaching. No organization in the world has had great influence on the Christian community than the Sunday School. Hundreds of thousands of people have come to Christ, and larger numbers have grown in the maturity of the Lord because of the power of what some have called ‘the church organized’”.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Allan Taylor, The Six Core Values of Sunday School (Canton, GA: Riverstone Group Publishing, 2003), 9

<sup>266</sup> Bill L. Taylor, 21 Truths, Traditions, and Trends: Propelling the Sunday School Ministry Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Nashville: Convention Press, 1996), 11.

Many churches have a complicated structure with not a lot going on within the structure. There is no need for a complicated structure. The church is to be about the Great Commandment (Mt 22:37-40), and the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20). This is not complicated but it takes work and diligence. Sunday School is an effective way to organize the church to be faithful.

Sunday School is to be biblically based, and principle driven. In two pastorates, this author has seen attendance more than double in both churches, the level of evangelism increase significantly, the number of people in leadership rise dramatically, and the level of care within the church increase exponentially with Sunday School at the core of the ministry. In this pastor's experience the Sunday School works, because it works the biblical principles.

#### E. The Management of the Church Buildings and Facilities

Management (of church buildings and facilities) is the fourth segment of church administration for the pastor. The church is made up of people and not buildings. In this sense, the church only comes together a limited amount of time each week. Otherwise, the church is out in the marketplace, among the people. Church facilities are simply tools that facilitate the coming together, or gathering, of the church. Facilities are places where people can come together for the purpose of preparing to do the work of the ministry.

### *Maintaining a Balance of Space*

Church facilities can be categorized by space for worship, education, fellowship, administration, and parking. The balance of space significantly determines ministry philosophy. For example, a church with a large worship center and small educational space, reflects an emphasis on worship. On the other hand, a church with large fellowship facilities and marginal worship and educational space, reflects a ministry focused on fellowship and recreation. Overall, facility space should be balanced and utilized according to the size and ministry needs of the congregation. The balance of the facilities can either be a great facilitator for growth, or a great hindrance to growth. The best ministries can be in place, but if they cannot be accommodated, they will not grow.

### *Maintaining Visibility and Attractiveness*

Church facilities should be visible and inviting to attract attention to newcomers and prospects in the community who may consider attending. Familiarity with the facility can sometimes hinder those who have been in a church for some time because they do not think like guests would think. On the approach to a facility, is it easy to see where one should go? Are the buildings clearly marked to assist people in finding where they need to be? Visibility is very important.

### *Maintaining Accessibility and Usability*

Facilities should be accessible in order to accommodate people of all ages and physical abilities. Jesus personally ministered to those with physical limitations, and would certainly expect His church to do the same. A church cannot minister to people

with limitations if buildings are not easily accessible. Buildings should meet current disability codes and even exceed them, reflecting a heart for ministry to people who need to be accommodated in order to access the facilities.

Buildings should be functional in order to make maximum use of space and not to waste space. Many times churches operate as if they are out of space when in fact, the space they have is being used improperly. Churches are also notorious for being places where excess materials accumulate over the years and crowd out otherwise useful space.

#### *Utilizing a Building and Grounds Ministry Team*

The wise pastor will utilize a building and grounds ministry team to coordinate this segment of ministry. Those who are gifted to care for, develop, and expand facilities should be entrusted to do so. The pastor simply serves as lead manager of this ministry. Leith Anderson suggested an appropriate level of involvement for the pastor in the facilities of the church. He suggested that the pastor should “delegate responsibility but demonstrate interest; concentrate energies on areas that relate to pastoral duties; become knowledgeable in the areas of pressing concern; and teach people to notice what facilities communicate.”<sup>267</sup> The pastor should be interested enough to understand the condition and use of the facilities, but wise enough to delegate their day to day management to others.

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<sup>267</sup> James D. Berkley, Ed., Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 390-91.

*Building and Expanding*

The one facet of this ministry that can bring particular joy and fulfillment to a pastor's ministry is the building and expansion of facilities. Building programs have the effect of organizing a congregation around a vision. People pull together around a common purpose. It calls a congregation to higher stewardship as they can see in a tangible way what is being accomplished together. Building programs can motivate a church toward a greater outward focus. When additional space is provided, it opens up potential for ministry and reaching out to new people. Building programs can also provide momentum for a congregation as it builds excitement and enthusiasm. W.A. Criswell asserted, "It takes careful planning, praying, and much discussion for a church to enter a building program victoriously."<sup>268</sup>

Building programs also include challenges. They can be draining on resources and pull a lot of focus from other ministries. Building programs can become the focus of the ministry and slow down the momentum of churches. One of the major challenges can be the financial drain that building programs can cause that result in stifling other ministries.

Building programs entered into prayerfully and carefully, and then managed diligently, can be a great blessing to a church. The pastor should encourage new facilities when needed and lead out in the development process, but leave the details up to people in the congregation who are more gifted.

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<sup>268</sup> Criswell, Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors, 163.

### F. The Money of the Church

The fifth segment of church administration the pastor oversees is money (finances). The first fundamental principle of stewardship is that everything belongs to God. All good gifts that God has entrusted to His children should be used to honor and glorify God and advance His kingdom on this earth.

#### *The Pastor Leading By Example*

The pastor should lead by example in being faithful with what God has entrusted to him financially. Many pastors are under compensated, but this is no excuse for unfaithfulness. If the pastor is to call the church to give, he must be consistent in his tithes and offerings to God. He should also manage what he has faithfully and have an impeccable financial record.

#### *Stewardship Education*

The pastor through his teaching and preaching ministry should provide stewardship education, and teach the body why and how to give. The purpose of stewardship and the motivation for stewardship should be kept at the forefront. Stewardship is not important because God needs our money, because He obviously does not. Stewardship is important for Christian maturity.

In the words of Fred Smith, “God is basically interested not in our money but our maturity. Some people try to substitute service for giving, while others give to avoid serving. Neither one works; both are required for Christian maturity. That’s why is you

show me your calendar and your checkbook, I can write your biography. I will know how you spend your time and money and that constitutes your treasure.”<sup>269</sup>

The focus should not be primarily on money. It should be on maturity of the believer and on the glory of God. Stephen F. Olford argued, “Godly stewardship of money indicates the reality and depth of commitment to Jesus Christ.”<sup>270</sup>

Stewardship is a faith building exercise. We give not to get something out of God. We give because we love God and trust God. Stan and Linda Toler suggested, “In return, we receive sovereign benefits continually supplied in just the right amount for our spiritual good. Then, in return, we give back-- we recycle God’s blessings.”<sup>271</sup>

The pastor should be diligent to connect the issue of money with the mission of the church. At times pastors are accused of only being concerned about money. Sometimes that is true if the pastor has lost sight of the greater mission God has called the church to. If people clearly see the mission, the money will follow. Wayne Pohl wrote, “If our hearts are beating for the lost, finances will follow. Money flows to the right causes. Great Commission enthusiasm, in fact, provides a growth environment for every area of the church, but especially in people’s financial stewardship.”<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Fred Smith, “The 4 Faces of Stewardship”, Leadership; available at <http://www.ctlibrary.com/print.html?id=13182>, Internet; accessed June 18, 2006, 8.

<sup>270</sup> Stephen F. Olford, The Grace of Giving: A Biblical Study of Christian Stewardship (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000), 12.

<sup>271</sup> Stan and Linda Toler, The Cycle of Victorious Giving: Your Time, Your Talent, Your Treasure (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 2004), 14.

<sup>272</sup> Wayne Pohl, “Developing Generous Givers”, Leadership; available at <http://www.ctlibrary.com/print.html?i=6052>, Internet, accessed June 18, 2006, 2.



Fundamentally, the church is a spending organization. Talmadge Johnson wrote, “The greatness of a church is determined not by what it takes in but by what it sends out.”<sup>273</sup> Every dollar that is received should have a purpose in being spent. This does not mean that the church should not exercise good business practice and keep in reserves money for times of uneven cash flow or for problems that arise. According to Paul W. Powell, it does mean, “The church exists, not to make a profit, but to help people in worship, discipleship, missions, and the physical needs of life.”<sup>274</sup>

#### *The Ministry Support Plan or Budget*

The ministry support plan, the budget, is a very important part of church administration. The budget reflects the priorities of the church and provides the guidelines for expenditure of money. Jesus instructed His followers to “count the cost” (Lk 14:28-30) before beginning to build a tower to be sure we have enough to complete the task. In the same way, it is important that we evaluate the use of resources to utilize them to the fullest to accomplish the task at hand. Jack A. Henry defined a budget as, “a plan for allocating available resources . . . it is simply a matter of setting priorities . . . so that the money is used for the most important things first.”<sup>275</sup> The budget gives clear direction, with the approval and support of the church, to the expenditure of monies received.

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<sup>273</sup> Toler, The Cycle of Victorious Giving, 46.

<sup>274</sup> Paul W. Powell, Taking the Stew Out of Stewardship (Dallas: Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1996), 9.

<sup>275</sup> Jack A. Henry, Basic Budgeting for Churches (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 6.

The pastor should lead the congregation through its ministry teams, to quantify what they want to accomplish as a church each year, and clearly identify their priorities and goals. The most common method of budgeting is simply to work from the previous year's budget without giving considerable thought as to why or how ministry is taking place. Ideally, a church should use a combination of the previous year's budget and zero based budgeting. The previous year's budget is an invaluable tool as it relates to fixed costs related to the facilities, personnel and the like. In regard to the ministries however, in order to stay fresh and focused, each ministry should articulate each year what it intends to accomplish with the monies being requested.

#### *Maintaining Integrity and Accountability*

As a rule, the pastor should never personally handle any monies of the church directly, nor should he have check writing or bank account privileges. This separation of duties protects the pastor and helps to maintain his integrity. It is crucial to the church that the entire process of receiving, counting, recording, reporting, and spending money be one of integrity. People need to have confidence in the controls that are in place in order to insure proper handling of money. There should be clearly written controls in place for how a church receives monies, how they are counted, the method in which they are recorded, and how they are expended.

Records should be maintained diligently and regular reports should be made to the congregation on the financial condition and progress of the church. It is advisable for churches to conduct a periodic audit, by an outside firm, and then a report be made to the church on the findings of such an audit.

The pastor should entrust the carrying out of the financial duties to those who are qualified and called to serve, but as the lead administrator he has the responsibility to provide financial oversight and leadership in each of these areas. Ultimately, it is the pastor who will be held accountable for the financial integrity of the church, and he must do everything within his authority and ability to ensure it is well maintained.

Church administration is a complex and time consuming component of the pastor's ministry. A well administered church will operate according to scriptural principles and the conscientious pastor will work to ensure that it does. The pastor who takes a hands-off approach to church administration will reap the negative consequences. In contrast, the pastor who takes the responsibility seriously, will reap many benefits from his labors.

#### G. Church Administration Survey Conclusions and Directives

Survey results regarding the church administration ministry of pastors of middle sized churches reflect some important results. These results can be utilized to better understand how the ministry of church administration is being practiced. Directives related to church administration in the twenty-first century are given in order to assist the pastor in faithfully fulfilling the calling that God has given Him in this area of competency.

##### *Preparation for Church Administration*

Of pastors responding to the survey, 85% indicated that they had at least a foundational course in church administration in formal education. However, only 5.3%

indicated they feel “very prepared” educationally for the task of church administration. Only 39.3% of respondents indicated they use the methods learned in formal training. There is apparently a deficiency in formal training. With the multitude of other core competencies the pastor must learn in formal educational training, it is difficult to include a broad spectrum understanding of church administration with additional classes.

Church administration often is given only secondary attention at best because it is often not perceived to be as spiritual as other areas of ministry. It is viewed as something that has to be done, but only after the more spiritual activities have been completed. This is faulty reasoning however, because church administration coordinates the underlying structure for all of the ministries of the church. If the foundation is faulty, the structure will also be faulty.

Concerning continuing education, 55.4% have participated in it, primarily through conferences and seminars. There is interest in becoming better equipped but not an overwhelmingly significant concern. When asked what they most helpful training was that they have received, 31.9% indicated on the job training, and 14.9% indicated formal education. There is no clear consensus on the best method of continued education. When asked to list five important functions of church administration, the most listed functions by survey respondents were; organization (23.1%), staffing issues (20%), vision formulation (17.8%), communication (15.7%), and planning (10.5%).

The majority of respondents, 70.9%, spend between 6 and 15 hours per week on church administration, or between one and two days. This represents a significant amount of time toward this facet of ministry. This time commitment reflects the complex nature

of church administration and the importance of it to church life. The effective pastor cannot afford to relegate church administration to secondary importance.

### *Current Factors Impacting Church Administration*

According to respondents, 83.1%, church administration has changed somewhat or significantly with the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. Three primary changes were identified in the surveys: use of technology; legalities in the church; and the emphasis on the chief executive officer model of management.

### *Impact of Technology*

The increased use of technology has definitely impacted church administration. Most of the change has been positive. The use of technology offers greater precision. In tracking finances, membership, and other data functions, technology allows for more information to be tracked in less space and allows for more focused use of the information. From the pastor's perspective, with the use of a computer, he can have within easy access needed information about the membership, and about the finances and progress of the church statistically.

Allison Horne and Adam Martin wrote, "Churches are using media technology tools to accomplish incredible amounts of ministry. Churches all over the country are using computer technology to communicate their message and optimize the efficiency of their administrative and pastoral staffs. Many of these churches are also using computer

tools to keep the staff in touch with each other and with other ministries.”<sup>276</sup> It is a vitally important tool in staff and lay ministry communication and coordination.

### *Impact of Legal Issues in the Church*

Legalities and liability issues are a second area of change noted by survey respondents. Unfortunately we live in a very litigious society and it appears to be getting worse and not better. Stephen Chawaga identified ten areas that a church must be concerned with concerning lawsuits: Suits based on negligence-- involving the general public, suits based on negligence-- involving parishioners, suits based on negligence-- involving nuisances that attract children, suits based on negligence- involving supervision of employees, suits based on sexual harassment, suits based on defamation, suits based on apparent authority, suits based on disputes over election of the pastor, suits based on disclosure of confidential information, suits based on unfair acts.<sup>277</sup>

The pastor must be informed and be able to capably be the lead administrator of the church in issues of church incorporation, constitution and bylaws, liability insurance, policies and procedures, personnel issues, finances, childcare ministries and protection of children, transportation issues, facility safety, and property acquisitions and use of.

The pastor does not have to be an expert on these issues, but he is wise to surround himself with people who have experience and knowledge in these areas to

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<sup>276</sup> Allison Horne and Adam Martin, “Utilizing Technology in the Church”, Lifeway ; available at [http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/lwc\\_cda\\_article/0,1643,A%253D155984%2526X%253D1%2526M%253D50088,00.html](http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/lwc_cda_article/0,1643,A%253D155984%2526X%253D1%2526M%253D50088,00.html); Internet; accessed July 21, 2006.

<sup>277</sup> Stephen Chawaga, “The Ten Deadly Lawsuits”, Christianity Today; available at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/yc/2001/003/8.55.html>; Internet; accessed July 21, 2006.

adequately protect the church as much as possible. It is important that the pastor lead the church to provide continuing education for leadership regarding these issues, to periodically evaluate how the church is doing in each area, and to exercise reasonable care in all areas of church administration to prevent potential problems. The middle sized church will have more potential legal issues than the small church due to the number of people involved.

### *Impact of the CEO Model of Management*

The change of the pastor being expected to fulfill the role of chief executive officer of a corporation has also had an impact on the ministry. Joseph Stowell wrote on this issue:

Unfortunately, we often perceive ministry through management paradigms that place the pastor, if not at the top of the chart, second only to the board of elders, with those in the church falling below them in a scattered array of functions. While it is accurate to say that that shepherd does hold a particular sense of biblical authority in the flock, when it comes to function, the biblical organization chart has the mission of the church at the top; under that, like a reverse pyramid, are the people in the flock; and beneath them, at the bottom point of the upside down pyramid, is the pastor, to serve all those in the flock with enabling resources to help them become all they need to be in order to advance the mission of the church.<sup>278</sup>

Because the pastor is viewed as the chief executive officer in a corporation, there is often not a lot of patience extended to him regarding the forward progress in the church. A lot of pressure is placed on the man of God to mold the church into whatever a particular member may believe the church should be. The pastor must resist the temptation to bow to pragmatism when it comes to matters of church administration, and focus on the biblical model of honoring God with the resources of the church.

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<sup>278</sup> Joseph M. Stowell, Shepherding the Church, 187.

Fred Smith argued, “The church is not a business corporation and should not be managed as one. Most corporations are for profit; churches are not. The corporation manufactures and distributes products, the healthy church deals in relationships. Since the central aims of the corporation and the church are not the same, pastors taking on the role of CEO can develop a metallic, mechanical quality in their ministry. An effective executive with integrity can lead a religious organization but not necessarily pastor a church.”<sup>279</sup> While it is important that the pastor have good business skills to lead the middle sized church, it is equally important for him to remember that he is the shepherd leader of the organization.

It is not uncommon for there to be very business minded people within the local congregation. It is sometimes particularly difficult for the pastor of the middle sized church to maintain leadership within this environment as the shepherd leader. He must be diligent to maintain a clear focus on biblical principles rather than allowing the church to be molded into a business model by the strong leaders within the body.

#### *Impact of Congregational Expectations*

With these changes have come increased expectations within the church. The significant focus on leadership has been good in that it has magnified the importance of the pastor casting a clear vision for the organization of the church. If the shepherd leader of the church does not know where the church is heading, how can the people be expected to know and follow?

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<sup>279</sup> Fred Smith, “The Minister as Maestro”, Leadership; available at <http://www.ctlibrary.com/print.html?id=13480>; Internet, accessed July 21, 2006.



With this being the information age, the need and expectation for effective administration has continued to increase. The informed church will likely be a more active church. The wise pastor will use communication to strengthen understanding of the vision and to inform the body of pertinent matters. People in the local congregation are essentially stockholders in the work of the local church on mission for God in a worldwide effort. If people know and trust how a church is being administrated, they will take personal ownership in it and contribute to it significantly with their resources.

There is also the expectation that people desire consistency and want to know what to expect out of the church and their ministry responsibilities. It appears that the churches making an ongoing impact for God are clear in what they expect from their members and the ministry has a quality of steadiness and clarity of purpose to it. D.A. Carson suggested, “We should be careful about building our church according to the pattern that God has given us in Scripture. At its best, the deliberate church is careful to trust the Word of God, wielded by Jesus Christ, to do the work of building the local church. It is an attempt to put our money where our mouth is when we say that we believe in the sufficiency of Scripture for the life, health, and growth of the local church. Our goal isn’t to see how innovative we can be. Our goal is to see how faithful we can be.”<sup>280</sup>

### *Differences in Competency Levels*

Each pastor is equipped differently in terms of his ability to manage. Some pastors are stronger than others in church administration. Educational background and

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<sup>280</sup> Dever and Alexander, The Deliberate Church, 21 (Foreword by D.A. Carson).

experience contributes significantly to the pastor's ability to administrate. The pastor of the middle sized churches faces some unique challenges related to church administration.

First, the middle sized church is large enough and complex enough to create a significant amount of church administration needs, while often small enough not to warrant or be able to afford a full time church administrator as a larger church could. This leaves the challenge for the pastor to be able to adequately cast the overall vision and administrate the overall ministry of the church, while at the same time entrusting significant amounts of day to day administration to lay people in the church body.

This comes with both risk and reward. The risk is that there is a very real possibility that tasks will not be accomplished, or that they will not be accomplished adequately when left to lay people. There is the reward, that when God raises up competent lay people to do the work of the ministry and administrate the ministries, the church body functions as it should and the ministry multiplies.

#### *The Pastor as Chief Administrator*

The pastor has the responsibility to be the chief administrator of the flock. This is true even when someone else has the day to day responsibilities and is functioning as the church administrator. The pastor is the chief administrator in that he is ultimately responsible for the direction of the organization and its effectiveness. Unfortunately, many pastors do not hold to this view and loathe administration, to their detriment. This is reflected in the lack of interest in ongoing educational opportunities to improve administrative skills.

Only a little over half of pastors responding to surveys, 55.4%, have participated in continuing education regarding church administration. This number is significantly lower than preaching, 70.9%, or pastoral care, 80.6%. This could be due to the fact that the preaching ministry is very public and primary and pastors are concerned about improving this area of ministry as much as possible. Concerning pastoral care, the needs are great and many pastors no doubt feel the pressure as pastors to care for the flock adequately. In terms of time and focus, something has to give, and it appears that it is often church administration.

A lot of church administration goes on behind the scenes and is easier to purposefully neglect than the other two areas of focus. Church administration formulates and manages the superstructure of the church. If this is weak, it may not be apparent immediately, but it will show up over time in negative results.

### *The Importance of Equipping the Saints*

The pastor must own His God given responsibility to direct the flock and train those serving in the ministry, to carry out the functions of church administration, so the church operates smoothly. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:11-12 “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” This applies directly to church administration.

Nowhere in the Word of God is the man of God given the responsibility of doing everything in the church. He is responsible however, to lead by example and to train others to do the work of the ministry. The extent to which he does this will significantly

impact the level of spiritual fulfillment among the members of the church as they exercise their spiritual gifts in obedience to the Spirit of God. It will also greatly impact the effectiveness of the church in fulfilling God's kingdom agenda.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND DIRECTIVES

This chapter summarizes the overall scope of biblical pastoral ministry for the twenty-first century, and serves as a concluding directive for those currently engaged in ministry and those who are considering it. The calling, character, and competencies of the twenty-first century pastor are rooted deeply in biblical principles. Stability for the pastor is found in the calling. Character is of foundational importance to his ministry, and it undergirds everything the pastor does. The functional competencies are the areas where the pastor's calling and character are implemented.

#### A. Biblical Principles for Pastoral Ministry are Timeless

The biblical principles for ministry are timeless and unchanging. The essential nature of what it means to be a pastor and what God expects of the pastor has not changed from the time of the first century to the time of the twenty-first century. Society has changed, and many of the circumstances of life have changed with modern times, but God's model for the New Testament Church and for its primary leaders is the same. There are several guiding principles for pastoral ministry that the wise pastor will cling to and build his ministry on. These guiding principles are focused on exalting God, evangelizing the lost, and equipping the saints.

*Exalting God*

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God” (I Cor 10:31). This is the main guiding principle for pastoral ministry. We are dependent on God for our existence, salvation, and sustaining grace for all of eternity. The pastor must be careful to frame all that he does around a passionate desire to glorify God among the nations. The pastor’s love for God should be preeminent over anything else in his life (Matt 22:36-40). Because he loves God and desires to glorify God, he can in turn love people.

The pastor’s spiritual health and growth is directly related to the level to which he passionately pursues a relationship with God. His desire will be to know God more fully that he might glorify God more earnestly. People will be drawn to God because of the passion the pastor has for God. The calling on the pastor’s life is not to prominence, power, or prestige. It is a calling to love and serve God wholeheartedly, and to love people as a representative of God to them.

The glory of God and the Word of God are inseparable. God has breathed out His Word that man may know that He is God and glorify Him as such (I Tim 3:16-17). It is through a deep love for God that the pastor will also love the Word of God. The Word of God does not need the pastor to make it relevant. It is eternally relevant and applicable to life. The pastor needs a simple dependence on the Spirit of God to apply the Word of God to bring about eternal change in the souls of men.

### *Evangelizing the Lost*

The pastor must set the tone for evangelizing the lost. Jesus came to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He is the model for the pastor. When Jesus returns it will be too late for the church to evangelize any more. There should be a great sense of urgency regarding evangelism.

When the pastor understands the horrors of hell and the glories of heaven, he will make it a major priority to reach the lost with the good news of salvation. The Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20) is about making disciples and reaching the nations for the glory of God.

Evangelism has not changed fundamentally from the first century to the twenty-first century. Man in his basic nature is the same, sinful and separated from God who is holy. He is utterly incapable of saving himself. The pastor is the herald of the good news that Jesus can save even the most wretched of sinners. The work of the pastor must include a lifestyle of evangelism, and leading others to engage in the work.

### *Equipping the Saints*

The pastor is uniquely gifted in the body of Christ to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11). The church will only be equipped to do the work of the ministry to the extent that the pastor leads it to be. A perfect church does not exist on this side of glory. The faithful pastor will constantly be engaged in discerning where the local body needs help to be better equipped, and he will work to ensure that the saints are prepared to do what God has called them to do.

There is much work to be done. The pastor cannot afford to spend his energy on unprofitable pursuits trying to do too much alone, rather than focusing on the priorities that God has given to him. The work of the body must be shared and multiplied so the church can flourish.

### B. Stability is Found in the Calling

It is in his calling that the pastor can find stability for his life and vocation. The calling of the twenty-first century pastor is the same as the first century pastor. It is a calling to serve Jesus, the Good Shepherd, in leading, feeding, and caring for His flock.

When everything else seems to be constantly changing, the pastor can return to the fact that God has placed a high and holy calling on his life to serve the church, the bride of Jesus Christ, and to advance the kingdom of God. It is the call of God on His life that reassures and encourages the pastor.

The faithful pastor will encounter opposing forces in his ministry. He will encounter spiritual warfare, carnal Christians, and personal discouragements and doubts. In those times he can be reminded of the high calling that God has placed on His life. No matter what the external circumstances are, the pastor can know in his soul that He is doing the work of the Lord.

### C. Character and Integrity are Non-Negotiable

Character is the underlying factor of everything the pastor does. A good reputation that is based on good character is built over a lifetime. Yet it only takes a moment to destroy it. There are many pitfalls in ministry that can destroy the man of



God. The Apostle Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet 5:8).

In the sensual, lust driven, idolatrous world of the twenty-first century the pastor must keep up his guard all the while knowing the promise of the Word of God, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (I Cor 10:13).

The twenty-first century is no more sinful than the first century was. As Solomon wrote, “That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, ‘See, this is new’? It has already been in ancient times before us” (Eccles 1:9-10). This applies to sin as well. While expressions of sin may differ somewhat from the first to the twenty first century, there is nothing new. One cannot overestimate the importance of good character in the life of the pastor. He cannot minister from a position of authority without it. God blesses the man with good character.

#### D. Functional Competencies are Essential

If calling and character are present, God will also gift the pastor to perform the functional competencies in the ministry in a way that is acceptable to Him, and also to the people of God. Preaching, pastoral care, and church administration are necessary functions for the pastor. The essential spiritual gifts to perform these competencies are given by the Holy Spirit, but the pastor must learn, grow, and develop himself in each of these areas in order to be a good steward of the blessings of God.

The function of preaching has not changed fundamentally from the first century to the twenty-first century. The Word of God is eternal and unchanging. The servant of God has the responsibility to study, apply, and proclaim the Word of God so that souls into a personal relationship with God, and so that those who already know Him will serve Him more fully.

The function of pastoral care has not changed fundamentally from the first century to the twenty-first century. The basic needs of people are consistent. The complexities of life have changed some of the circumstances whereby pastoral care is applied, but the pastor is to be a shepherding and serving leader. Following God as the ultimate Shepherd and Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd, the pastor willingly sacrifices of Himself to tend and care for the flock of God.

The function of church administration has experienced the most change in regards to the functional competencies. The early church in its basic organization of pastors, deacons, and church body was the same as the twenty-first century church. But things were much more basic than they are in the twenty-first century church. The New Testament Church was house church oriented, much more decentralized. The charge of the Word of God to do things “decently and in order” (I Cor 14:40) remains the same. The pastor as the chief administrator must see that this is the case in all areas of ministry. In doing so, the pastor should work to see that all church administration is motivated and managed in a way that the Great Commandment (Matt 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) are carried out.

### E. Finishing the Race Well

While remaining true to biblical foundations, the modern pastor must take every opportunity to hone his skills and abilities to maximize his effectiveness for God. As he grows in the basic competencies of ministry, and in the position of service that God has placed him, God will provide opportunities to make an even greater impact for the kingdom. “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more” (Lk 12:48).

Each pastor will be held accountable for his calling, character, and competency in the Lord’s work. There will come a day at the return of the Chief Shepherd, that faithful pastors will “receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (I Pt 5:4). This crown will not be for personal glory or attention, but will be awarded by the grace of God and for the glory of God! The pastor could hear no sweeter words at the end of a faithful life than to hear His Master say, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Mt 25:21).

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim 4:6-8). It is important that the pastor begin the race of ministry well. It is absolutely essential that he finish the race of ministry well, to the eternal glory of God!

## APPENDIX

### SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear survey participant,

Greetings! I am in the Doctor of Ministry program at Liberty Theological Seminary. I am researching a project on the thesis topic, *The Twenty- First Century Pastor: His Calling, Character, and Competencies*. This survey relates to the area of pastoral competency in three areas; preaching, pastoral care, and church administration.

The survey is being sent to Southern Baptist pastors of middle-sized churches in West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina. A middle sized church, for the purpose of this project, is being defined as having annual undesignated receipts of \$250,000-\$750,000 and from 200-600 in average weekly worship attendance. It is believed that pastors of this size church will be able, and hopefully willing, to provide significant information.

Thank you in advance for taking time to complete this survey. It should take at the most ten to fifteen minutes of your time. Please be assured your responses will remain anonymous. Complete the survey, place it in the return envelope, and mail it to me.

Regards,

Seth N. Polk

Survey Questions and Responses

*Annual Undesignated Budget Receipts of your church:* Average of Survey Respondents- \$368,386  
 (From most recent Annual Church Profile)

*Average Weekly Worship attendance of your church:* Average of Survey Respondents- 270  
 (Sunday AM Worship)

**Circle your response or write in your answer where appropriate.**

***Education & Level of Experience:***

1. What level of education have you completed?

High School	Some College	College Graduate	Some Seminary	Seminary Graduate	Some Post-Graduate	Completed Post-Graduate
<b>0%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>40.2%</b>

2. How many years experience do you have in pastoral ministry?

0-3	3-6	6-10	10-15	15-20	20+
<b>1%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>44%</b>

3. How many years have you been serving in your current position?

0-3	3-6	6-10	10-15	15-20	20+
<b>22.5%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

4. How many churches have you served in a full time capacity?

1	2	3	4	5	6+
<b>13.9%</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

**Preaching:**

1. In your education, what courses did you take in hermeneutics and homiletics?

**94% indicated at least having completed Sermon Preparation and Delivery.**

2. Did your educational background adequately prepare you for the task of the preaching ministry in the twenty-first century?

Very Prepared	Mostly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Marginally Prepared	Not Prepared At All
<b>23.6%</b>	<b>39.7%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

3. What continuing education in preaching have you participated in?

**80.6% indicated having participated in conferences, seminars, and reading.**

4. What is the most helpful training you have received in preaching?

**Most listed responses:**

- 45% On the job training.**
- 24.7% Observation of more experienced pastors.**
- 23.6% Formal education.**

5. Do you utilize the method of preaching you learned in formal training?

Always	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Never
<b>10.7%</b>	<b>38.7%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>

6. List five important functions in preaching.

**Most listed responses:**

- 56.9% Preach the Word**
- 23.2% Equipping the saints**
- 22.5% Evangelism**
- 20.4% Exhortation**
- 17.2% Encouragement**

7. What is the most important function in preaching?

**Most listed responses:**

- 43.1% Preach the Word**
- 16.1% Evangelism**
- 13.9% Glorify God**

8. How would you primarily define your preaching ministry?

Expository	Topical	Narrative	Other _____
<b>80%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>

9. How many hours do you spend each week in preparation for preaching?

3-6	6-9	9-12	12-15	15-18	18+
<b>4.3%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>



10. What is the average length in minutes of your typical sermon?

20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45+
<b>15%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>1%</b>

11. Do you think the task of preaching has changed with the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century?

Significantly	Somewhat	Minimally	Not at All
<b>19.6%</b>	<b>53.6%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>15%</b>

12. What is the most significant change in preaching during this time period?

**Most listed responses:**

- 16.1%** Increased biblical ignorance of listeners
- 15.1%** Decreased attention span of listeners
- 13.9%** Increased use of technology
- 10.9%** Visually oriented society
- 10.7%** Entertainment mindset of society

13. How important is technology (audio-visual) in preaching?

Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Marginally Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All
<b>4.3%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>39.9%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>

14. Do you utilize multi-media (PowerPoint, Video, etc.) in preaching?

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
<b>10.7%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>

**Pastoral Care:**

1. In your educational background, what courses did you take in the area of pastoral care?

**90.2% indicated at least having completed Basic Pastoral Care and Counseling**  
**54.8% indicated having completed two or more courses in Pastoral Care and Counseling.**

2. Did your educational background adequately prepare you for the task of pastoral care in twenty first century?

Very Prepared	Mostly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Marginally Prepared	Not Prepared At All
<b>5.3%</b>	<b>31.2%</b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>

3. Have you participated in any continuing education in pastoral care?

**70.9% indicated having participated in continuing education primarily through conferences and seminars.**

4. What is the most helpful training you have received in pastoral care?

**Most listed responses:**

**47.3% On the job training and clinical pastoral education**  
**22.6% Observing more experienced pastors**  
**11.8% Formal education**

5. Do you utilize the methods of pastoral care you learned in formal training?

Always	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Never
<b>4.3%</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>

6. List five important functions of pastoral care?

**Most listed responses:**

- 40.8%** indicated compassion
- 29%** indicated listening
- 17.2%** indicated prayer
- 16.1%** indicated encouragement and hope
- 12.9%** indicated presence with those in need

7. What is the most important function of pastoral care?

**Most listed responses:**

- 26.8%** Presence with those in need
- 19.3%** Love for those in need
- 8.6%** The Scriptures
- 8.6%** Listening
- 4.3%** Prayer

8. How would you define your pastoral care ministry?

- Strictly Biblical
- Integrationist (utilizing both the Bible and principles of psychology)

**34.8%**                      **65.2%**

9. How many hours do you spend each week in pastoral care including counseling, visitation, and crisis ministry?

3-6	6-9	9-12	12-15	15-18	18+
<b>21.5%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>

10. Do you think the task of pastoral care has changed with the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century?

Significantly	Somewhat	Minimally	Not at All
<b>27.9%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>

11. What is the most significant change in pastoral care during this time period?

**Most listed responses:**

- 21.5% Busyness of congregation**
- 20.4% Breakdown of family units**
- 18.2% Complexity of problems**
- 13.5% Increased expectations on pastors**
- 11.8% Decrease in desire for home visits**

**Church Administration:**

1. In your education, what courses did you take to prepare you for church administration?

**85% indicated having completed at least a basic course in Church Administration**

2. Did your educational background adequately prepare you for the task of church administration in the twenty-first century?

Very Prepared	Mostly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Marginally Prepared	Not Prepared At All
<b>5.3%</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>37.1%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>

3. What continuing education in church administration have you participated in?

**55.4% indicated having participated in continuing education in Seminars and Conferences**

4. What is the most helpful training you have received in church administration?

**Most listed responses:**

- 31.9% On the job training**
- 14.9% Formal education**
- 10.6% Additional reading**
- 9.5% Seminars and Conferences**
- 8.5% Observing more experienced pastor**

5. Do you utilize the methods of church administration you learned in formal training?

**Yes** 39.3%  
**No** 34%  
**Sometimes** 25.5%

6. List five important functions in church administration.

**Most listed responses:**

**23.1%** Organization  
**20%** Staffing  
**17.8%** Vision  
**15.7%** Communication  
**10.5%** Planning

7. What is the most important function of church administration?

**Most listed responses:**

**11.5%** Vision  
**9.4%** Leadership  
**8.4%** Communication

8. How many hours do you spend each week in church administration?

3-6	6-9	9-12	12-15	15-18	18+
<b>15.9%</b>	<b>32.8%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

9. Do you think the task of church administration has changed significantly with the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century?

Significantly	Somewhat	Minimally	Not At All
<b>38.5%</b>	<b>44.6%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>

10. What is the most significant change in church administration during this time period?

**Most listed responses:**

<b>Technology</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Shift of Pastor expected to be Chief Executive Officer</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
<b>Legalities of Church Ministry</b>	<b>10.5%</b>



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