

## **A New Mind-set**

PAPER ON HOW THE ROLES OF BOTH CLERGY AND LAITY ARE CHANGING AND HOW TO "GO WITH THE FLOW." THE WORDS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET ISAIAH NEED TO BE HEARD IN FULL VOLUME FOR THIS NEW DAY IN THE CHURCH: "FORGET THE FORMER THINGS; DO NOT DWELL ON THE PAST. SET. I AM DOING A NEW THING! DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT?" (ISAIAH 43: 18, 19)

GOD IS CREATING A NEW MIND-SET IN HIS PEOPLE FOR THIS NEW THING HE IS DOING IN HIS CHURCH. AN EXAMPLE:

**OLD MIND-SET:** THE PASTOR HAS ALL OF THE GIFTS REQUIRED TO NURTURE AND CARE FOR A CONGREGATION

**NEW MIND-SET:** ONLY ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF A CONGREGATION TOGETHER HAVE THE GIFTS REQUIRED TO NURTURE AND CARE FOR A CONGREGATION.

LOREN MEAD, DIRECTOR OF THE ALBAN INSTITUTE IN WASHINGTON, D.C., MAKES THIS OBSERVATION: "MINISTRY IN THE PAST AGE WAS THE TASK FOR THE PROFESSIONAL.....THE NEW MINISTRY IS THE TASK OF THE PEOPLE."

## **A NEW MIND-SET FOR A NEW DAY**

A paper on how the roles of both clergy and laity are changing and how to "go with the flow."

### INTRODUCTIONS

"Christians Finding Help From Spiritual Mentors" was the caption of a feature article in the June 24, 1990 issue of the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Written by staff writer, Martha Sawyer Allen. Here are some quotes:

"Instead of depending only on a minister or priest, more and more Christians are reaching out to each other to deepen their faith journeys."

"Shirley Rowley, director of pastoral ministry at St. Michael's said, ....there's no way ordained clergy can do all the ministry. I believe this ti the future of the church. Ministry belongs to the people."

"Several experts say the increase in nonordained ministry is the leading trend in American religion. While they recognize the value of an ordained person, many are beginning to understand that it doesn't require a seminary degree to help another person on a spiritual journey."

"Said the Rev. Loren Mead, director of the Alban Institute in Washington, D.C., 'Ministry in the past age was the task for the professional in the pulpit or overseas...The new ministry is the task of the people.....'"

The church is in the midst of a major transition. The roles of both clergy and laity, once clearly defined, are no longer the same. John Stoot of England is calling it the "Second Reformation."

Today's church has inherited a crippling clergy-laity split from the past. It is now caught up in a revolutionary transition. The church is no longer what it used to be for either clergy or laity. The positive side of this changing landscape is seen when you view it as a new wind of the Spirit blowing through the church.

Today, the church is giving the ministry to the people like it gave the Scriptures to the people in the sixteenth century. Some are resisting what is going on. Some are going to extremes. Others are struggling to understand what God is doing and are working at ways to give, the ministry to the people.

We will need to explore this new terrain in five areas if we are not to only survive this revolution but discover where God is going so we can go with him:

1. The revolutionary change
2. The problems and the struggle
3. The role of the clergy
4. The role of the laity
5. The partnership in ministry

## THE REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

For centuries the ministry has been the task of the professional. Instead of singing, "Look what they've done to my song"; it is, "Look what they've done to my role." The clergy are tumbling from the lofty status position which carried authority and privilege. They had built a power system. They controlled the church, the seminaries and the

denominational offices. They determined theology and ecclesiastical life. The church leadership was authoritarian and clericalist. Now, they are no longer a privileged class. Both their status and authority is suffering decline.

Loren Mead, president of the Alban Institute titled an article in the May/June, 1990 issue of Action Information, "Reinventing the Congregation." He says that the changes which must take place are so major that instead of tampering with the congregations or polishing them up a bit we need to "reinvent" them. "What is taking place", he says, "falls somewhere between evolution and revolution. And the outcome is not entirely in our hands."

My appeal to the church is to discern where God is leading it and to make whatever minor and massive changes are required to go with God. Somehow we must make a 190-degree turn from where the church was as early as the beginning of the second century. A distinct cleavage began to appear between clergy and laity in spite of the fact that in the first century every Christian had clearly become a separate "order." The church followed the model of Roman magistrates and therefore departed from the way the Spirit of God had energize the church.

Clergy must see that they are not a privileged class, that their ministry is one part of the whole, that other believers are equally parts of the whole, even though not as prominent as the clergy. Laity must see that they are not second-class Christians, but are equally called of God to ministry; that they, along with all other Christians, including clergy, are authentically parts of the whole.

The Scriptures guide us. Paul's example of the body helps us to accept each part as important to the whole, even though, due to their unique function, some are more visible than others.

The tools we have for dealing with this change do not work well for the kind of escalating transition we are experiencing during these times. People are handling the change in four different ways. 1) Some, as they sense that things are not the same, try harder to make the old way work. 2) Some have swung to the extreme and have become entertainment centers or champions of an acculturated Christianity in trying to find their way. 3) Some others are disillusioned, frustrated, and even devastated as they watch the demise of their church and ministry. 4) Still others are bravely facing the new challenge, doing what needs to be done to go with God in giving the ministry to the people.

There are many outstanding models of the letter, Let's look at some of them:

#### **EASTSIDE FOURSQUARE CHURCH, KIRKLAND WASHINGTON.**

This church has grown from a few attenders in 1980 to 4000 today. They are mostly "baby boomers." pastor Doug Murren states his ideology clearly, "We have set about deprofessionalizing our congregation. As vocational leaders in our congregation, we are moving more and more toward not doing the work ourselves; instead, we are recruiting, training and releasing others to do our work. Why? Because I truly believe any position that is presently salaried can probably be done just as well – and perhaps even better – by several volunteers. Remember we are not meant to be mere spectators; we are called to be active participators. I am bold enough to predict at this time that the thirty-something people will laicize the church again. ("The Baby Boomerang, Doug Murren Regal Books, 1990 page 268)

#### **SKYLINE WESLEYAN, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA.**

John Maxwell, pastor, describes the senior pastor of the future as a general who directs an army, not a Red Cross worker helping the wounded one at a time. He says too many pastors stop to tend one wounded soldier when leadership so that no hurting person The pastor/general must give effective leadership so that no hurting person in his church is overlooked. But at the same time he must provide leadership for every aspect of the battle. Whereas pastors used to lead people, today's pastor is training leaders (lay and staff) who in turn lead the church."

#### **WILLOW CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH, SOUTH BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS.**

Recruiting lay workers is serious business at Willow Creek. Says, pastor Bill Hybels, "When it comes to recruitment, too many church leaders are 'slot' oriented. They identify a need in their ministry, then look for someone to fill that slot. New members are challenged to discover their spiritual gifts so they can serve where they are most effective and fulfilled." He uses the phrase, "Every member a minister" to describe the goal for lay involvement. The church's Network Ministry offers seminars which lead people through a spiritual gift inventory workbook. Then individual counselors help them determine their three strongest gifts and guide them into appropriate ministry options.

#### **NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH, PORTLAND, OREGON.**

They have the most effective cell ministry in America, according to Elmer Towns. These "TLC Groups" are led by lay people who are called "Lay Pastors." Pastor Dale Galloway teaches these lay pastors, who in turn teach the people in these cells. In addition, he channels requests for hospital visitation, prayer for the sick, absentee problems and other problems to the lay pastors. His own description of his job: "My job is, first to preach on Sundays, and second to make 500 lay pastors successful." To do this, he confesses that he had to learn to let go of ministry and to motivate others for ministry.

## PERIMETER CHURCH, ATLANTA, GEORGIA.

Pastor Randy Pope explains that in the traditional church model, the pastor does the ministry, and the people receive the ministry. In another model the pastor and his staff recruit, train, deploy and evaluate all lay people in the ministry. Perimeter believes in a model in which God calls each person. The staff member is the equipper. pope refers to the staff as "leader-equipppers." The aim is to use every person in the church in ministry. At the end of each Inquirer's Class, the prospective members are challenged to more than join the church. They are asked to become part of the ministry. (NOTE: The preceding four churches are written up in 10 of Today's Most Innovative Churches, by Elmer L Towns. Regal Book, 1990.)

A dramatic change is taking place. For some, the stream flows past them, leaving them to wither. For some, it is flowing over them, inundating them with frustration, anger, failure or indifference. These people may look forward to retirement, vocational change or burn out.

The change which is taking place is not the result of planning. It is the working of the Holy Spirit of God in his church. Therefore, we cannot control it. We can only resist it, be swamped by it or go with it. There are at least three ways we can go with it:

1. Be serious about lay ministry. Not going about it like one would play "Trivia" but like those who desperately want something significant to happen. Until that passion is there, nothing of strategic importance will happen. Frustration and decline will continue.
2. Be open to the new. Often we will only be open to the new under press. Usually, in a church, only crises will open the window to crises the church faces today:
  - a. Membership loss;
  - b. Leadership crisis;
  - c. Attendance decline;
  - e. Clergy scandals;
  - f. Cultural indifference to churches.

These crises provide "learning opportunities", a time of readiness to change.

3. Be informed. Books, seminars, conferences and periodicals by the dozen are alerting church leaders to the lay ministry revolution. However, many are

seeing but not perceiving, hearing but not understanding. Hear it! **THIS IS A NEW DAY FOR THE CHURCH. GOD IS LEADING HIS CHURCH TO GIVE THE MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLE.** Just, as. Romans 1:17, "The righteous will live by faith" came alive to Martin Luther in 1517, Ephesians 4:11 & 12, "Pastors and teachers....prepare God's people for works of service" is coming alive to the church today. God is calling some folks to a specific "work of service" – pastoral care. I Peter 5:2 is the mandate, "Be shepherds of God's flock." Since the Lay Pastors Ministry was launched in college Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati in 1978, it has become an international movement producing a quarterly newsletter, coordinating a network of churches, sponsoring an annual conference, publishing materials and providing leadership in lay pastoral care. And this is only part of a stream which is drawing an increasing number of churches into its ever-widening flow. It is an exhilarating number Let us now turn to the problems encountered in this time of massive change.

### THE PROBLEMS AND THE STRUGGLE

Laity have been engaged in passive participation. They are accustomed to listening to teaching and preaching with a minimum expectation of action. They serve on boards, committees and task forces to carry out the plans of the clergy or denomination. At best they are free to critique and modify a proposal or even given the prerogative of accepting or rejecting it. Now they are being "unleashed" (Frank Tillapaugh's term) from passive participation to active participation.

Energy have been accustomed to running the show. They have been ecclesiastical position with special privileges and prominence. Rarely has their authority and actions been questioned. All is radically different now! The downside of this new day is a diminishing status, erosion of confidence in motivations, damaged public image and loss of ability to impact our culture. The upside is the unmasking of the clergy so we are seen for what we are – human, faulty and in need of ministry partners. Can the downside be God's inimitable way of getting "pastors/teachers" to equip the saints for the work of the ministry? probably!

In this time of transition neither clergy nor laity are sure of their role, both are pioneers, finding their way over uncharted terrain. The uncertainty of their roles are in these areas:

1. **Training.** The clergy do not know how to train laity and they do not know with what to train them. The laity do not know what kind of training is needed, how much is needed, and from whom they should get it. Their wondering range from no

training to getting a seminary degree.

2. **Differences.** When there is a difference of opinion about strategy, direction, form, procedure, personnel, emphasis, content, etc., who makes the final decision, and whose responsibility is it to ameliorate the hurt feelings or frayed relationships of the loser?

3. **Authority.** In budget making and spending; in scheduling events; in the relative importance of programs; in selection of curriculum' in evaluating the need, usefulness, or appropriateness of a new program; in the use of facilities or equipment: who has the authority?

Seminaries were created to serve the church by generating professionals who could lead the laity in their passive participation. They can now serve could lead the laity in their passive participation. They can now were the church best by generating professionals who will equip non-professionals to engage in "active participation". What we are proposing is that seminaries begin to train the church's pastors/teachers to give the ministry to the people. Some few are. Those who are, have rediscovered Ephesians 4:11 & 12 and are gong with the new wind of the Spirit blowing in the church today. It is clear that the struggle in the local church is also the struggle of the seminary and denominational bureaucracy.

One surprise in this transition is that we do not have a vocabulary which communicates the new role of the laity. The most common term is "lay ministry". But this very term contributes to a second class image of the ministry of the laity. It encourages the self image of inferiority and invites the lament, "I'm only a lay person." The need for a term which communicates equality of a call to ministry and which can also be easily understood challenges our creativity.

I have begun to refer to vocational ministers and volunteer ministers. I believe this communicates the parity of ministry but the terms may be more novel than clear. The lay/clergy vocabulary is so widely sued that it makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to change the concept. The wrong word perpetuates the wrong ides. The lay/clergy dichotomy imprisonment is prolonged the vocabulary.

Three problems obstruct the progress of the transition.

**First, the professional pastor's reluctance to relinquish control.**

It is very difficult for those called by God to do ministry, trained in seminary to do ministry, ordained to do ministry and called by a congregation to do ministry to give

this ministry to the people. Transferring "their ministry" to the laity militates against both their human possessiveness and the traditional protectiveness of the church. Some feel threatened by giving up control. Are they afraid that some laity will outperform them in their areas of call, training and experience? If they are, they have forgotten that the supreme moment for a football coach is when the one he has been training surpasses him.

To give the ministry to the people requires an understanding and acceptance of Ephesians 4:11 & 12. It requires a new congregation to do. It requires what To "do ministry" is now perceived as equipping others to do the hand on ministry which they were called by the congregation to do. It requires what they believe Paul was also writing to them when he introduced Timothy, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified, to teach others." All we are talking about is the clergy giving (entrusting) the ministry to others who are also called by God.

Those who do not feel threatened may fear they are being replaced and will therefore lose what is giving them significance in life, i.e. doing the ministry to which they were called and for which they were trained and ordained.

The thrilling resolution of this inner struggle is for them to see that shifting their role from doing ministry to the role of equipping people to do ministry is the grand fulfillment for their call. By fulfilling their call to "equip the saints for the work of ministry", clergy are enabling lay people to fulfill their call from God to do the "work of ministry."

How can this role change take place? The role transition from doer of ministry to equipper of people who will be doers of ministry is a process which can be controlled by intentional cooperation or resistance to the transition momentum generated by the Holy Spirit.

Here are six strategies of transition, six action-steps leading from clergy ownership of the pastoral care ministry to lay ownership of the same.

**a. VISION.** The pastor has a heart for the pastoral care of his people. He sees himself comforting, encouraging, listening, affirming and caring for his people, all of his people.

**b. SHARING.** He shares his heart with a few pastoral-type people or his board. Part of his sharing discloses pain, guilt and frustration over not being able to get to all the people.



c. **STRUCTURING.** He forms a pastoral care leadership group of people who share his vision to being planning how to pastor all the congregation. The equipping beings here. He teaches the Biblical basis for this ministry and leads them in the beginning stages of a plan.

d. **PASSING.** When the group begins to catch the vision and assume ownership. the leadership is turned over to them and he begins to withdraws.

e. **RELEASING,** In his heart and in his actions he relinquishes the ownership and management of the group and the pastoral care ministry. The ministry is their's. They 1) accept the responsibility for it. 2) feel the burden and. 3) become accountable for its success.

f. **SUPPORTING.** The pastor continues to give support to the group by 1) being a resource, 2) affirming, 3) encouraging and retaining the prerogative to become involved when requested or when he sees need. He also, as Moses did, will take care of the more difficult pastoral matters of the church. (Exodus 18)

**The second problem obstructing the progress of the transition is that many clergy are ill-equipped to equip the people. Our solutions have come to the fore:**

a. God has raised up many lay-equipping leaders, churches and organizations. Elton Trueblood was a pioneer in this field. The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry Network has been equipping churches to give the pastoral care of the congregation to the people for several years. Stephen Ministries, founded by Dr. Ken Haugk, equips both churches and people for significant pastoral care. And there are more,

b. A growing number of seminaries are now educating the new crop of pastoral leaders to equip their people for ministry.

**The third problem obstructing the transition is the reluctance of the people to give and receive authentic lay ministry.**

They have been in a clergy- dependent and passive mode too long. It is improbable that both clergy and laity are ready for this transition at the same time. There-in lies the struggle.

#### THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY

Ministry has been the task of the clergy, supported by the people. Seminaries were created to build a class of clergy, educated for leadership and ministry. They are funded by the laity. Clericalism has been the church's power system.

Without designing it as such, the church has created a caste system. The clergy have the power and the prestige. The people of the pew, as far as church life is concerned, are second class.

But all of this is changing. The wind of the Spirit is blowing through the church. The church, therefore, is breaking with the traditional way of doing things. The clergy has a new role. Three observations fuel this change:

**a. The pastor cannot do it alone.** If they try to go it alone they either burn out or much ministry is left undone.

**b. The traditional system is crumbling.** The Second Reformation is in progress. Lay people who became aware of their ministry and leadership gifts will leave the churches which are not changing and go where they have the opportunity to be equipped and use their gifts in ministry.

**c. The Bible calls for it.** Ministry is included in everybody's salvation package. Ephesians 4:11 & 12 speaks to the issue directly, "prepare God's people for works of service".

The role of the clergy has six components: Spiritual leader: Equip: Provide Vision: Support: Legitimize: Minister.

**Let's look at them one at a time.**

**SPIRITUAL LEADER.** The charge God gave to Moses when he was decentralizing his ministry was to represent the people before God, teach them the decrees (the laws), show them the way to live and appoint capable people (Exodus 18). If today's professional pastors accept this assignment and commit to carrying it out, they will find it almost overwhelming. It will be job enough to be a spiritual leader.

**EQUIP.** The ministry of the pastor/teacher, according to Ephesians 4:11 & 12, is to equip. That involves far more than we have time to write about here. It includes (1) preparing the congregation by preaching and teaching to anticipate being equipped for ministry, (2) orienting new members to the same, and (3) having it taught in the children's youth and adult educational classes. (4) Helping people discover their gifts

is part of it. (5) Designing or discovering curriculum for equipping people for specific ministries such as evangelism, pastoral care, leading worship, teaching, counseling, social action, small group leadership, etc., etc. It soon becomes clear that the principle given in II Timothy 2:2 has been used, that of equipping some to equip others.

**VISION.** Most people are not people of vision. The pastor of a church must be one who is. It is inconceivable that God would call a person into a position of spiritual leadership without following the call with giving a vision of what he wants done. This vision must be shared, implemented and frequently renewed.

**SUPPORT.** Lay people engaging in significant ministry need support. Research among social workers helps spiritual leaders to believe this. Satisfaction with themselves and what they were doing depend on these four things:

- a. Shared responsibility:
- b. Support in difficult cases;
- c. Help with problems; and
- d. Personal growth.

Good support will motivate, assure, encourage, strengthen, and stimulate a lay person. It will tap their inner resources in such a way that the person will not only continue in ministry but will grow in competence and strive to excel. They will have a sense of achievement, a feeling of importance, and be grateful to God and their church for giving them the privilege of ministry.

Here are five ways of giving support:

- 1) A phone call. "I know you are working at your ministry. I want you to know that I am thinking about you and appreciate what you are doing. How are things going? Any problems? Is there anyway I can be of help to you?"
- 2) A written note. The affirmation, encouragement and assurance or continuing interest and concern for the person and what he is doing is strongly supportive.
- 3) A personal visit. An occasional eyeball-to-eyeball meeting will do wonders in giving support. The one in ministry will feel affirmed. The time together provides the contact for discouragements to surface so they can be dealt with before becoming serious, gives the opportunity for problems to be aired, to affirm the person and to pray together.

4) A verbal commitment to be available as far as possible to talk over problems and to hear the joys.

5) Attend important meetings of the ministry as far as possible.

**LEGITIMIZE.** The clergy person is a "Legitimator", to coin a term. The spiritual leader is viewed in a distinctive way by the people, and this is in accord with Scripture. Through Hebrews 13, God calls his people to "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith . . . Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account."(v.v.7.)

In Counseling and Values, Miller and Atkinson write, "... in the eyes of many members of the congregation, the role of the clergy person carries with it certain distinctive emotional overtones associated with the member's feelings about the divine." The pastor is in the unique position to authenticate the people doing ministry and legitimize the ministry they are doing. This is way it is often said that if the pastor is not in favor of it and does not give it his support it will not go.

Ernie O. Codier wrote in Action Information (September/October 1990 issue), "We have a system for accrediting and authorizing clergy; we do not have a system for taking lay ministry equally seriously." The pastor, through preaching, commissioning, personal support and relinquishing ministry in practice and not just theory, gives credibility to the lay ministers and their ministries. People generally view that I call legitimizing as both an ecclesiastical and divine imprimatur. It is imperative that the pastor be the "legitimator" in this new role. Only a person with authority can give convincing permission.

**MINISTER.** The mosaic model does not lead the clergy out of personal ministry. Moses was to do the larger tasks. We must be careful of the swing of the pendulum from doing all the ministry to doing none of the ministry. The clergy need to do pastoral care too. Sometimes alongside the laity and sometimes in their place. Giving the ministry can be a "cop out" for the clergy. Determining who does what is more of an art than a science of neatly written lists. Differences in people, circumstances and timing will call for changes in the lists. Also, clergy need to do hands-on-ministry to know who to equip effectively.

Is it a surprise that some believe this new movement tends to marginalize the role of the clergy? It seems to some that the importance of their call is undercut and that they may even be replaced. Three Biblical models make it clear that giving the ministry to the people will maximize the role rather than marginalize it.

**EXODUS 18.** The Mosaic model. Rather than Moses becoming less and less a central figure, he is more so. He is teacher, selector and His role becomes clearer as you read beyond Exodus 18 to see him struggle with the people's faulty actions. They needed an intercessor and had one who sought God desperately and regularly, The chief difference in Moses' new role was that, with the people doing the ministry, he was now free to do what God called him to do – head the people.

**EPHESIANS 4.** The clergy as pastor/teacher is to prepare (equip) God's people for works of service (ministry). This is a servant role, assisting people in doing what God has called them to do. What more strategic role could there be in a church!

**HEBREWS 13.** God makes it clear that, there are to be leaders in the church, not just facilitators. And these leaders are accountable to God for the quality and effectiveness of their leading.

Instead of this new role diminishing the significance of the office of pastor, it heightens it. And it does this without a counter-productive elevation of status. In fact it lets him be a greater servant to his people, releasing them into more complete fulfillment of their Christian lives by giving the ministry to them.

The clergy have to rely more on authority than power in this new role. Their power has already been reduced considerably.

His status via education, ordination and installation granted him a good measure of power. His word was law. People put him on a pedestal and he accepted the esteem of this elevated position. It gave him a feeling of power. With far too many, this went to their heads. Their self esteem was rooted in their status rather than in their service.

Clergy are no longer on the pedestal. For our secularized, humanistic and hedonistic society, what was once a sacred calling is no longer valued. In our contemporary churches pastors are having more to prove themselves because the numerous public scandals have made them all suspect in the minds of many. Clergy are not escaping the sweeping bias against all leaders.

This erosion of power is helping to awaken the church to what it has done to the laity for centuries: assigning them to a second class role, and creating a huge gulf between laity and clergy. Losing power in forcing the clergy to rely on authority rather than power.

Let's look at the difference between authority and power. Power gets things done even if it takes coercion. Authoritarian demands from a position of ecclesiastical superiority is one form of power. Instituting changes, establishing policies or implementing programs by the sheer force of position is power.

Authority, on the other hand, gets things done by persuasion. Its influence is moral, spiritual and intellectual rightness. Its source is not credentials or position but is integrity, rightness and love. Truth is always compelling and demands a serious response.

Dictators, policeman, military generals, I.R.S. agents and gun-wielding robbers are examples of people using power to get things done, Effective teachers and parents are examples of people who use their authority to get things done. Jesus had no power, but he had more authority than the credentialed scribes and pharisees. Mother Teresa has no power of any kind, political, physical or governmental. But she has influence, she is taken more seriously than politicians and other people of power. She is loved, respected and honored. The dictator of Romania, on the other hand, was executed by the people over which he had power as soon as he was out of office. He did not have authority.

It's a new day for the clergy. Those who want to get things done will rely on the authority of rightness and integrity rather than the power of position.

Here is a good illustration of the new clergy role. When we added a room to our house in the summer of 1990, I noticed that I saw very little of the builder. We had spent several hours going over the plan with him earlier in the year. Now he darted in and out infrequently; usually, I observed, at the beginning of the work of a sub contractor.

For example, the morning the electricians started doing the wiring, the builder was there to talk with the crew leader. He spent about five minutes with him before taking off to tend other projects for the day.

What was his role? Planner. Coordinator. Supervisor. Encourager. Inspector. It was evident that his visible presence was indispensable to the project and that his spirit permeated all the activity.

If he did his job well, the building progressed rapidly, was cost effective and was well built. If he shepherded the project well, the workers were fulfilled and doing their best, and the owner felt confident that he was getting his money's worth.

The builder was the leader. He was superior over the others, but only in what he was doing. He was an expert in his role. However, if he had tried doing the whole job by himself much of it would have been inferior and it would have taken forever. The masons, the carpenters, the electricians, the plumbers, the roofers were all superior to the builder in their roles. The builder needed them. They needed the builder. They all needed each other to get the job done and to get it done well.

Was one person more important than another? One was more prominent, but that is not the same as important. They each took turns being more visible than the others. They each had a different role but they were all indispensable. They were interdependent. They all contributed to the common good. They all shared in the joy of a beautiful and usable structure.

This illustration is a parable of the new role of the clergy in the "Second Reformation." In the traditional model, both the clergy and the people believe the professional is superior in all things and has all the gifts required to do the work of the church – preach, teach, administrate, pastor, lead worship, evangelize, disciple, counsel, social action, etc. The reality is that while he is doing a few of these things, those he either likes best or has special gifts for, all the others get short shrift.

On the other hand, if he gives the ministry to the people and fulfills his role as spiritual leader, equipper and encourager, the church will be able to do all that God calls it to do. The diversity of gifts will be utilized for the common good. All will experience what it is to be interdependent and all will share in the joy of a beautiful church.

### THE ROLE OF THE LAITY

Lay people are being called from "support service" to "active engagement." This is as different as it is to move from being an annual subscriber to the symphony to realizing that you and your friends have to pick up the oboes, bassoons and violins and make the music. If there is going to be music you are going to have to make it. And maybe we'll have to get used to quitted a different music.

The role of the laity is bound up with the role of the clergy. If the clergy are to equip, there have to be people who are looking to them for equipping. If laity are to do the work of the ministry there has to be commitment, performance, sacrifice and accountability.

Maverick mentality and adolescent behavior will impede progress which may have

been made in giving the ministry to the people. A readiness to be equipped, and openness to counsel and a humble spirit are requirements for progress toward completion of the transition. A colleague of mine in Cincinnati put it this way, "We need "FAT" people: Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

Some people are not overly enthusiastic about the new responsibility that is theirs. And, because they are not clear about what to do and be, they are often afraid to get started. An identification of their spiritual gifts and some kind of "call" from the Lord to ministry will motivate the laity have no corner on a call to ministry"!

According to Ephesians 4, if the "people of God" (saints) are equipped for their ministry and will do their ministry the results will be astounding:

1. The body of Christ will be built up;
2. The church will have unity in the faith;
3. People will come into spiritual maturity;
4. There will be stability, not blown about;
5. The truth will be spoken in love; and
6. People will more and more be bonded with Christ, who is the head of the church

### PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

Clergy and laity are partners in ministry and can grown in their acceptance of each other as true partners. This includes their acceptance of diversity if a role while at the same time a parity of a role.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, "As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you," he revealed that true partnership between the spiritual leader and the others was a very natural and accepted relationship. The caste system, protected and perpetuated by credentials, titles, tradition, and the reluctance of both clergy and laity to accept a parity of role makes it extremely difficult if not impossible to be true "partners and fellow workers."

How can clergy and laity both work toward being true partners in the Gospel?

Here are six ways:

1. Consult one another
2. Listen to one another
3. Learn from each other



4. Draw on one another's strengths
5. Be patient with one another
6. Identify your individual roles

Let's look at these closely one by one.

### CONSULT ONE ANOTHER

The decision-making and planning process will be punctuated by frequent telephone calls, drop-in visits, or lunches. The shaping of projects or ministries must be done collegially rather than separately. The only way this can be done is frequent contact so both have equal input.

The difficulties of doing this are obvious: time, distance, and will. The latter, of course, is the greatest deterrent. But, "Where there is a will there is a way" is still true. You have to start with a will to true partnership. As you take the time and go the miles you will make two regarding discoveries which are guaranteed to galvanize the will to continue taking the time and going the miles. First: you will experience the truth of the adage, "Two (or more) heads are better than one:" or, to draw on Proverbs 15:22, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." You will wonder why you didn't do it this way long ago.

Second: the load will be shared by others. Moses learned this principle from his father-in-law, "The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone." (Exodus 18:18) He discovered the truth of it by doing it, "If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." (Exodus 18:23) How good this sounds to an overworked pastor-reduced strain and satisfied people.

Know that this is not the fastest way of doing things, but it is the right way. Try it: you will like it!

### LISTEN TO ONE ANOTHER

"Get on his page," is how someone said it. Or, "Get on his agenda." If there is any place for listening it is in developing and sustaining ministry partnership. This, again, will take time. It takes time, effort, and will to hear one another. Until you are both sure of what both are saying, true partnership is impossible.

The listening skills called paraphrasing, active listening, perception check, listening for what is not being said, listening over time, listening for feelings, and others can be

learned and used to great advantage.

Without truly hearing and understanding each other we will revert to what we are trying to change, the clergy/laity dichotomy, We will resort to power, "pulling rank." You will go back to bearing the burden alone devoid of the "many advisors."

One of the greatest fulfillments in life will come from hearing one another, You will know you are a valuable person if someone is taking you seriously. When you are taking each other seriously partnership is happening.

### LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

Each person has something from his life, learning and training which will be valuable to the other. Mutual respect is the key to being humble enough to learn from one another. As Bruce Bugbee, staff member of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago says, "Everybody is a 10 in something." Everybody is an expert at something.

The clergy have been trained in certain areas which have to do with leadership in the church. the laity have been trained, either informally by experience or formally by school. It is humbling to admit that the clergy's training is a very narrow band of the full spectrum of knowledge. This is the nature of any professional training. The laity have a wide diversity of experience and training! This is especially true if your partnership in ministry goes beyond one or two people and exists in a leadership group of several people.

Styles of leadership, personality difference, variety of temperament as well as diversity of experience and education make it clear that we have much to learn from one another. The ministry will be effective only to the degree that leadership exists in a true partnership where all learn from the others.

To learn from one another takes mutual respect, humility, intentional listening, and time. since partnership is the goal, and since learning from one another is one of the requirements of true partnership, it is well worth the effort.

### DRAW ON ONE ANOTHER'S STRENGTHS

Many marriages go on the rocks because a couple clash over their weaknesses rather than putting their strengths together. For one to see the weakness of another and move to criticism and denouncement is a sign of immaturity and selfishness. To see the strengths of others. Then, put the strengths together. Identifying your weakness

help you know where you need the strengths of your partners.

A common fault of clergy is to either be in denial regarding our weaknesses or, knowing them, finding ways to conceal them from those who would be partners. This fault causes a lay person to try to relate to an unreal person. Besides that who can relate to a perfect pastor? Projecting a faultless image keeps one's prospective partners at a distance and, let us admit it, many feel more comfortable that way.

Honesty with ourselves and others is the key to drawing on one another's strengths for the sake of the kind of ministry which will please God. In *Can the Pastor Do It Alone?* I give an example of putting strengths together. During the year and a half the Ministry Leadership Group was putting the what Lay Pastors would do. I prepared an ivory-tower type of ministry description. We had become partners enough by that time for them to throw my proposal out. With that out of the way they were able to come up with the description which has made the ministry workable in hundreds of churches:

Does that mean they did not need me? Not at all! I had the theological and philosophical perspective which the description needed. They had the practical know-how. I knew what it should contain Biblically. They knew what would work. I knew what it was to be a pastor. They knew that would be understood and accepted.

We put our strengths together. Without them I would have had lay people pastoring like seminary graduates. Without me they would come up with a program which would have been far less than the kind of ministry God was calling forth. Granted, this way take more time and a good bit of struggle over personal turf, but we came up with a ministry design which met our church's pastoral care needs and is doing it for hundreds of others.

### BE PATIENT WITH ONE ANOTHER

True partnership not only takes more time, it takes a lot of patience, the fourth Fruit of the Spirit. And Patience is born out of love. Consulting with one another is not always a comfortable experience. The struggle to compromise what you believe to be the only way to go may be very painful. The struggle to compromise takes patience but "patience produces character and character produces hope." (Romans 5:4) God who knows all about this struggle adds, "And hope does not disappoint us..."

Patience has to be mutual. This is new terrain for both clergy and laity. The path of

clergy domination and lay intimidation has been traveled so much through the past centuries that it is well marked. If you feel a bit insecure and a little frightened finding your way along the new partnership path do not abandon it. Press on because God is doing a new thing in his church and he is with you.

We must have patience with each other. Lay people will make mistakes which they cannot hide as easily as clergy are able to do. Clergy will make mistakes and tend to pull rank in order to cover them. Patience with one another is the key. Remember, it is one of the fruits of the Spirit.

### IDENTIFY YOUR ROLES

Distinctive roles for the clergy and laity are not a foreign idea in the Scriptures. Moses was the leader of Israel. The leaders of 1000's, 100's, 50's, and 10's had roles different from Moses. The people who were led by Moses and the others had a role different from them. Their different roles involved them at different levels of responsibility rather than different levels of prestige and exclusive privileges. Hebrews 13:24 subtly states a difference between "your leaders" and "all God's people." In the way one's eye must be distinctive in performance from the ear, one Christian must see his or her performance in the body of the church as distinctive from another. And this must be done without any air of superiority or feeling of inferiority. On Crete, Titus, who was the spiritual leader of the Christians, was to appoint elders who were to be "entrusted with God's work" of caring for God's people. (Titus 1:7 ff.) There were differences of qualifications and differences of role. But they were related to different ways of serving the church, not to prestige and positions of honor.

Those in Thessalonica who "are over you in the Lord and who admonish you" are referred to as "those who work hard among you," not as those who lord it over them. Their position is one of privilege, but a privilege of serving them and the Lord rather than a privilege, of position and place of honor. They are to love them because of their work, not because of their high position. (1 Thes. 5:12, 13)