

TWELVE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL LAY PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

TO START A LAY MINISTRY FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF YOUR CHURCH AND TO TEST ITS STRENGTH LATER, YOU MUST BUILD IT ON THESE FOUNDATION BLOCKS. THEN, PERIODICALLY, USE THEM TO CHECK YOUR MINISTRY FOR POSSIBLE SIGNS OF SHIFTING AND EROSION.

Like a building, a strong ministry is strong because first, it sets on a solid foundation, and second, it is built with quality material, If the foundation is weak at the beginning, or if after starting with a solid foundation we see it beginning to erode, we can fear for the future of the ministry, It is imperative that we use these twelve blocks as the foundation of our ministry at the start and then periodically review them (conduct an evaluation) to see that they are in place.

If you are beginning a Lay Pastoral Care Ministry, ask yourself these questions about each Foundation Block:

1. Shall we include this one? Why?
2. How shall we do it ?
3. How well shall we do it?

If you already have the ministry on line, do not be afraid to ask the following tough questions about each block, Asking them is a productive way to conduct a evaluation of the present state of your ministry.

1. Are we doing this? Why?
2. In what way are we doing it?
3. How well are we doing it?
4. How can we do it better?

We shall now proceed to the TWELVE FOUNDATION BLOCKS. Each one is followed with some suggested building material, a few "bricks."

V I S I O N FOUNDATION BLOCK #1

"Where there is no vision the people perish." (Prov. 29:18) A good definition of "vision" is: "Something seen by other than normal sight." I have on the wall in front of my desk one of Bill Gothard's inimitable definitions. This one has a picture of three Giraffes with their long necks stretched as high as they will stretch. Then this definition of "Leadership": "Seeing farther down the road than those around me can." Not many people are leaders, people of vision. This often causes misunderstanding between leaders and followers but such friction is "the cost of doing business."

Somewhere I read, "Vision without a task is but a dream; a task without a vision is drudgery; a vision and a task is the hope of the world." Now, on to the materials to place on this part of the foundation.

A BIBLICAL BASE AND CALL I refer to I Peter 5:1-4 as the Magna Charta of our Lay Pastors Ministry. The operational part of this passage is, "Tend the flock of God which is your charge." This is both the Biblical base and the call of God to church leaders to see that every member of their people is loved and cared for. The Biblical model is in Exodus 18 where Moses divided God's flock into thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens and set "able men" over each segment. He got pastoral care down to bite-size so it could actually be done. See pages 25-44 in *Can The Pastor Do it Alone?* where this "brick" is developed more fully.

NEEDS OF THE CONGREGATION Reviewing the membership list by either the pastor or envisioned lay person is all it takes to document the need for pastoral care. I did a survey of 50 of our 2500 members at Hope Church, a cross section which ranged from active to inactive. Those to whom I reported the results were shocked at the critical need. The reality is that many members of every church, both small and large, are not being cared for, God would have every one of his people prayed for regularly, known well enough so struggles and pains are not suffered alone, and close enough to another so they are assured that someone cares. What has led many churches to begin a Lay Pastoral Care Ministry is a study of their needs and priorities.

PRAYER Time spent with God in prayer will keep the vision bright, it fixes the focus on God and what he has called you to do. A weakening ministry is usually preceded by a dimming vision and a dimming vision is the result of failure to pray. Conversely, a strong ministry is sustained by a vision which is regularly renewed and even enlarged in prayer. We don't wonder why Jesus was so strong in ministry when we see him so often at prayer. It's this simple: the clarity and energy of our vision is in proportion to time spent in prayer.

SHARED WITH LEADERS Vision must be shared. I know of churches which now have a strong Lay Pastoral Care Ministry because of a lay person, who had a vision for it, shared it with the pastor, I know of churches which have a strong Lay Pastoral Ministry because the pastor, who had the vision, shared it with a few lay people, It, then, spread to others, The circle of people sharing the same vision grew larger. I know churches where a lay person or

two who had the vision proceeded to launch the ministry alone, It failed, I know of churches whose pastor had the vision and proceeded to launch the ministry alone. It failed. This leads us to the next foundation block.

OWNERSHIP FOUNDATION BLOCK #2

"God want this ministry in our church so we have to make it work." Someone has to "own" the ministry. That is, someone must be responsible for it, manage it and be accountable for it's state.

A SMALL GROUP WHO SHARE THE VISION AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Moses was told by Jethro what he must have already known, that it was foolish to try to do the job alone. This is true for caring for the congregation and it is true for managing the ministry which cares for the congregation in our church of 2500 members we have a Ministry Leadership Group of eight people who whare the vision and give leadership to our Lay Pastors Ministry. What are the signs of ownership? There are at least five:

1. Attending meetings regularly.
2. Thinking about it at times other than at meetings.
3. Talking about it at home, with friends and others.
4. Agonizing over the problems. Even lose sleep over them.
5. Feeling the joy of success.

THE PRIORITY MINISTRY FOR EACH IN THE GROUP This is not a ministry

people can add to what they are already doing in the church. for some it will require that they drop other commitments so they can focus on this in prayer and consultation they will need to discover what God has gifted them for and what he is calling them to do. Our zeal often carries us into more-commitments than our Lord calls us to make. He was focused. No matter how much there was to do in the world Jesus established a limit to what his disciples were to do: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel." He even limited their message. Read it in Matthew 10, Each member of the Leadership Group must set this as his or her priority ministry in the church.

COMMISSIONED BY THE PASTOR AND OFFICIAL BOARD Since this ministry is

basic to all ministries of the church, it needs to be treated as such publicly. Setting aside by prayer those who are responsible for this ministry establishes the members of the Leadership Group as partners with the vocational pastor in fulfilling the charge in I Peter 5, "Tend the flock."

SCHEDULED MEETINGS No one likes meetings for meetings sake but meetings for

ministry's sake is palatable. Our Ministry Leadership Group (called "Ministry Group" in Can The

Pastor Do It Alone?) at Hope Church meets twice a month, the second and fourth Thursday evenings. The meetings include four parts: worship, koinonia (sharing what is going on in our lives), nurture and ministry. The ideal is to do all four each meeting, and at times we have. But, more often we will expand one or two of the parts at the expense of the others. Sometimes a personal problem in the life of one or two members will. take priority over nurture and even ministry as we listen, counsel and pray. Other times the ministry business will be so pressing that a meeting or two is spent on only that. If a balance cannot be achieved in each meeting, it should be sought over a period of time. It is the worship (usually very simple – a song, Scripture of devotional thought to focus us on God, and prayer) and sharing our lives which bonds a group together and makes ministry business both pleasant and productive.

D E S I G N FOUNDATION BLOCK #3

"Wherever the grace of Christ is present, it is in search of a form that will adequately express what it is." Avery Dulles in Models Of The Church.

Organization is not a necessary evil but the part of ministry the Lord has left up to us. He charges us to "Tend the flock." We are to try to understand what that means and create the strategy for doing it. He gave the great commission but left it up to us to develop plans and mobilize people to do it. If our people are to be adequately and effectively cared for we need to have a way of doing it. Hundreds of churches have adopted or adapted our Lay Pastors model, even though they call it something different. This model is set forth in my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*

DETERMINE PURPOSE, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES Our stated purpose is to provide pastoral care for every household in the church family. Or, in your situation, your purpose may be tailored differently or stated differently, One of the goals might be to "call forth" a certain number of people by a certain date to pastorally care for a stated number of households. The objectives would be the actions you would take to accomplish your goal. One objective might be to send letters to the members of your congregation who seem to have a pastoral heart, inviting them to consider and to pray about coming Ministry Leadership Group would develop clear statements of purpose, etc. The acronym "SAM" tells us one, imperative about goals, they must be Specific, Achievable and Measurable.

CREATE AN ADEQUATE STRUCTURE The Mosaic model in Exodus 18 gives the basic principles for a lay pastoral care ministry structure. Chapter 10 in my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* "In Search of a Form" is helpful, Whatever your organizational structure, it must be seen to be as important to your ministry as the skeleton is to the body. And it performs the same functions, giving it shape and enabling it to move.

DEVELOP JOB DESCRIPTIONS We call them "Position Accountability Write-ups," You must determine who is to do what and the "what" needs to be written. It is interesting to see how getting an idea down on paper harmonizes different perceptions, clarifies the ambiguous,

defines expectation and significantly reduces future misunderstanding. The Lay Pastor's job description is very clear – P.A.C.E. The tasks of the individual member of the Ministry Leadership Group need to be clearly written, as well as the tasks of every person involved in the ministry in any way.

BUILD ON ALL TWELVE FOUNDATION BLOCKS Each one is so very important that to overlook any one will weaken the total structure. Taken all together they make one strong foundation for a strong ministry. Consider them one at a time and ask the questions suggested above. It may take several months to get your ministry on line this way, but when you get it on line it will be there to stay.

C A L L FOUNDATION BLOCK #4

"You have not chosen me but I have chosen you...(John 15:16) I have found that lay people seldom think of themselves as being called by God to a ministry. They have no problem believing that we vocational ministers are called. But they are cheating themselves out of something tremendously significant by not believing they also are called by God. There is need for some Biblical teaching on this.

ACCEPT SPIRITUAL GIFTEDNESS AND DIVINE CALL AS ESSENTIALS FOR THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE The call to ministry is included in our call to salvation. Some denominations other than mine put it this way: "The call to ministry is in the baptism." Elton Trueblood puts it very strong: "To be a Christian and not to be in ministry is a contradiction of terms. To be a Christian is to be in ministry." He, of course, being a layman, can get by being that blunt. The refrain in Romans 12:4, "Just as each of us..." is repeated in a similar way in I Corinthians 11:7 & 27, and again in I Peter 4:10. These passages each deal with the spiritual gift and make it clear that every one in the Body, every Christian, is given gifts for ministry. The Holy Spirit, then, enables each of us to know whether we are an ear, an arm or an eye—a pastor, an administrator or a teacher. It makes a great difference in a Lay Pastor's, an administrator or a teacher ability to know he or she is called by God to pastorally care for people.

CONFIRM THE CALL OF EACH PARTICIPANT Not every person wanting to be a Lay Pastor is gifted or suited for this ministry. We have had to turn people down even after they have been through an equipping seminar. This is difficult and requires some pastoral work with those refused. I know one church which limits the equipping seminar to only those whom the elders give prior approval to be Lay Pastors. Qualifications are essential and have Biblical precedence. It is very important that a Lay Pastor's church leadership. It is good to hear, "We, too, believe you are called by God to be a Lay Pastor." That affirmation, given privately and publicly will help one persevere when the going gets tough.

PROVIDE FOR PUBLIC RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE We call this

"Commissioning." John Wesley's formula for Lay Preachers fits Lay Pastors as well: (1) The gift; (2) The call; (3) The training; and (4) The sending. The "sending" was to correspond in some way with the ordination of vocational ministers. At a Sunday morning worship service we have a special time for the laying on of hands by the elders during a time of prayer, setting them aside for this ministry.

E Q U I P P I N G FOUNDATION BLOCK #5

"Equip the saints for the work of the ministry." (Ephesians 4:12) The New International Version says it another way, "Prepare God's people for works of service."

ADOPT THE BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EQUIPPING The call to equip the people who are going to be ministers is given in the passage above. Equipping enables one to minister with confidence and competence. God must know our need for being equipped for he has given us three equippers: (1) people—Ephesians 4:11 & 12; (2) Holy Spirit—Acts 1:8; and (3) Scriptures – II Timothy 3:16 & 17. Some churches have tried to establish this ministry without this foundation block because of a false belief that their people either did not need it or that they would not take it. Those who sense the call of God want to be equipped so as to do the best job possible for their Lord.

DESIGN A COURSE You will need to determine in what subjects you want your lay pastoral caregivers to be equipped. What will they need to do the ministry you have in mind? There are two areas to lead them through: (1) Equipping them to be; and (2) Equipping them to do. Since what they are is more important than what they do, a fair amount of time needs to be given to growing as a person of faith, a servant of Jesus Christ. They need to know the place of prayer and the power of the, Holy Spirit in their personal lives. Their personal relationship with Jesus Christ cannot be taken for granted. It is imperative that they understand the principle of "Being with the Lord before doing for the Lord." Isaiah Muiya, an African Christian leader says, "We cannot reach out to people unless we reach up to God." Another leader wrote, "God is more concerned about your relationship with him than your ministry for him."

Pastoral principles and skills are not unimportant just because they are second in priority. Because what we are is more important than what we do does not mean we can slight the practical hands-on skills. The fact is that if one truly loves the Lord he or she will do all that can be done to excel in the skills. In addition to pastoral skills they will need to know the organizational structure, rationale for reporting, the reasons for coming together frequently to share their experiences, plans for further equipping and what to do when they get in over their heads with people's problems. *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* was written to be a text for equipping people to give pastoral care. I still use the 12 units of equipping in the book for equipping our people at Hope Church and in seminars I conduct around the country.

One important equipping principle is stated by John Ed Mathison, senior pastor of the rapidly

growing Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, in its little book, *Every Member In Ministry*; "The training gives people direction, but allows them to make their own decisions about the best way to outstanding lay pastoral care ministries in North America.

IDENTIFY THE EQUIPPERS According to Ephesians, pastors and teachers are to equip God's people for ministry. In II Timothy 2:2 we encounter another practice: pastors equipping other people to be equippers, "And the things you have heard me say . . . entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." There are not only people in our churches gifted with pastoral gifts, there are people gifted by the Spirit of God with equipping (teaching) gifts. We have at least two people who do not feel called to pastor but who feel called to equip those who are called professionals to give units on listening, pastoring the sick, confidentiality, family life, problem ownership, etc. One final thought on equippers, we found it extremely helpful to our trainees to invite seasoned lay pastors to share their experiences and to field questions.

PROVIDE ONGOING EQUIPPING This can be formal or informal. It can be done in hour-long, half-day, whole-day workshops or week-end retreats. The forms can range from special classes to providing resources such as books, audio and video tapes, magazine articles and such for individual use in their homes. They can be given information on community opportunities for classes, workshops, seminars or meetings on subjects which will enrich their pastoral skills or spirit. You can instill an awareness that worship services, organized Bible studies, preaching missions and other special events in your church, though not designed as equipping events, will enrich their pastoring heart.

A C C O U N T A B I L I T Y FOUNDATION BLOCK #6

"It's not what is expected that gets done, it is what is inspected." Dr. Gary Sweeten, Founder and Director of Equipping Ministries International. Ronald H. Sunderland, creator of ELM(Equipping Laypeople for Ministry), writes, "Oversight or supervision is essential to the health of any lay ministry. Experience has shown conclusively that when oversight lapses, the active commitment of lay people to their ministry fades." Accountability has to be built into the ministry. We do this in three major ways: monthly reports, "pastoral supervision" and ministry-sharing times.

PROVIDE REPORTS AND POLICY REGARDING REPORTS The ministry Leadership Group needs to determine what they will do regarding reports, set the policy implement it. Not everybody likes to make out reports. This will always be a sticky, albeit important, part of the ministry. Giving the people the rationale for reports helps them to be faithful in making them. The rationale is admittedly accountability, but it is also to keep those responsible for the ministry in touch with how the ministry is going. It is important to respond to the reports in some fashion. If people turn in reports and never get any feedback, they will never know whether they

were received or if anybody reads them. No response results in no reports.

PASTORAL SUPERVISION Each lay pastor has a lay pastor, The first responsibility of this person is to pastor the lay pastor. The first interest is in him or her as a person. The second interest is supervision. The term, "pastoral supervision" was coined by Dr. Kenneth Poholy at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. The role is explained on pages 71–78 in *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* In its simple form, this person makes an appointment with the lay pastor for the purpose of getting to the question, "Tell me, how is your ministry going?" This is a moment of accountability. But instead of the supervising person having to "supervise", the lay pastors, in telling how their ministry is going, are supervising themselves. They know what they have done or not done. They know how well they have done it. By the time they have finished telling their story they have supervised themselves. This is a comfortable time for both shepherd and lay pastor and will usually end in affirmation and a time for prayer.

A F F I R M A T I O N FOUNDATION BLOCK #7

"Words of encouragement and appreciation with a pat on the back ignite the spirit."

Affirmation, the act of giving credit, praise, honor and recognition to another greatly helps establish the worth of another in his or her mind and, if done publicly, in the minds of others. Affirming a Lay Pastor for excellence is always in order, Affirming one for ministry well done, for a compassionate spirit, for a generous act, for growth in the use of their gifts, for handling a difficult situation with sensitivity and skill is a way of declaring the truth about a brother or sister in Christ. And it can be done in private or in public.

Affirming a person or group is Biblical. Romans 13:7 calls us to "Give everyone what you owe him... if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." The ultimate affirmation will be given by Jesus in that future day, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful ..." (Matt. 25:23). Affirmation can even include a gift if we take 1 Peter 5:4 literally, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." That is, of course, conditioned on our fulfilling the previous charge in verse two, "Tend the flock of God." We should withhold neither private nor public affirmation but rather try to be creative in affirming people with appropriate words, gifts and acts.

GIVE PUBLIC RECOGNITION This is to be done for both the ministry and the individuals doing the ministry. Some ways it can be done is by articles and pictures in the church paper, by pulpit announcements and by posters. The Ministry Leadership Group can come up with creative ideas to appropriately give honor to whom honor is due.

PLAN AN ANNUAL MINISTRY CELEBRATION AND RECOGNITION EVENT A ministry may be on line for years before the leaders realize that they need to do more to celebrate the ministry, before they realize what a celebration of the ministry will do for the morale of their

people. At Hope Church we have annually what we call a "Ministry Celebration Dinner." This is without cost to the Lay Pastors and their spouses. It is a gala event with an emcee, music, prizes and testimonials from Lay Pastors and from people receiving pastoral care. It is amazing how affirming it is to a Lay Pastor to be asked to do this. We recognize those who have been pastoring for certain numbers of years and give recognitions for other reasons. We conclude with a "Circle of Love", forming a circle around the room, joining hands for singing and prayer.

PASTORAL SUPERVISION The response to the supervisor's question when doing pastoral supervision, "How is your ministry going?" will include some pastoral activities and attitudes for which the lay pastor can be commended. Affirmation is a natural for the supervisor. He or she must not forget it.

ONE-ON-ONE AFFIRMATION Occasional notes, cards or letters to recognize one's faithful ministry is an excellent means of affirmation. A phone call from a ministry leader, pastor or pastoral staff will bring a lot of joy and a warm glow in one's spirit. This takes a very little time, but it is a case of a little being as lot, a little by the one doing it but a lot to the one receiving it.

S U P P O R T FOUNDATION BLOCK #8

"Many persons can do most of what we pastors do ... The task of pastors is to equip these persons for ministry and support them through administration and example." Samuel Southard in *Comprehensive Pastoral Care*.

We vocational pastors are notorious for getting a person to volunteer for a job and then leave them high and dry. They need support and we need to give it. Lay people doing significant ministry need the security of knowing they have those to whom they can turn for help and/or mentoring. The following "bricks" will give some ideas of how we can give the necessary support.

AVAILABILITY OF STAFF AND LEADERSHIP Lay Pastors are participating in the pastoral care of the congregation, not solely responsible for it. They are partners in ministry, unsalaried volunteers who share in tending the flock. The pastor, or pastoral staff, needs to understand that since the lay people are participating as partners that they need to commit themselves to being available to deal with problems and answer questions. A research which was conducted among social workers found that they needed support in these three ways: (1) Shared responsibility for cases; (2) support in difficult cases; and (3) Help with problems. What is true for salaried social workers must be as true or more so for unsalaried lay pastors.

PROVIDE FOR CONTINUING EQUIPPING Just knowing that additional equipping

opportunities for growing in their ministry are available gives support. They know there is help, that their ministry is taken seriously.

ARRANGE FOR PRAYER PARTNERS The desire and will is there. All that is needed is to provide some plan for them to pray for one another. In my camp directing days I used the "buddy" system for swimming. Every swimmer had a "buddy" who kept track of him or her. The same plan works for prayer support. This makes it possible for them to provide support for one another. I know one church which assigns new prayer partners every two months. This provides new relationships and freshens up the prayer experience.

PASTORAL SUPERVISION We focused on this earlier for other purposes but we can see that, in addition to other uses for pastoral supervision, it gives support to lay pastors. For them to know that they have one who is praying for them, who is interested in them and who will be meeting with them regularly gives strong support. They know they are not alone in bearing the burden of pastoral care. This means that the "supervisors" will need to be committed to their people and faithful in carrying out their commitment.

F E L L O W S H I P FOUNDATION BLOCK #9

"The community which ministry creates must come together for sharing, growth and renewing." If people who are involved in the same ministry have an opportunity to come together frequently their lives will bond in an amazing way. The bonding will keep them in the ministry and produce faithfulness. In addition to their faith, they have their ministry in common. It is the responsibility of those who lead the ministry to provide for this. All who minister must be able to move from ministry to community, then from community back into ministry. This essential cycle is more clearly seen in this diagram.

Our lay pastors come together for regular meetings quarterly for two hours,

The evening includes five segments: (1) Worship – a brief time of singing and focusing on the Lord with the help of some scripture, (2) Ministry news – and announcements, policy changes, etc.; (3) Equipping – reviewing basic material from the equipping seminar (Note: the basics need to be repeated often!), videos on pastoring skills and principles, teachings by experts in listening and other skills; (4) Sharing – dividing into small groups to share with one another how their ministry is going (the "agonies and the ecstasies"). This has proved to be the most interesting part of the evening for the lay pastors and the most around the room, joining hands to sing and pray.

PLAN SOCIAL EVENTS Creativity is the key here. An annual picnic Christmas party

or other excuses to get together help to make the ministry fun and bond their lives in Christ and in ministry. know that one reason people offer themselves for ministry is to be together with others. The you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

C O M M U N I C A T I O N FOUNDATION BLOCK #10

The ministry cannot be strong without frequent verbal and printed contact. Did you ever hear this, "Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark; you know what you are doing but nobody else does." The Ministry Leadership Group knows what they are doing but unless the ministry, its purpose, goals, needs and accomplishments are articulated and/or printed the ministry will not flourish.

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER Most lay pastoral care ministries I know of publish a newsletter either occasionally or monthly. We title ours KEEPING P.A.C.E. The purpose of a newsletter is to maintain a meaningful printed contract with all who are involved in the ministry. The content should (1) Encourage, (2) Equip and (3) Inform. Our newsletter is one 8 1/2 x 11 sheet, both sides. Some churches produce longer ones. It does not need to be voluminous. Again, it is a case of a little doing a lot. Many people will read a paper if it is brief but lay it aside to read "later" if it is long. Rather than getting read, it gets to the bottom of the "stack."

CHURCH PAPER ARTICLES Almost every church produces a monthly publication of some kind. Ministry leaders, church staff, lay pastors and others can contribute to a regular section in the paper. It is important to keep the ministry before the congregation for two reasons: (1) You will need to be calling people from the congregation into the ministry; and (2) it will make it easier for the lay pastors to be accepted by the people because they will know about it and think well of it.

SPECIAL MAILINGS Occasionally you may want to accentuate some milestone in the ministry or some special event. A letter to the congregation by the pastor or lay leaders would be an effective instrument for this. A critical need for additional lay pastors may warrant the effort and expense of a letter to either specially selected people or to the whole body.

PERSONAL WITNESS AT WORSHIP SERVICES If your church has lay people sharing either regularly or occasionally as part of the worship service, you have a ready-made opportunity for the lay pastors to share their experience occasionally. If that is not being done in your church, you could introduce it. A good three-point sharing outline can be: (1) What I am doing; (2) Why I am doing it; and (3) How I feel about it, or what this ministry is doing for me.

BE IN TOUCH WITH OTHER CHURCHES AND THE NETWORK Regular correspondence with other churches which have a lay pastoral care ministry will keep your ministry freshened up and you, in turn, will contribute to their strength. This can be done by exchanging newsletters, speakers, publications, etc. raised up this ministry and we are to get strength from being in touch with one another rather than going it alone.

E V A L U A T I O N FOUNDATION BLOCK #11

"Taking time to see how the ministry is doing will keep it moving ahead."

After the ministry has been on line for a time it is essential to evaluate it so as to see if it is being done the way you planned and it is performing as you expected. Evaluation is monitoring your ministry in the light of your goals for the purpose of making it as effective as it can possibly be. We need to know four things about what we are doing:

1. Are we doing what we set out to do?
2. Are we having the results we projected?
3. Are we using the methods and means we planned to use?
4. Do we need to make some changes? if so, what?

Evaluation, of course, assumes that we have a stated purpose, goals and objectives against which we can measure the current state of the ministry. If these have never been clearly written, that would need to be done before you can do an evaluation.

DESIGN INSTRUMENTS FOR EVALUATING THE MINISTRY This may take some special help from someone experienced in this skill. Or it is possible to adapt evaluation forms from organizations or agencies you are acquainted with. Samples of forms we have used are in Can The Pastor Do It Alone? To design your own, determine first what you want to find out and then proceed to the questions which will give you this information. You should do at least one evaluation a year.

UTILIZE THE RESULTS FOR MINISTRY IMPROVEMENT The hard work begins after getting the forms returned. They will need to be interpreted and collated. You will discover where your ministry is strong and where it is weak. Then, formulate plans for making the strong parts of your ministry stronger and the weak parts strong. The first evaluation we ever did indicated that the ministry was about seventy percent effective. The questions revealed that some of the lay pastors were not fulfilling their commitment regularly, too well. To raise this percentage we provided additional equipping opportunities and gave incentives for them to take advantage of them.

M A I N T E N A N C E FOUNDATION BLOCK #12

This is the nuts and bolts of day-to-day office and administration work. When we would come to this topic in our national seminars on the Lay Pastors Ministry, my ministry assistant, who usually taught this unit, would invariably say, "Goodie, I get to talk about the "yucky stuff" There is nothing glamorous about the smoothly. It is something like the difference between selling a new TV set to a customer and repairing it. The sales person has an up-front position. The repair technician is a behind-the-scenes person, doing what needs to be done to make it work right. Unless the maintenance is done the ministry will come apart sooner or later.

DO ESSENTIAL OFFICE WORK There is essential office work such as keeping records, processing reports, getting out the newsletter, and much more.

REVIEW THE FLOCKS REGULARLY The size of the pastoring groups will diminish because people move away, transfer to other churches or die. Unless the flocks are gone over regularly, the number of people being pastored will decrease. For example, a lay pastor could be down to two households from the original six or eight over a period of time. When one household is gone, another assignment has to be made. Someone has to have this maintenance responsibility.

PROVIDE MATERIALS Another behind-the-scenes task is getting the materials together for a workshop, equipping seminar, fellowship meeting and other events. The supply of report forms, and getting them into the hands of the lay pastors has to be done by someone. There are so many things!

REVIEW AND UPDATE THE STRUCTURE, POLICY AND PARTICIPANTS This is the task of the group which has ownership of the ministry. If the ministry is alive, and it better be, it will be changing. This calls for changing how things are done, updating the policy, revising the mission statement, struggling to find solutions for the problems and counseling with those lay pastors who are discouraged or whose life situation has changed to such an extent that their participation needs to be modified or discontinued.

These twelve foundation blocks were discovered over the years rather than devised at the beginning. We created the Lay Pastors Ministry over an 18-month period, conducted a pilot project for the next six months with five lay pastors to see if it would work and, finding that it did, began to implement and maintain it. In looking back over the years it became very clear that these twelve blocks were there, some of them put into place only after irreparable damage had been done. Hopefully, knowing the essential nature of these foundation blocks will help others make their ministry strong fight at the beginning, that it will save many from the waste of the "trial and error" process.