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**AXIOM
OF
MELVIN**

**THE FIRST QUESTION IS NOT, "HOW CAN I DO THIS?"
RATHER, IT IS "HOW CAN I BE THIS?"**

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Edited by Byeongchea Seo

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PREFACE

Dr. Melvin wrote many ideas, insights on the Lay Pastors Ministry in the newsletter from the beginning to all the way, called Network News through his experiences of 35 years.

I have read and studied all of them, and even translated them into Korean. I thought of selecting more valuable articles from them and to put them into one volume, called myself, AXIOM by Dr. Melvin. I personally respect and admire his own hand-written, just like golden messages.

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AXIOM 1

Perseverance is our quality signature

Keeping at keeping at it – *perseverance* – is the hallmark of successful lay pastoral care. A good synonym for perseverance is *faithfulness* - "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove *faithful*" (I Cor. 4:2)

Perseverance is not a long race, it is many short race, one after the other. Jesus taught perseverance in these words, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fits for service in the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Those are hard words!

How was Moses able to persevere? "he persevered because he saw him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). How is a Lay Pastor able to persevere? The same way, looking to the invisible One: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus..." (Heb. 12:2). Are any having trouble persevering? Here is the solution.

How is perseverance connected to the will of God? Heb. 10:36 makes it here that "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you want to receive that he has promised." To persevere in doing the task God gave you is to be doing his will. God says, "Just keep at keep at it!"

How is perseverance connected to other Christian qualities? It is pearl number five on the eight pearl string of godly qualities listed in II Peter 1:5-8. It says that possessing these qualities keep us from being ineffective and unproductive. It is faulty thinking to believe that our effectiveness and productivity as Lay Pastors is due to skills and techniques. Possessing and polishing these pearls with make whatever skills and techniques we master effective and productive.

How is perseverance connected with the Holy Spirit? It is number seven of the nine fruits of the Spirit, faithfulness. The Greek word translated *faithfulness* means *fidelity*, i.e., the character of who can be relied on, one who keeps his promises.

If a Lay Pastor is "love with skin on it," there must be an element of perseverance in love. There is! I Corinthians 13 (the love chapter) says this about love: "It always protect, always trusts, always hope, always *persevere*." (vs. 6, 7) The next verse says the same thing another way, "Love neve fails."

Not persevering is one of the standard problems most Lay Pastors wrestle with at times, keeping at keeping at it. Occasionally a Lay Pastor will be "pinned" while wrestling.

Because perseverance is the hallmark of successful lay pastoral care, we must keep at keeping at it the way Moses did, looking at him is invisible. When you feel like giving up, look up!

AXIOM 2

What Ministry Is and Who Can Do It

In the traditional church, the clergy are the providers of professional services for church members. The "consumer" (church member) has spiritual needs; the "provider" (clergy) is trained to look after those spiritual needs.

Consumers come to church needing inspiration, encouragement and direction....clergy provide a sermon. Consumers need to learn....clergy offer instruction. They need support and guidance...clergy dispense insight and counsel.

There are three problems with this consumer-provider model:

1. The proliferation of needs becomes too heavy, leading burnout and/or leadership patterns which stunt congregational growth.
2. The congregation is energized largely by the energies of the clergy, leaving the vast reserves of the people's energies untapped.
3. The people's embryonic spiritual gifts remain undeveloped while an unhealthy dependence (a.k.a co-dependency) on the clergy infects the congregation.

In his new book, *Letting Go: Transforming Congregations for Ministry* (published by Alban Institute), Roy Phillips tells how that early in his ministry an older minister told him that people would not be happy if any other than the minister came to visit when they were in the hospital. Read Phillip's analysis of this counsel:

"It was to the detriment of my ministry and the congregation's ministry that far too long I believed what he told me. It means that the load I carried wore me out and that I always felt guilty because of all the people I missed. It also, that too many patients waited in vain for a visit."

This young clergyperson unwittingly communicated to the congregation that far too narrow understanding about who had the gifts to carry out its ministry. His proprietary acts suggested that clergy hold in their possession a magic other Christians are denied.

But, the Lay Pastors Ministry is challenging this centuries-old error. Formerly both clergy and laity perceived the Church as hierarchical institution; now they see it as a Living Organism, a Body whose Head is Jesus Christ. The consumer-provide Church is giving way (albeit, stubbornly) to a partners-in-ministry Church where clergy ministers and lay ministers are the partners. We are rediscovering what ministry is and who can do it.

AXIOM 3

How to Deal With Guilt Produced by Your Ministry

Successfully dealing with guilt is an important component of perseverance. If not met head-on with honest self-assessment, timeliness and in the presence of God, guilt can adversely impact your ministry, ranging from withdrawing to draining its joy...and many miseries in between.

1. Identify the expectations you have for yourself, what you are believing you must do. Write them down, evaluate them, and revise them to be realistic.
2. Accept a less than perfect performance. Accept your limitations of time, ability, energy and human faultiness.
3. Do what you can, after setting realistic goals, and offer it to God. Do not grieve, fret, stew or downgrade yourself for what you have *not* done. Focus on what you *have* done, knowing God is using it for good. (God will use what you can do to accomplish what you could never do.)
4. Learn from the mistakes you make, thereby turning negatives into positives. Most of us have learned our most valuable lessons from our mistakes.
5. Examine your spirit in God's presence to determine your dere of commitment to Him, your commitment to the ministry He gave you and the priority of your ministry in relation to your local life's activities, interests and commitments. Be completely honest. Then adjust your priorities to this order: God; Family; Job; Ministry. Be sure your guilt is *not* caused by:
 - a. Lack of Commitment to Christ.
 - b. Worldliness of other sin which robs your time and energy which could be used to fulfill your commitment to God, and which dilutes your passion for being God's servant.
 - c. Doing a ministry for which you are not gifted and to which God has not called you.
 - d. Trying to do too much, more than God is calling you to do.
6. Try to imagine how Jesus must have handled unfinished ministry each day...people unhealed, families not contacted, wrongs not set right, multitudes not taught, conflict unsolved, bad relationships not confronted, evil spirits not cast out, needy and hurting people not touched, social ills not addressed...in light of His prayer to His Father at the end of His life, "I have brought You glory on earth ny completing the work You gave me to do." (John 17:4)
7. Talk in depth with a close Christian friend or pastor about your guilt and its source. Separate false guilt from real guilt. Then pray together building your prayer out of the specifics in your conversation.

AXIOM 4

Stick with the BASICS!

I heard it again during the US Open tennis tournament....I heard it while watching the Minnesota Twins gettings beat...I am hearing it regularly about the Minnesota Vikings.

I hear it from men and women who announce these sports. They are not critical; they are factual. They are not caustic; they are corrective. What is "it"? You've heard it, too. "It" is the basics. Tennis, baseball and football prayers have to be reminded by the coaches and the TV/radio announces to "Get back to the basics."

I want to say this to Lay Pastors and Lay Ministry Leaders more than anything else. "STICK WITH THE BASICS!" I am bing pastoral, not judgement in giving this counsel. Jesus gives us the bottom line basic, "If you remain in me, and I in you, you will bear much fruit" (John 15:5). He had already said, "No branch can bear fruit by itself...Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (v. 4).

Remaining in Jesus is the basic! Remain means at least seven things: (1) joined spirituality, i.e., by love, admiration, devotion; (2) common interests; (3) going the same direction; (4) good communication (on speaking term); (5) desire to please; (6) an enjoyable and fulfilling relationship; and (7) drawing energy, passion, ideas, life and inspiration from him (like a branch draws sap from the vine).

As a Lay Pastors caring for some of God's people, what fruit do you intend to bear? What fruit did he intend when he assigned this privileged task to you? Here Jesus further, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, show yourself to be my disciples" (v. 8).

I hope you will ponder and pray about what all Jesus means by this basic until you sense his life flowing into your life as the vital juices flow from the vine into the branches. When this is happening there will be much fruit; until this happens...

Your brother in Christ and in ministry,

AXIOM 5

Equipping People with Spirituality

People attending our conferences on Pastoral Care of the Congregation by Lay People flock to workshops on prayer, spirituality and other subjects dealing with personal spiritual life. Lay People hunger for opportunities to deal with their personal spiritual condition. Where as their felt need for this may be incentive (sparked by the Spirit), pastors and ministry leaders need to be intentional about spiritual-life equipping.

BEING PRECEDES DOING

1. See Unit 7, pages 97-102 in *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* and modules 7 and 8, pages 41-45 in the Leader's Manual, A Complete Equipping Seminar. People need to be equipped at two levels – being and doing. "If they don't pay attention to their spiritual sides...they will soon become empty 'wineskins' with nothing to give." "If Christians ministers have no contact with the transcendent God...if they cannot share an experience of the living God with others, then they have become 'a noisy gong or clanging cymbal'."

2. The "E" of the Lay Pastors Ministry description (PACE) stands for "example". Many ministry designers and leaders avoid this component by substituting the word "encourage," making an end-run around I Peter 5:3: "Be shepherds of God's flock by being *examples* to the flock." Being an example does not infer perfection. Our call is to be faithful and to *grow toward* perfection. (*I may Not Be Totally Perfect, But Parts of Me Are Excellent* is the title of a book by Ashleigh Brilliant.) Note: See pages 141-144 in *The Lay-Driven Church*.

3. Our secular cultural penetration of the church produces just the opposite within serious-minded Christians – a passionate desire for more of God. (My soul thirst for you like a parched land." Psalm 143:6) a. The desire of or indifference to the reality of the spiritual. b. The difficulty of being silent before God. c. the lack of training in spiritual warfare. d. The ensconce of hedonism. An example of the cultural penetration: A high school graduate goes into teaching music because "it plays well and you have the summer off." Life-goal: money and leisure. Values: good paycheck and play.

AXIOM 6

Finding the time to do your ministry

If congregational care is going to happen God's way — including every member, not leaving a single person out — lay people have to be co-opted as pastoral associates. Not because they have the time, they don't.

However, lay people will find the time when they are first, committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; second, called to share the pastoral ministry; and third, equipped so as to do the ministry with competence and confidence.

Here are seven practical ways to find time.

1. prioritize. Everything is not equally important. Decide what has to be done and what can wait or even be dropped. "When you don't have much time to invest, put it where you'll get the bigger dividends," so write Stephanie Culp in *How to Get Organized When You Don't Have Time*. (Writer's Digest Books, 1986)
2. say 'no'. Don't do everything people ask or expect. When asked, consider: "Do I really want to add this to my other responsibilities?" "Does this match my gifts and priorities?" If the answer is "no," be pleasant but firm and explain that you are not able to take on another commitment at this time.
3. don't try to be a super-person. Not everything in your ideal image of a Lay Pastor needs to be done. We have bought into the 80's philosophy of "be it all and do it all."
4. cut some corners – creatively. Many of us do the same things in the same way year after year. Think about changes that will save time or will eliminate some things. Take a look at cooking, dishes, yard, car, cleaning, shopping, reading, TV, etc.
5. rely on your body's natural energy rhythm. There are morning people and there are night people. Get up and tackle the extras or save them for evening time, depending on whether you are morning or evening.
6. rely on lists. The discipline of writing something down in the first step to making it happen. One suggestion: buy a notebook. Divide it into four categories: 1) Phone calls to make; 2) Errands to run; 3) Things to do; 4) Contacts to make.
7. Keep to a schedule. Make up a schedule so as to find where your time goes, like many do with their financial budgets. This will help set and keep priorities. It will enable you to be realistic. See the Time Use Survey, shown down.)

AXIOM 7

Lay Pastors Ministry Expands Internationally

Meet our Director of the Lay Pastors Ministry in Korea, Rev. Byeong Chea, Seo On July 1, 1999, Mr. Seo opened his Lay Pastors Ministry office in Seoul, Korea. Mrs. Park Jung Ja is the Vice Director; Mrs. Lee Young Hwa is the secretary.

Byeong Chea translated my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*, into Korean a few years ago and has been teaching it at Sungkyul Theological University in Seoul. (*Lay Driven Church* is just now being published in Korea, having been translated by the Wagner Church Growth.) He earned his M.Div. at McMaster University in Canada and is presently a Ph.D. candidate, Graduate Theological Foundation, USA which is conjunction with Oxford University, England.

Mr. Seo has divided Korea into six regions, appointing a Regional Director for each region. They are on a dated schedule for translating and printing many of our LPMI resources. Byeong Chea plans to attend our 11th conference on Pastoral Care of the Congregation by Lay People in St. Louis, Missouri, April 28-30, 2000.

FRANCE: Richard Wilcox, Pastoral Assistant for the American Church in Paris, wrote August 13, 1999: "Greetings from Paris! I have been asked to organize a Lay Pastors Group here this fall. Do you have prospectus of some kind that would let me know what is available..." **THE NETHERLANDS:** Mr. Wilcox also wrote: "Last year I organized and trained a group of Lay Pastors in the American Church in The Hague, using some of your materials." In a follow-up letter (September, 1999) he wrote: "The Lay Pastoral Team in The Hague is alive and well. we were over there a few weeks ago and everything is going well. The contact person is Maria Van Alphen." **SOUTH AFRICA:** A letter from Rev. Brian Cameron, Programme Coordinator for St. James Church (Church of England in South Africa) wrote: "We have been using you materials for some three years...we introduced the Pastoral Care Programme at St. James and have slowly but surely been bringing more and more of our large congregation under the umbrella...We now have just under a thousand members of our congregational care by a Lay Pastor." ministry."

AXIOM 8

Do I want to stick with Jesus?

I am going to put my spiritual integrity at risk by disclosing the search I've been on for four months, taking me over the Y2K dateline.

My search was to find out, really, if, after 65 years of following Jesus, I still wanted to follow him. The search was triggered by reading in John 6:66, "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him."

It was because of Jesus' "hard teaching" that they turned back. "At this time in my life," I asked myself, "do I want to stick with Jesus?" for I, too, have found that many of Jesus' teachings are hard. I searched the Gospels again to hear them.

I found that, even though Jesus is a man of all-inclusive unconditional love, He is a hard man. He told one to sell all he had and give it to the poor. He said that if anyone is to follow him, he must forsake all, deny himself, and love him more than family. He said I was to lose my life for his sake, and that I would be hated because of him.

Do I want to follow a man who was denounced by respected leaders, a man whose standard for greatness was being a servant, who aligned himself with a kingdom at odds with the culture? Can I continue to follow a man whose ultimate destiny was clearly an early death by shameful execution?

Can I stick with one to whom I give the right to do what he wants with me, to be Lord of my agenda, time, work, relationships, money, and everything that makes up my life?

Of course, my search was a rhetorical search. I knew the outcome before starting, because my love for Jesus and commitment to him was tested over many years. Also, because I knew the payoffs – joy, peace, fulfillment, the privilege of being close to God in this life, and at the end, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Lay Pastors and Clergy Pastors, our reaffirmation to take his "hard teaching" and stick with him is the only way of fulfilling the mandate to his church. "Be shepherds of God's flock."

AXIOM 9

Pastoring ...One Person at a time

Paul, who taught extensively about doing the ministry for which God gave spiritual gifts, wrote twice that he was appointed a *herald* and an *apostle* and a *teacher* (I Tim. 2:7; II Tim. 1:11). He left out *pastor*. Who, then, pastored the many churches Paul founded? As a herald and apostle he started dozens of churches in Cilicia, Cappadocia, Galatia, Bithynia, Pontus, Asia, Macedonia, Greece, Crete, and other provinces of the Roman Empire. As a *teacher* he pastored with teaching. He grounded them in the faith and laid down rules for Christian behavior. But who did the pastoral ministry Jesus had in mind when he told Peter, "Take care of my sheep." Paul did't. Peter did.

There were thousands of Christians making up the scores of churches throughout the Mediterranean provinces of the Roman Empire. The following drawing shows Paul's pastoral dilemma.

Rather than default on pastoral care, he provided for pastoral care by sending Titus to Crete and Timothy to Ephesus. Though the record does not report it, we can assume that he sent other of his partners to other churches. Peter discharged *his* pastoral duties by calling on the elders of churches in four Roman provinces to "be shepherds of God's flock" (I Peter 5:1-4). Paul had already gone on record that pastors and teachers were to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:11-12). Surely some of "the saints" were to be equipped to do the one-on-one pastoral care. After all, this was Moses' caring model.

Paul's pastoral dilemma is today's pastoral dilemma. The solution is to decentralize pastoral care by equipping people with pastoral gifts and who have a sense of call to give the one-on-one care. The following drawing shows today's pastoral dilemma.

Today's postmodern pastors pastor their congregation as a whole by preaching, teaching, vision casting, etc. in addition to providing for the pastoral care of individuals by giving that ministry to the people.

Paul not only appointed Timothy to be pastor of the church in Ephesus, he taught him to "entrust [pastoral care] to reliable people who will also be qualified to [pastor] others" (II Tim. 2:2). Paul wrote about Titus whom he sent to Corinth for a time, "I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you" (II Cor. 8:16). Today's pastors who provide for the one-on-one pastoral care of their congregations by equipping lay people soon discover that God puts pastor's concerns for their people into the hearts of those they equip.

AXIOM 10

How is it with your “Personal Network?”

The ties to your “personal network” are either strong, weak, or somewhere in between.

A lay pastoral caregiver’s “personal network” is often referred to as a “flock”, i.e. “Shepherds of God flock” (1 Peter 5:2). Lay pastors are at their best when they have strong ties with the people in their “personal network.”

The word “personal” in “personal network” speaks of relationships. It has been said that the most important single word in any language is “relationship,” and relationships are established and nurtured in quality connections between people.

Of all the ingredients in your caring initiatives, the most potent is the relationship between yourself and the individuals of your flock. Jesus exemplifies the ultimate in relationships – the mutual exchanging of selves - “Remain in me and I will remain in you.” He said this in the context of shared love, complete joy, and laying down your life.

It is in the relationship that the key to lay pastoral care is found, not in training or skills. The transcendent element in caring for people is the character of your relationships. The focus of your caring commitment is neither the problem the person struggles with nor the new joy in their lives. The focus is the relationship. True loving care (TLC) flows from strong personal ties.

Even psychologist Carl Rogers maintained that in professional counseling, change in people’s lives comes about, not through the learned techniques, but through the experience in a relationship.

Now, with these thoughts fresh in mind, read my paraphrase of the first sentence of this article: The relationships with the people in your flock are either strong, weak, or somewhere in between. Where the relationships are the strongest, the lay pastoral care is the richest.

My next point: Relationships exist in the frequency of interaction. Strong ties develop over a long period of frequent interaction. Weak ties result from infrequent interaction on an as-needed basis rather than a regular and ongoing basis.

AXIOM 11

Diamonds Are Forever

Riding on the church bus with a partying group recently, I was awed by the huge sparkling diamond on the finger on the woman who draped her arm over the back of the seat across the aisle. I reached over and held her fingers to see the diamond better. It was huge! How brilliantly it sparkled in the sunlight. My comments prompted the story of how she was surprised by this treasured gift from her husband on their 10th anniversary. It is a gift of great value and great love.

So it is with God's gift of ministry. He has given it to me. It is a gift of great value and great love. I have always treasured it. I have always felt humbly indebted to God for giving me the privilege of doing ministry. But, that's me.

Let's talk about you. Would you be surprised to learn that God has given you the same gift! Look at I Corinthians 1:7: "You do not lack any spiritual gift." This is your diamond. "You" mean you, and it means every Christian. The gift of doing ministry is not a gift exclusively for the clergy.

Just as this woman's diamond was flanked by other diamonds, your gift of ministry is flanked by other treasured truths. They are seen in I Corinthians 1, and they add to the beauty and value of the stone: (1) God will keep you strong, (2) God has called you, and (3) God is faithful to you. (Verse 8-9)

A close look reveals four of the sparkling facets of your gift: (1) Salvation, (2) The Holy Spirit, (3) Heaven, and (4) Ministry. All four are included in this gift from God. You are glad about the first three. But how about the fourth?

Many have not even seen number four and do not know that God has gifted them with ministry abilities, responsibilities and call. Is this a surprise to you? Humbly thank God. Do your ministry. It was given to be done in such a way that people would see the sparkle and "glorify your Father in Heaven."

Lay Pastors Ministry blends need and opportunity. Every member of your church needs someone who is praying for them and keeping in touch with them. This is some of what it means to be a part of the church family and a member of the Body of Christ. The need creates a wonderful opportunity for you to make a difference in someone's life, to serve them by being a caring person in their lives. Your Lay Pastors Ministry creates a caring network whereby the vocational pastors and volunteer pastors become co-pastors to "tend the flock of God."

This diamond sparkles in the sun of God's love...and it is yours! Wear it always!

AXIOM 12

Being Jesus' disciple

In my morning time with God during the past two months, I have read only from John 6:66 —"From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him" —to John 15 where Jesus explains that we show ourselves to be his disciples by bearing much fruit (v. 8).

For both you and me, being Jesus' disciple is the prerequisite for ministry. I wrote in the last issue that, since many of Jesus' disciples turned back and no longer followed him, I should rethink my commitment to follow him.

The "rethink," of course, was rhetorical. I knew the outcome before I started because I had passed that critical point many times earlier in my life.

Now I am pondering the connection between showing myself to be his disciple and bearing "much fruit...fruit that will last." (vv. 8, 16). Being known as a disciple requires that, in my ministry, I bear enough fruit to call people's attention to it. "Showing has got to mean "being seen."

It all starts with being connected to Jesus as a branch is connected to the vine: "No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (v. 4)

"Remain" means staying attached, having been connected by faith, love and Spirit. The "much fruit" is the love and care people are getting (PACE). In my morning times with God, I am examining my ministry as president of LPMI, trying to identify the fruit, its quality and quantity.

I invite you to check (1) how firmly you are attached to the vine and (2) to identify your fruit. What an exercise this is! What a time for humbling, renewal and Godly pride. The driving thought for me right now is: without Jesus I can do nothing; with him I can do much. Tell me, does the fruit I am bearing show you that I am Jesus' disciple (v. 8)? What a question!

AXIOM 13

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;

where there is hatred, let me show love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek,
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

It occurred to me when I read this prayer again, this time at a friend's funeral who embodied the "instrument," that many Lay Pastors are living "instruments" of peace, etc. St. Francis's prayer is a most appropriate Lay Pastors Prayer.

AXIOM 14

The change of leadership for LPMI

The change of leadership for LPMI is awe-inspiring! It's part of the *ever-changing flow* within the secure boundaries of *never-changing banks*.

I compare this awesome change with the ever-changing flow of the mighty Mississippi. Its flow begins in northern Minnesota and continues within its never-changing banks until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico.

The Lay Pastors Ministry, whether in your church or in the LPMI organization, has a slow but constant flow of leaders. Some grow old. Some move. Some get into other ministries. Some die. Some just quit.

But in spite of the succession leaders, just like the Mississippi River, the Lay Pastors Ministry continues. Why? Because it exists within the Fixed Banks of God's Word and God Himself.

It's the same with the Church. Starting with Jesus, the Church has had ever-changing leadership for 2000 years. Leadership have come and gone, but the Church is still there – not the building, not the organization – but the Fixed Banks along with the ever-changing flow of generations of believers.

I was first the founder of the Lay Pastors Ministry, and then the President of Lay Pastors Ministry, Inc. Its beginning was like that of the mighty Mississippi, a little trickle. As the flow gathered waters and widened, a succession of wonderful women and men led with me, starting as a Advisory Group and becoming a Board of Directors when we incorporated. It has been the great privilege of my life to be a part of the God-activated flow.

Now, in God's time (kairos), Tom Parrish, a gifted, experienced and committed man of God, is, leading. The ever-changing flow of the ministry has changed. the never-changing banks guarantee that this ministry of congregational care by laypeople will not only continue, but will deepen and widen as it moves along.

AXIOM 15

Eureka! I found it!

I was mining in Proverbs and discovered gold. I hadn't mind in Proverbs for a long time, and because other mines were not producing during a very worrisome time for me (this was just a few weeks ago), I thought I would try working the Proverbs mine.

There it was. Lying right on the surface.

Let love and faithfulness never leave you...Then you will win favor and a good name is un the sight of God and man. (Proverbs 3:3-4)

Let = I have choice.

Love = The essence of every relationships and the life of every ministry.

And = Connects two essentials.

Faithfulness = Sticking with God, persons, ministry; being dependable, loyal and authentic.

Never = A long time.

Leave = Connected with "never," treasured enough to keep always.

You = This is me. Personally accountable to God.

This "gold" is the solid and scintillating foundation upon which our lay pastoral care ministry rests.

It is a ministry of love—"love with skin on it." This love ranges from a friendly relationship (pigele) to sacrificing oneself for the benefit of another you may not even be fond of (agape).

It is a ministry of faithfulness — persevering, devoted, reliable, trustworthy, sticking with a person, ministry, organization and principles.

Authentic love makes one faithful, Faithfulness makes love lasting. Fifteen tributes to love, starting with "Love is patient," reaches a crescendo at "Love never fails" (1 Cor. 13: 4-8).

Lay Pastors, "Let love and faithfulness never leave you."

AXIOM 16

Fixed your eyes on Jesus

Ever feel like quitting? Unappreciated? Tired? Failing? Harried? Disgusted? Sometimes I feel like quitting. Don't we all! Motivation is one of the two major challenges all lay ministers and clergy ministers deal with. How do you:

1. Keep up your enthusiasm?
2. Keep your vision bright?
3. Keep your spirit lively?
4. Keep your commitment steady?
5. Keep your ministry joyful?

Here is a sure-fire way: FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS. This guaranteed way of keeping your ministry juices flowing is in Hebrews 12:2. These word flow "hold on"... "don't give up"... "stand your ground"... "don't shrink back"... "persevere"... all in Hebrew 10.

I am writing this on Saturday morning, January 20, during a prolonged struggle with frustration. So, I know the way works. After fixing my eyes on Jesus for a half hour or so, the juices are now gushing, not just flowing! I feel new inspired like Mose who "persevered because he saw him sho is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27).

I "fixed my eyes on Jesus." I "saw Him" in the graphic etchings of Hebrews 1:1-4:

JESUS: God's spokesman (My spiritual ear heard again of many of Jesus' teachings.)

JESUS: Radiance of God's glory (The brilliant rays shielding God from my sight were sharply focused as a Person – Jesus.)

JESUS: Exact copy God's being (To see Jesus was really to see God. John 14:9)

JESUS: Purger of my sin (The blood of Jesus Christ washed away all my sin – forever.)

JESUS: Seated at God's right hand (This is the place of honor, authority, and prayer.)

Take time to fix your eyes on Jesus and your ministry juices will flow! Guaranteed.

AXIOM 17

First United Church of Barron, Wisconsin

How would you like the visiting preacher to publicly single you out as the one to whom the sermon is being preached? That's what I plan to do June 24 when I preach in the First United Methodist church of Barron, Wisconsin.

I will tell the congregation I am preaching to the people who are to be commissioned may choose to count bricks, doodle, leave or listen.

Here is the sermon:

Jesus trusts you with His ministry.

(I Timothy 1: 12)

His expectations:

- a. Strength -- He provide it.
- b. Faithful -- You provide it.
- c. Service -- He assigns it.

Jesus ordained you a minister. (Eph. 4:11-12)

Key essentials:

Grace, gifts, equip, people, ministry

Jesus gave you gifts for pastoral care ministry.

(I Peter 4:10)

Accountability: "Each one should use whatever gifts he has received to serve others."

You will be caring for five to ten households:

PRAY for them faithfully.

Be AVAILABLE to them.

CONTACT them regularly.

Be an EXAMPLE to them.

I know non- Lay Pastors will listen in. I want to "corral" them (somewhat like early American cowboys corralled beautiful and potentially useful wild horses), not to make them Lay Pastors, but to unleash them into the ministry for which Jesus gave them gifts.

No Christian will ever reach his or her highest purpose for life until they are using the gifts Jesus gave him in specific ministry.

AXIOM 18

To whisper at the end of my life

I am writing this two days after my birthday. Guess how many! Answer: Not as many as Billy Graham; more than George W. Bush. I am at the age where the following Psalms take on special meaning:

From my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your marvellous deeds. Ps. 71: 17

You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me to glory. Ps. 73:24

Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord as long as I live. Ps. 146: 1-2

(From my perspective, this one has a tad of humor.) *The righteous flourish like the palm tree...they still bring forth fruit in old age. They are over full of sap and green.* Ps. 92:12-14

The prayer I expect to whisper at the end of my life is Jesus' prayer at the end of his earthly life: "Father, I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." Whoever plans to pray these words at the end of life has to pray them at the end of each day, each week, each month, each year, each decade!

Between now and the end, even though I have to get older, I don't have to get old. I stay "full of sap and green" by vigorous involvement in LPMI, one of God's ministries. Examples: (1) I have been writing and writing the past month, preparing for a heavy speaking engagement in November. (It may grow into another book ; I don't know.) (2) The anti-aging juices are constantly stimulated by new churches starting the Lay Pastors Ministry. (3) And most of all, A NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR LPMI HAS BEEN SHAPING UP. THERE MAY BE "BREAKING NEWS" IN THE NEXT **Network News**.

AXIOM 19

New Dimensions of Care

SEPTEMBER 11! We will be forever impacted by what happened on 9/11 as we were on December 7, 1941. The bombings of both Pearl Harbor and the World Trade Center "live in infamy" (FDR). America is forever changed!

Whatever the cause — CIA failure, U.S foreign policy, God's judgment — Dick Chaney makes us face reality: "This is a new normalcy." I believe him. We have to accept insecurity, nervousness, and less "liberty and pursuit of happiness."

This "new normalcy" requires new dimensions of care, *pastoral care*. There is heightened need for people who are loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, compassionate and self-controlled (fruits of the Spirit) to shepherd people in these perplexing and disturbing days.

In other words, there is heightened need for the Lay Pastors Ministry, a decentralized plan for congregational care, laced with Christian faith and love, which is immediate, individual, continual and personal.

When church members are lovingly cared for, they in turn will care about their neighbors. Then, instead of the panic created by bombs and the fear spread through the mail, peace will be instilled in neighboring households and faith disseminated.

Lay Pastors Ministry, Inc. is positioned for this "new normalcy" with hundreds of Lay Pastors across America, in churches of many denominations. Ministry leaders and laborers: Lets **RENEW** OUR COMMITMENT, **REVIEW** OUR EFFECTIVENESS, **REFINE** OUR GIFTS, **RECRUIT** ADDITIONAL LABORERS, AND **REJOICE** IN OUR PRIVILEGE!

AXIOM 20

A little Means A LOT

A new study published in CIRCULATION, the American Heart Association Journal, indicates that a nutrient lutein prevents clogged arteries and ward off macular degeneration, an eye disease which causes blindness. Egg yolks and spinach contain lutein.

A LITTLE LUTEIN MEANS A LOT ONE'S BODY!

While a pastor in Cincinnati, Ohio, I was called to the hospital emergency room one evening by a frantic mother. Her high school son had just been kicked in the head during a hotly contested soccer game. He was in serious condition. I immediately left home, went to the hospital and waited with an anxious parents. Bob came out of it okay and was released after a few days.

What did I do? Mostly, I was just there. I stood with the parents, and said almost nothing, and tried not to get in the way of the very busy doctors and nurses. What I was doing is known as the ministry of presence. What seemed to me to have the importance of an observer's presence at a NASA rocket launch, was of inestimable importance to the parents. How do I know? Five years later, even after many post hospital thank you's, the boy's mother, Carole Worth, sent me a Hallmark card to tell how much my presence meant to her and her husband that night.

A LITTLE PASTORAL ATTENTION MEANS A LOT TO TROUBLED PEOPLE!

Scott Hanson trained to run in his first Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minnesota, on June 16, 2001. "I did the first half in 2:06," as he tells it. "Then around mile 19, I hit the wall. My legs felt heavier than I ever dreamed possible. I willed them to walk. A friend was there cheering me at mile 20. It was the most uplifting gesture I have ever had." This recharged his energy and he finished the 25-mile race in 4:48.

A LITTLE SUPPORTING CHEER MEANS A LOT TO A TIRED RUNNER!

Lay Pastors, don't ever underestimate the value of an encouraging word, a hand on the shoulder, a card in the mail, an e-mail over the internet, a phone call, a visit, a 30-second prayer with a person, "even a cup of cold water" in Jesus' name.

A LITTLE "LOVE WITH SKIN ON IT" MEANS A LOT!

AXIOM 21

What Keeps You At It?

"I wouldn't do that for a million dollars!" said a friend to one who was telling of her experience as a Lay Pastor. The Lay Pastor's response? "Neither would I!"

Pastoring for money is ruled out as an acceptable motive by Peter who called lay people to be shepherds of God's flock, "not because of greed for money, but because of eagerness to serve." (I Peter 5: 2, 3).

What, then, keeps lay people pastoring once they have started? Especially since there are discouragements, rejections, demands on already scarce time, and failures. These are the major reasons for keeping at it:

1. Alert to God's call to be a Lay Pastor/Shepherd. What committed person can say "No" to God?

2. Desire to serve one's church.

3. Encouragement from the clergy and other brothers and sisters who also pastor. Gehard Frost quotes an unknown speaker in his booklet "What In The World Are We Doing?" who say, "the reason mountain climbers are tied together is to keep the sane ones from going home." There are times when all of us would quit if it were not for being tied in with others doing the same thing.

4. The sense of fulfillment which excites as person when he experiences being a blessing, inspiration, and help to another - being "love with skin on".

5. The conviction that what you are doing is significant. God calls you to do it. The Spirit has given you the gifts for doing it. Your church needs it done. Your people need you whether they all acknowledge that or not. You are pastoring people. And pastoring has a significant importance, Biblically and historically.

6. Wanting to hear Jesus' word, "Well done good and faithful servant", on the day of His appearance. Or, as Peter put it, "You will receive the crown never fade away." (I Peter 5:4) Doing what you are doing with an eye toward the future generates adequate intrinsic motivation to keep at it.

AXIOM 22

Getting Things Done

Lyle Schaller's book by the above title tells us whom God has called to positions of leadership in His church just exactly that, how to get things done.

I began overlining with yellow these points right away in the Preface: "...three of the basic assumptions on which this book is based.

First, it is assumed that leadership can be taught and learned." Since I need to continue learning leadership skills this assumption gave me hope.

Second...that it is difficult to teach anyone anything that person does not want to learn.

Third.... effective leaders are both willing to lead and also know how to organize for action."

These **basic organizing principles** are identified in chapter 3, drawn from one of Schaller's inimitable stories involving two contrasting church choir scenes:

1. Ask for commitment (not merely join the choir)
2. Communicate high expectations.
3. Be on schedule.
4. Call every person by name.
5. Delegate leadership roles.
6. Contact those absent.
7. Internal communication newsletter.
8. Be person-centered. Celebrate every joy and share every sorrow.
9. Do not simply organize. Nurture, love, challenge people and brag about what they are doing.
10. Lounge range planning.
11. Frequent social gatherings.

These principles raise the question about the difference between motivation and manipulation. He deals with this dilemma by shifting to the neutral concept of influencing other people's beliefs and behavior. He writes, "By definition leaders seek to influence both beliefs and behavior." (270pages, Abingdon press)

AXIOM 23

BELIEVE AND ACT

When I read those words, I felt affirmed in our Lay Pastors Ministry for it is grounded in Scriptures: the Mosaic model (Exodus 18), God's instructions to pastor-teachers (Ephesians 4: 11, 12), and the mandate "tend the flock of God that is your charge" (I Peter 5:1-4).

You should feel affirmed as well! I believe we are all committed to continue our ministry in creative ways within the framework of Scripture's eternal verities.

These five propositions, if **believed** and **acted** upon, will open a congregation to authentic and effective lay ministry.

GIFTS Since lay people are given gifts by the Spirit for ministry, and are called by God into ministry, they are authentic ministers.

CONTEXT Lay people will be called to ministry and be open to giving and receiving ministry from one another to the degree the whole congregation is nurtured in those Scriptures which deal with gifts for ministry.

EQUIPPING It is only by being equipped that lay people are able to use their gifts effectively in ministry.

STRUCTURE Ministry structures have to be created within which lay people can authentically and effectively minister.

CLERGY To the degree the professional clergy see their role as equipping the saints for ministry, lay ministry will be attractive, authentic and effective.

AXIOM 24

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? OR WHY I OUGHT TO BE PART OF THE NETWORK

1. By coming together you will be stronger in your ministry.

-creative ideas will be generated which never would have happened staying by yourself.

-your spirit will be supercharged. You will go back with renewed commitment and passion for your ministry. We seldom lack ideas and projects. It is spirit we need.

-you will get a new perspective on your ministry. You will be looking at it from new angles just by talking about it and/or listening to others. Solutions to some of your problems will burst upon you; ideas of how to improve your ministry will hit you: dormant plans will come alive; what seemed to degenerate to the commonplace, routine or unimportant will be regenerated to significance.

2. By coming together you will be more productive. Why? Because you will be acting on a fundamental principle running throughout Scripture: the work of God is done by the people of God through mutual submission. It is not by looking out for our own efforts, but by submitting to the gifts and roles of others that His work is accomplished. One reason the disciples could get the Church going in the world is that they had been together.

3. By coming together you will be doing something significant for the larger church, the Church of Jesus Christ in the world. You will be doing to leaders of the churches what I Thessalonians 5:11 tells us to do, "Encourage one another and build one another up." You will be interpreting I Corinthians 12:7 in a universal rather than a provincial way, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit (gifts) for its common good."

"One another" in the I Thessalonians verse is the NETWORK of those who are pastoral leaders of churches. "The common good" in the I Corinthians verse includes all of us in pastoral care leadership. We have leadership responsibilities in common. Coming together to share our gifts will do us all good! **including you!**

AXIOM 25

DO YOU PRACTICE SIBKIS

"Hello, Mel. This is the Pope." This telephoned greeting from Florida delayed my response. What would you say?

It turned out to be a Pope - Rev. Don Pope, pastor of Smyrna Baptist Church in Smyrna, Ga. These Baptists!

He inquired about my coming for a Lay Pastors Seminar. In the course of the conversation, he asked, "Do you practice SIBKIS up there?"

"What's that?"
"SIBKIS."

"I don't know. Tell me what SIBKIS is. Maybe we do."

"See It Big: Keep It Simple. We believe in SIBKIS here. Do y' all?" I told him that we believe it, but that we do SIB better than KIS.

Do you believe SIBKIS and practice it?
It is very important!!!! To see "Tend The Flock of God" and all that means is to really SIB. To structure a ministry by which lay people will do the tending and KIS is a challenge.

The acronym PACE is a SIBKIS description:

- P - Pray daily
- A - Available in time of need.
- C - Contact regularly
- E - Example of a growing, through struggling, Christian.

As one lay person of the Ministry Group summarized after this ministry job description was formulated, "Lay people can understand it; they can do it, and when it is done they will know what they did."

Don Esa, Associate Pastor of Madeira Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, told me they use the formula CARE:

C - Contact; A - Available; R - Regularly pray; E - Example

If you are developing a Ministry, SIBKIS! If you have a ministry on line, when you do your evaluations, the SIBKIS'er you can make it, the better. While not losing sight of its bigness, the more simple it can be the better understood it will be, by both those who give care and those who receive it. And the more that will actually get done.

AXIOM 26

KEEPING IN MOTION

Isaac Newton's first law of motion also applies to our Lay Pastor/Shepherd Ministry: **A body at rest tends to remain at rest; a body in motion tends to remain in motion.**

Enthusiasm, commitment and zeal peak at the time a Lay Pastor is called forth, equipped and commissioned. He or she is in MOTION! The energy level is high!

How is that level maintained or, if it dips, how is it brought back up? The answer is fourfold:

1. Good "Pastoral Supervision"

(see pages 73-78 in *CAN THE PASTOR DO IT ALONE?*).

2. Occasional or frequent scheduled meeting of the troops (One Lay Pastor: "I'm glad for these meetings. They are a deadline for me to make my contacts").

3. Reports (respond to the reports and follow up on those not turning them in).

4. Name-calling affirmation at every possible opportunity by those who lead the ministry (lay and clergy).

Once a Lay Pastor/Shepherd slows down or stops, Newton's law is a painful one. It is very difficult to restart a stopped Lay Pastor/Shepherd. So the best strategy is to keep him or her in motion. God, who designed the law Newton discovered said through Paul,

'BE NOT WEARY IN WELL DOING' (Gal. 6:9)

JESUS ALSO SAID,

'NO MAN, HAVING PUT HIS HANDS TO THE PLOW AND TURNING BACKWARD IS FIT FOR THE KINGDOM.'

AXIOM 27

Reasons for Reporting

A method of reporting is essential to the effectiveness of the Lay Pastors Ministry for these two reasons:

1. REFLECTION VALUE TO THE CARE GIVER.

Being accountable for pastoring activity helps us to be faithful in fulfilling our commitment. The process of reporting causes us to reflect upon the degree of faithfulness to which the Scriptures call us. (1 Cor. 4:2 and 1 Tim. 1:12) Faithfulness is one of the fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5:22)

2. IN-TOUCH VALUE TO THE MINISTRY GROUP AND STAFF

God and the official board hold us accountable for the effective pastoral care of people through those giving the pastoral care.

This accountability means that the Ministry Group and/or staff must be in touch with the ministry. Receiving reports is a major way of keeping in touch, enabling them to motivate and encourage those lay pastors needing it, and to strengthen weaknesses when and where they appear.

The model for this is in Jesus' parable of the pounds - Luke 19:11-27.

vs. 12 - The Ministry Group is represented by the nobleman, having the basic ownership of the ministry, under God and the official board.

13 - The ministry is given to others to handle it productively.

14 - There are some members of the church who resist pastoring.

15 - The time of accountability has come, ("That he might know.....")

16 - The report is given.

17 - The report is responded to. ("Well done!")

23 - The appropriate response is given to the inactive servant.

("Why then did you not.....")

AXIOM 28

HOW TO INITIATE PLANNED CHANGE

Lyle Schaller, America's foremost church consultant, lists five overlapping steps for what he calls "initiating planned change". That phrase can be synonymous with "starting a ministry". Some of you reading this are praying about, talking about and contemplating starting a Lay Pastors Ministry. According to Mr. Schaller these five steps are imperative!

The First - Discontent with the status quo. If everyone is happy with how things are, it is unlikely you can get very far with your proposal.

The Second - Form an initiating group. We called this a Base Group and later a Ministry Group at College Hill Presbyterian Church. At Hope Church we are calling it a Ministry Leadership Team.

The Third - Build a support group. Everyone affected by the new ministry must be fully informed and brought on board. In the case of a Lay Pastors Ministry, the whole congregation is affected. This calls for thorough repetitious in-church communication: Sunday bulletin, church paper, special letters, information meetings, etc.

The Fourth - Formal Approval. This would probably be by the official board of the church after the plan is finalized. It would be good to give them progress reports as the initiating group makes progress in developing the ministry so that they are familiar with what they are asked to act on.

The Fifth - Implementation. This is a "hallelujah" time! There should be celebration at the launching. Caution This fifth step has to be seen as the launching platform for maintaining the ministry. Implementation is not the end. It is only the beginning. But, you will not have the beginning if any one of these steps is missing.

AXIOM 29

PRINCIPLES OF CARING FOR THE CARE GIVERS

(Drawn from The Care and Feeding of Volunteers by Douglas W. Johnson - Creative Leadership Series, Lyle E. Schaller, Ed. Abingdon, 1978. Tenth Printing, 1986)

1. The congregation resembles a volunteer association more than a called-out community of believers. Our task is to help them see themselves as a community of ministers and respond accordingly to needs for ministry.

2. The pastor needs to be the visionary, encourager, stimulator and legitimator, A legitimator legitimitizes an activity or ministry. (These are new terms to me.) "Legitimation" is the approval of a person or activity by the person in charge. This is usually the clergy, the pastor-teacher of Ephesians 4:11.

3. There is a difference between prodding a person and having concern for him/her, between breathing down a person's neck and holding them accountable, between a supervisory inspection and a check-point. The difference is in prior and mutual agreement for accountability and check-points.

4. Support means: Available, concerned, helpful. (When it is said that ministering lay persons need support, they need it in these three modes.)

5. Keeping personally in touch with volunteers is essential. (Building a relationship.)

6. People's refusal to accept a position is not necessarily final. They may only need time to think about it, talk it over and pray about it. Or, it may be that they are not ready yet and need to be contacted again in another month or year.

7. Persons ministering need to see their relationship with the total church - how what they are doing fits into the total life of the church, the fulfillment of Scripture and what God is doing in the world.

8. Feedback is essential. Feedback is letting a person know how others feel about the way he or she is doing the job.

9. I disagree with a statement-"A meeting is for making decisions and ought to be held to the task." I believe a meeting ought to be a relationship-building time as well as business-doing time. Time for koinonia needs to be built into the agenda.

10. Equipping can be seen to be the way of helping a person become capable. Equipping is the solution for people who say, "I can't do that.;" "I don't know enough to do that.;" "I could never be a lay pastor."

11. People need help in planning. The planning process needs to include purpose, goals, resources and implementation.

Purpose - What and why; **Goals** - Specific and clear deadlines;

Resources - Time, energy, experience, training, money;

Implementation - Do it, then evaluate.

AXIOM 30

COUNSELING OR PASTORING

The difference between counseling and pastoring must be understood by both clergy and laity so they can intentionally know what they are doing in any given situation. Knowing and accepting the difference is especially necessary for the lay person doing or considering doing the lay pastoring ministry.

"I can't be a lay pastor because I wouldn't know what to tell people who are having serious problems", is an often-heard decliner. The following delineation, extracted from a paper written by Alice Petersen, a member of the College Hill Presbyterian Church staff in Cincinnati, will help to sharply focus pastoring as distinctively different from counseling.

What is counseling? What is therapy? Counseling is the process of increasing a person's emotional capacity and ability to live adequately in life in the way he/she chooses. The therapeutic relationship helps to remove the blockages in a person's life which prevent growth and freedom. The counselor or therapist skillfully provides the client with many occasions and resources to shed self-inflicted obstacles. Human growth and freedom are facilitated in counseling.

What is pastoring? Historically, in the Biblical tradition, pastoring is meeting people right where they are, folding and re-folding them into the flock. Our reformed theology calls for the pastors to be the custodians of the Word entrusted to them and to enable that Word to become effective in the lives of people. Pastoring is leading the people into a deeper understanding and appropriation of the Gospel in daily life.

The pastor and the therapist also have different expectations. The pastor reaches out to a person in need while the therapist waits for the person to initiate an invitation for help.

AXIOM 31

WANT TO BE ACCEPTED? LOVE!

"They don't seem to need me."

"They don't want a lay pastor."

"I've been their lay pastor for a year and they still don't accept me. They don't warm up to me. We seem like strangers."

What is the problem? Chances are it is either **non-acceptance**, or **limited acceptance**, of the person or family by the care giver rather than resistance by the people. It is not easy for us who are to care for others to accept others totally and unconditionally.

I asked the same question when pastoring a congregation of Hawaiians in Hilo, HI, "When will these people accept me?" I put the question to Paul Toms, my predecessor, who had come back to Hawaii for a visit.

His answer surprised me, temporarily insulted me and finally taught me, He said, "**They will accept you when you accept them.**" The next six years of pastoring the people of that church proved him right.

I prayed about loving them. I struggled with fully accepting them. What helped the most was to know that God totally accepted them like He accepted me and called me to totally accept them. To the degree I became real in my love and acceptance for them the limited acceptance barrier disappeared.

I had to take the initiative which, first of all, was an initiative of my heart. Then they accepted me. I had expected them to be first in the order of mutual acceptance. What a mistake!

Hear another story on acceptance, Robert Slocum, a high-tech expert, tells in his book, ORDINARY CHRISTIANS IN A HIGH-TECH WORLD, about his first venture into lay ministry. His ministry was to share his faith at Texas Instruments. Acceptance is essential to all ministry whether lay or clergy, pastoring or evangelism.

He asked his friend Keith Miller, what to do, Keith's counsel was, "Don't worry. When people find out you are a Christian, they will come to you." He

worked hard at making it obvious he was a Christian. He kept his Bible on his desk. He talked of his activities in a local church. He passed out some literature on becoming a Christian. Two years passed. No one came to him.

Why? Miller's diagnosis: "What I meant was, people would experience God's love and concern coming through you and be drawn to you."

What people were experiencing was a formal and externally visible invasion of their religious turf. They were not experiencing love and concern.

He could do the external acts on his own. It took the power of God for him to have genuine love and concern. People didn't need the first. The latter they desperately needed. Everyone does!

When people don't "need" or "want" a lay pastor (shepherd, lay minister, caregiver) it's really the invasion of their religious, personal or family turf they don't need, **But everybody needs and wants love and concern.** When those elements become real in your heart, you will have little trouble being accepted by those you seek to pastor.

The keys are the "more excellent way" and "make love your aim" of I Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1. We don't gain acceptance by aiming at it, but by aiming to love. And, according to I Corinthians 13:8, "love never ends" but will persist through resistance or rejection to acceptance. "Try it; you'll like it". so will they!

AXIOM 32

Three affirmation of Lay Pastors Ministry

If you have a lay pastoring ministry on line, are in the process of developing it, or are seriously contemplating it, know that this is the way to go if you want comprehensive pastoral care, i.e. all your people pastored. Lyle Schaller, in THE PARISH PAPER (January 1989), says three things affirm us who are giving pastoral care to equipped lay people.

ONE: "While it may not represent an intentional strategy, thousands of small churches are organized around worship and one-to-one relationships. Many of these one-to-one relationships are pastor-parishioner, while others are parishioner-parishioner relationships." Of course, you recognize the parishioner-parishioner as your Lay Pastor/Shepherd/Caregiver ministry.

TWO: Referring to the pastor-parishioner relationship Schaller continues. "Only a very tiny proportion of pastors are able to use that approach effectively with congregations including more than a couple of hundred members." But, you and I know that thousands of pastors are trying to maintain one-to-one relationships against impossible physical, social, spiritual and emotional odds. The pastor cannot do it alone. The effective alternative is a lay pastoring plan.

THREE: While acknowledging the benefits millions of Christians have derived from "small groups", Schaller sees seven limitations to the small group approach to congregational care, two which affirm the lay pastoral ministry. (1) ".....it is far easier to concentrate on building one-to-one relationships" than to build on "the power of the small group movement". (2) "It is difficult to enlist more than 40 percent of the adult membership of a congregation in this (the small group) approach....." The one-to-one parishioner-parishioner pastoral caring relationship promises adequate and effective pastoral care for every member, if that is what we want for our congregation.

we who have a lay pastoral care ministry going, or are putting one together, or are considering doing it, need to come together to know one another, learn from one another and be led to new heights by tried-and-proved leaders.

AXIOM 33

DISCOVER YOUR GIFT

"I'm not sure I can do that" is a way of saying, "I don't know if I have the gifts required for a pastoring, caring ministry." Some lay people who have been pastoring for some time wonder many times if they have the gift. Prospective lay pastors would like to know if they have the necessary gifts.

Regarding gifts for ministry, those ministering need to be affirmed and those pondering a possible commitment to ministry need to be informed.

Peter Wagner, in his book on I Corinthians (OUR CORINTHIAN CONTEMPORARIES, Zondervan, 1972) lists five concrete steps for those who either have not discovered their gift or are not using it.

1. Distinguish between spiritual gifts and natural talents. God may use a material talent, e.g. teaching or empathy, as raw material for a gift for ministry. "What can you do?" or "What do you like to do?" are helpful questions.

2. Know the possibilities of spiritual gifts. I Cor. 12, Rom. 23, Eph. 4 and I Peter 4 should be read prayerfully, asking God to give an understanding. "Mercy" (compassion for others) should be high on the list for lay pastors.

3. Trust God to give you all the gifts you should have, and then to show you not only what your gifts are but also what they are not. Many who are outstanding evangelists are failures as pastors and vice versa. It is fallacy to think that if we just applied ourselves enough, or prayed enough, or was filled with the Spirit enough, we could be great in a ministry for which we are not gifted.

4. Be content with what you have, and be content with what others have. We must neither envy others because they have gifts we do not, nor belittle them if they do not have what we have. Never think that if you tried hard enough you could do what they do. And never expect that if they tried hard enough they could do what you do.

5. Once you know what your gift is, develop it. Diligent practice and study are imperative. As the gift of teaching calls for specialized study in pedagogy, the gift of mercy (compassion for others) calls for specialized study in the skills of listening, communication, interpersonal relations, crisis intervention and psychology.

These five steps can be taught at a meeting of your lay pastors (Caregivers, Shepherds, Lay Ministers). Then, break up into small groups of three to five to discuss them for ten minutes. Then, each take two minutes to share what they think their gifts might be. Next, ask each one to select one other person in the small group to tell what he or she sees that person's gifts to be. After all have shared, spend a few minutes in prayer, asking God to reveal the gifts clearly and to enable them to use the gifts fully.

AXIOM 34

STEPS TO A LAY PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH

Some of you are asking, "How can we get a lay pastors ministry started?" Follow these seven steps. They lead to an effective and authentic ministry whereby lay people give pastoral care to the other members of a church.

1. VISION- Be convinced that God is calling your church to fulfill I John 5:2, "Tend the flock of God, which is your charge."

2. PREPARE CONGREGATION-You need to take the congregation from where they are to know, understand and accept the Biblical truths (1) that every Christian is given gifts for ministry and is to be doing ministry with those gifts; and (2) that we are to minister to one another, that is, give and receive ministry.

3. LEADERSHIP GROUP- A few committed lay people who will share your vision and have a variety of gifts need to be called together, be committed to one another, develop the ministry, and have ownership of it.

4. STRUCTURE- As the body has a skeletal structure of unseen bones, so your ministry must have an organizational plan which gives it existence and stability.

5. PILOT PROJECT- A trial run of a few months with a small number of people involved will give you a chance to fine -tune the ministry and also demonstrate to the congregation that it works.

6. APPROVAL-The official board of the church must understand the need for this ministry, its purpose and structure so as to authenticate it in the eyes of the whole congregation.

7. START - Once the planning is complete, call people into the ministry, equip, commission and assign people to them for pastoral care.

8. REJOICE - Celebrate the ministry God has called forth as people begin to "serve the Lord with gladness." Psalm 100:2.

AXIOM 35

YOU CAN BE A RESOURCE TO OTHERS

You have ideas others can use if they only know - equipping, motivating, problem solving, organization, communication, meetings, commissioning, or ideas for resources.

Example: Jim Van Roekel, Associate Pastor of the Third Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa asked four of the members of his "Care Team" (the ministry ownership group) to each write on one of the letters of the acronym describing their pastoral care ministry. "C.A.R.E." (Contact monthly, Available at any time, Regularly pray, and Examples that encourage). These were printed in their monthly newsletter, THE SHEPHERD STAFF. The writings were exceptional! The one on "Contact" was titled, "THE HARD PART OF CARING'. In it Jim Terlouw asks four tough questions:

1. Can you really care without contact?
2. How far from down inside you does your caring come from?
3. Can the people you care for detect your sincerity?
4. Is your caring limited to how well you know the person?

There are things you are doing which would help others. In turn, you will be able to learn from others. We as God's people in similar ministries have much to learn from one another. You can make this happen by telling us so they can be passed on through the News Letter. Send them today while you are thinking of it.

AXIOM 36

Role of Conference

I believe there are five role of annual Conference, I called it "overflow." It is to do ministry; to be an effective minister.

FIRST-It Takes Commitment.

Commitment to your Lord, your church, your leaders and yourself.

SECOND-It Takes Work.

One must move from commitment and intentions to action. II Chronicles 15:7 says your "work" (not your un-activated commitment or intention) will be rewarded.

THIRD-It takes Vision.

The reality will always fall short the dream, bu the dream is essential to the reality. Vision needs periodic renewal.

FOURTH-It Takes God.

Who said, "Without you God will not; without God you cannot"? God uses what you can do to accomplish what you never could have done.

FIFTH-It Takes One Another.

Just as the body needs its eyes, legs, and inner organs to function properly, we need one another. No one person has all the gifts. No one has unlimited time and energy to get it all done.

We all have these five things, probably to different degrees. We could all be stronger in all of them. Therein lies our challenge and God's call to "fulfill your ministry". (II Tim. 4:5)

AXIOM 37

MEASURING YOUR MINISTRY

One of the mega goals of our lay caring ministry has to be "building up the body of Christ". According to Ephesians 4:12 that is the purpose of equipping "the saints for the works of ministry". The ultimate standard for evaluating this goal is the "stature of the fullness of Christ".

In other words, note how tall Christ stands and compare the people we pastor with Him. By what standards can we measure our ministry to assure us that it is moving our people toward spiritual maturity. Try these four:

1. FULFILLED COMMITMENT BY THE LAY PASTORS

The commitment is P A C E or C A R E or Whatever caring specifics your care givers have agreed to do.

- Frequency and fervor of prayer.
- Number and quality of contacts.
- Offer of availability and its reaffirmation periodically.
- Intentional and real spiritual growth - example.

2. ACCEPTANCE BY THE PEOPLE BEING PASTORED

- Aware that someone prays for them regularly.
- Aware of intentional contacts by their lay pastor.
- Appreciation of the lay pastors and the Lay Pastors Ministry by some positive spoken or written words.

3. POSITIVE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

- They know about the ministry.
- They understand its purpose and structure
- They accept it as a vital part of congregational life.

4. COMMITMENT OF AND OWNERSHIP BY THE MINISTRY LEADERSHIP GROUP

- Heart-felt confidence that this ministry is needed, that God has called it forth.
- Readiness to sacrifice personal plans so as to have time for the ministry.
- A sense of owning the ministry; feeling personally responsible for it, along with the other group members.
- A personal delight in being involved, seeing it as a privilege.
- A readiness to struggle with the problems, resolve them, and help the ministry thrive.

NOTE: These four standards can be:

1) discussed by the leaders, 2) the basis of a creatively worded survey, or 3) used piece-meal for evaluation of the ministry by the lay pastors, those being pastored, the congregation, and/or the leadership group

AXIOM 38

PRAYER IS THE KEY

Most of us continue to read magazine or newspaper articles on diet, exercise and stress even though we have read others zillions of times. Why? This information is central to our health and we need to be reminded regularly.

So it is with prayer. We need a reminder often because it is central to the health of our ministry and we tend to be careless with it.

I am discovering again the simple importance of prayer to the ministry I am leading at Hope Church. This morning (Friday, February 24, 7:30 A.M) I again prayed for our newly commissioned lay pastors. There are twelve. They are the first of about 150 we will need to fully implement the ministry here.

I prayed for them by name - Bobie, John, Daniel, Jack, Glynis, etc. Three things popped into my mind as I moved from one to the other:

1. Those I don't know too well need to meet with soon to get better acquainted.

2. I need to call each one today to find out how their First Visits are going.

3. I lingered longer on one, praying about a special personal problem I know of.

I will take action on numbers one and two because I believe God popped these into my **mind** and **heart**.

Then I prayed for the Ministry Leadership Group, one by one, by name. Same thing!

I know that the key to an effective and successful ministry is prayer. It gives God a chance to pop the things He wants us to do into our minds. We who lead these ministries have these major responsibilities regarding prayer:

1. Pray faithfully for those doing the ministry, by name

2. Equip, remind, motivate, and hold them accountable to pray for their people.

3. Model regular and effective prayer by doing it and sharing your experiences with them. Even phone them to pray with them and/or pray with them when you meet with them about their pastoring. NOTE: Your praying is about their personal lives as well as their ministry. In fact, the personal focus has top priority. I would like to know some of the creative ways you lead, equip, remind, motivate and hold your people accountable to pray.

AXIOM 39

ORDINARY CHRISTIANS IN A HIGH-TECH WORLD

by Robert E. Slocum, Word Books, Waco, TX 1986, 252 pp

The author is a layman, a high-tech entrepreneur and an elder in the Highland Park Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas. Two statements in the book will threaten many clergy:

1. "I have found that lay men and women are often far more aggressive than clergy . . . in exploring a new future for the church."

2. ". . . we must discover a new shape for lay ministry. Our job is not to assist the clergy in our churches; rather, the job of the clergy is to assist the laity in being about their ministry in the world."

He is right on both counts whether we are threatened or not. The major thrust of the book is the Church "scattered".

Chapter 14 deals with the Church "gathered". Much of it is directly applicable to a lay pastoring ministry.

Two types of church leaders are identified; "E-Leaders", the professional ministers, and "e-leaders", the lay ministers.

He writes, "An E-Leader must concentrate on helping the ordinary Christians in the Church to hear God's call and follow Him..." The following statement affirms the simple core of a lay pastoring ministry: "The e-leader, based on the early church model, is a servant of a few rather than a leader of the masses. "He adds, ".....the future of the church rests with the e-leaders, the faithful servants, just as it did during the church's first three centuries."

Slocum calls Paul's practice of appointing elders in the absence of paid clergy "a tremendous gamble". He put in charge those local people who had the best chance of keeping the church going. Paul had to "risk letting those amateurs run the church into the ground".

This reader's conclusion from such reasoning is that we dare not resist giving authentic pastoral ministry to our lay people.

Two more quotes:

(1) "The early church has a commissioning service for lay ministry; it was called baptism. When people accepted Jesus as the Christ, they were expected to minister in obedience to Him. An important task of the E-Leader must be to keep this expectation alive and weave it into the fabric of the institutional congregation."

(2) "I need teaching and preaching that will equip and encourage me to be obedient to my call to work and ministry in the world. The church gathered can and must give me all of this."

AXIOM 40

Importance of Lay Pastors Ministry

Your Lay Pastors Ministry is to be seen as one piece of your total church pie.

Frank Tillapaugh, at our Kansas City CONSULTATION '89 identified four spheres for strategic thinking about ministry. Your lay pastoral care ministry fits into sphere #1, edification.

Sphere #1 includes ministry to people who are already attending your church. Frank forcefully explained, "**This is where the ministry of Lay Pastoring really plays a strong role.**" He quoted the Greek proverb, "Give us a place to stand and we'll move the world."

He continued, "**I would encourage you to see your objective as lay pastors to minister to people so they will have a place to stand.** Give them a place to stand and encourage them to move the world."

Another significant insight from Frank: "**As you know, there are not enough professionals to go around. It's going to take lay pastors!**"

If you are facing some discouragement, frustration or even what may seem to you to be failure, do not let your spirit weaken. Your efforts to adequately pastor all of your people by calling forth lay people, equipping them and supporting them in their ministry, are being spent in an indispensable area of the total life of your church, sphere #1. God is calling you to do this with vigor because He wants His people loved, prayed for and "tended". I Peter 5:1-4.

The other three spheres are: #2 relational evangelism, #3 people geographically close but relationally distant, and #4 oversees.

AXIOM 41

HOW WELL DID I DO?

The following questions can be used either, (1) In your equipping seminar as you can train your people to give pastoral care, (2) For additional equipping after they are into the ministry, or (3) A regular meeting of the lay pastors/shepherds/ministers.

Put your people in groups of two. One will share some personal in-depth problem (disappointment, concern, need, struggle, joy, celebration, good news) while the other practices "Active Listening". The listener will then assess his quality of listening by answering these six questions. For round two, they will exchange roles.

An alternative to this: the two can reflect on one of their last pastoral contacts and assess the quality of their listening by using the six questions as they recall the dialogue.

1. Did I exhibit warmth and respect to show that I care?
2. Was I empathic?
3. Did I understand accurately the feelings which were expressed?
4. Did I help the person explore the issues involved and not problem-solve?
5. Did I build enough trust to encourage the person to share problems or needs with me again?
6. How do I feel about myself regarding this experience of listening?

AXIOM 42

PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVE LISTENING

I Kings 3:9 "Give your servant an understanding mind and a listening heart."(Amp)

- * Listening is a skill which can be learned.
- * Listening means allowing the other person to tell you that which he/she wants you to know.
- * Listening means being able to accurately give back to the other person his/her own feelings. Being empathic.
- * Listening means being able to discern what the other person is wanting; action, information, change, quietness.
- * Listening well helps another explore his/her own feeling, choices, behaviors - not yours.
- * Listening means you are a facilitator of another's exploration of himself/herself. You are not a problem solver.
- * Listening means you respect the person and do not place value judgements on what has been told to you. You may not agree, but the person is still worthy of respect.
- * Listening means you are building trust and relationship.
- * Listening to another's struggles will aid you in your own growth if you allow that to happen.

NOTE; These principles can be used as an outline for a teaching on listening. The questions can then be used to assimilate the teaching.

AXIOM 43

FOR YOU WHO LEAD

Your ministry will be as healthy as your ministry leadership is. You and your leaders need to continue to grow in faith, commitment, knowledge of pastoring principles, and leadership. Seek to strike an agreement with the group that your ministry will be a "growth ministry".

Dr. Kenneth Haug's article in his Stephen Series paper, Christmas 1988 (Vol. 14, No. 4) is an article on growth - "Four Prescriptions for a Thriving Congregation". It could be titled "Four Prescriptions for a Growing Pastoral Care Ministry".

Dr. Haug refers to Tom Peters' best seller, "Thriving on Chaos". His analysis is that American business can thrive on chaos rather than being threatened, curtailed or destroyed by our chaotic society. The four verbs summarizing his prescription for business can be applied to your lay pastoral caring ministry: **focus, innovate, empower, and risk.**

1. Focus on the needs of people. Dr. Haug asks, "Where is the focus of your congregation"? Is it on what your members can do for the organization, or on how the organization of the church can serve and build up its members in Christ? Focus on the customer is Peters' word to American business. Focus on members of your flock is the word to lay pastors. Do not focus your energy on your organization or your self, but on your people.

2. Innovate in order to meet the needs of people. One new lay pastor was told by one of her flock, when she made the initial phone call to set up a time for the first visit, "I don't want a lay pastor. I don't want anything to do with that ministry. I don't need a lay pastor. Don't come." The rookie lay pastor's response was, "Can I come and visit as a neighbor?" "Surely, come," was her answer. This lay pastor innovated on the spot, dropping the objectionable title and substituting an acceptable one. A creative ministry committed to growth will find new and workable ways to meet new situations and changing needs. Dr. Haug asks the right questions of ministries committed to growth and focusing on people rather than organization, "How can we innovate, improve, and streamline the way we

plan and do ministry in order to increase our responsibility to the needs of those God called us to serve?"

3. Empower people to care. We get the principle to apply to our ministry from Peter's advice to business; empower people on every level, from top leadership to those who seem to play the smallest role. They may be staff, ministry group, lay pastors, secretaries and record keepers. Each person is encouraged to think about ways to improve the ministry. Each one has unique gifts to use and, therefore, plays a significant role in the growth of the ministry. They need the freedom to use those gifts creatively and effectively.

4. Risk. Be willing to risk in order to care. It is risky business to empower and free people to minister. To do this is to trust them and to have confidence in them. Remember that Jesus risked His kingdom by giving the Great Commission to very faulty people. Love is risky. A lay pastor may risk feelings by being rebuffed, self image by being rejected, exposure by building an authentic relationship, and pride by dealing with unsolvable problems and unanswered questions. Always remember that Jesus risked His life for you and the people to whom you are reaching out.

Do this in your Ministry Leadership Group:

- 1) Reach a consensus on your ministry being a "Growth Ministry", with a growth mentality and commitment;
- 2) Discuss your present state of ministry, goals, plans and effectiveness by laying these four words against it: **focus, innovate, empower, and risk.**
- 3) Then, update your goals and revise your plans as necessary.

AXIOM 44

Evaluate your equipping event

Ask your Lay Pastors to tell you how well the equipping seminar or classes prepared them for their ministry. This can be done by either producing a form for them to fill out, or by an informal personal visit, perhaps by phone. The Lay Pastors at Hope Presbyterian were very willing to respond to these questions:

- 1) After eight months of ministry, which units of the seminar did you find helped you?
- 2) Which parts would you suggest we spend more time on with those being equipped in our next seminar?
- 3) What additional equipping would have helped you if we had given it?

Asking these questions makes it possible for them to participate in evaluating your equipping, to discover its strengths and improve the content. They know whether our equipping course is doing the job!

We found from our Lay Pastors in talking with them via phone early in October that we had done an acceptable job in our January seminar, We also found some ways to improve the one coming in November, Here are some of the responses:

J.C. - (1) Getting people ready to make their first visit was very important to me. I knew what to do.

(2) The book "When Your Friend Needs You" is very helpful. (This book was given to our Lay Pastors at a special meeting seven months into the ministry).

J.K. - No criticism. It seemed you were rushed with too much material for the a lot of time.

D.L. - (1) Breaking into small groups was good!

(2) People need to get rid of their pre-conceptions of "pastoring". It is easier than they think; supportive, helping checking on the well-being of an elderly person, etc. (3) The meetings for Lay Pastors are a help. We should meet more often. "It's always fun to get together with people doing a similar ministry."

R.S. - The book ("*CAN THE PASTOR DO IT ALONE?*") was very helpful. I read it evenings for more understanding and help. The unit on problems helped me when I ran into them.

This summary of the interviews will guide us in planning the next equipping event:

1. In general, the equipping was adequate. We were affirmed.
2. Too much material for the time scheduled. We will evaluate the relative importance of the units and reschedule the time accordingly, or cut some of the material.
3. These areas are to be emphasized:
 - How to make the first visit.
 - "You don't have to be perfect".
 - Pastoring is easier than you think. It is not counseling, correcting, discipling or problem solving. It is being "Love with skin on".
 - The meetings of Lay Pastors are very important to the ongoing ministry. They are requested to put a high priority on this commitment.

AXIOM 45

Building a Relationship

Pastoring takes place in a relationship. We must make a great point of this in our equipping course. The following can be used for a lecture to supplement Unit 3 (page 94, "CAN THE PASTOR DO IT ALONE?"), expanding the paragraphs under BUILD A RELATIONSHIP! on page 48. It may be most helpful to give the lecture at a meeting of Lay Pastors after they have been in their ministry for some months. Seasoned people can divide into small groups after the lecture to discuss the success of their relationship development.

Pastoring takes place in a relationship. CAN TH PASTOR DO IT ALONE? states on page 49, "...it is the **relationship** that is built in non crisis times that earns the Lay Pastor's right to be trusted during the hurting times".

Alastair Campbell in his book, REDISCOVERING PASTORAL CARE, says, "Pastoral Care is a **relationship** founded upon the integrity of the individual. Such a relationship does not depend upon the acquisition of knowledge or the development of skill. Rather, it depends upon a caring attitude toward others which comes from our own experience of pain, fears, and loss. And our own release from their deadening grip." (Quote from page 39).

The definition we use for lay pastoring is "caring for another by giving one's self in Christian love to a **relationship**..." (page 39).

We are to build a **relationship**. But, just how do we go about doing that? Here are five ways:

- 1. Pray.** If one will pray for another faithfully, a relationship of a certain kind will be formed with out even being with or seeing the other person.
- 2. Be sensitive.** Have empathy, warmth and respect for the other.

EMPATHY - Know how they feel by listening to them so as to feel with

them.

WARMTH - Have an accepting, friendly spirit. This will come through your contact like the sun warming a person on a cool day.

RESPECT - Pray all judgementalism out of your spirit so you can accept the other person just as they are now. This shows respect for them as another human being. Jesus accepted the adulterous woman, Nicodemus, Peter, you and me.

3. Focus. Get on their agenda and stay there until they ask a question about you. Listen attentively so they know you are focused on them.

4. Serve. Commit yourself to give, not get. There are two types of people. One says, "I know what I want and I'm out to get it." The other, "I know what is needed and I'm out to give it."

5. Pray again. Prayer is the key to sensitivity, to empathy, to warmth and to respect. It will keep us focused on others, not on self. It will grow a servant spirit within us.

Even those who at first resist a Lay Pastor's efforts to visit them will sooner or later be ready for a relationship with one who is sensitive, focused on them, serving and praying for them.

Any relationship worth having is worth working at. This is especially true of a pastoral relationship where we are called to be God's "love with skin on".

AXIOM 46

Sixty Second Pastoring

You can do a lot of pastoring in 60 seconds. Very often it is not the quantity of time spent, but the quality of what you do. To make this point clear, think what a hug, a squeeze of the hand, a touch on the shoulder, a word of affirmation and a kiss mean.

10% of the lives of the people we care for are made up of crisis events. 90% is quite "everydayish", unglamorous, routine, even humdrum. It is important that we pastor our people during the 90%! And it does not take a lot of time. If you do this, your attention during a crisis will be ever so effective. Again, you can do a lot of pastoring in 60 seconds, during the 90%.

Try these three 60-second pastoring techniques:

1) Caring. Give your people 60 seconds of caring. Some people feel cut off from the rest of the world. Some feel no one cares. A brief phone call right now telling one of your people you are thinking of him/her/them will let them know you care. God wants them to know that you, their Lay Pastor, cares!

2) Encouragement. Give your people a 60-second treatment of encouragement. All of us get discouraged at times. We all have peaks and valleys in our lives. We are up some days and down others. Go out of your way to affirm them. To say something nice about them does not get you involved in depth. Getting involved in depth can come at another time.

3) Prayer. Be a 60-second pray-er. Your prayer need not be long or in "holy language". Just talk to God about your people. "Why, Lord? Why are those people suffering?" "Thank you, God, for helping them," "Lord, give them your guidance in the decisions they are making." Etc., etc., etc. Offer a sentence prayer now and a sentence prayer then.

Be a 60-second pastor, 60 seconds of caring, encouragement and prayer. A lot of pastoral care is packed into that short time.

AXIOM 47

LISTEN

When I ask you to listen to me
and you start giving advice
you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me
and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way you are
trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me
and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem you
have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked, was that you listen,
not talk or do, just hear me.

Advice is cheap: 35 cents will get you both Dear Abby and Billy Graham in
the same newspaper.

And I can do for myself: I'm not helpless.
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself,
you contribute to my fear and weakness.

But, when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter
how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and can get about the
business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling. And
when that's clear, the answers are obvious, and I don't need advice.

Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what's behind them.

Perhaps that's why prayer works, sometimes, for some people because God is
mute, and He doesn't give advice or try to fix things. He just listens and lets
you work it out for yourself.

So please listen and just hear me. And, if you want to talk, wait a minute
for your turn; and I'll listen to you.

AXIOM 48

Strategy for "Calling Forth"

One of the biggest problems for everyday pastoral care ministry is recruitment. (We prefer to talk about "calling forth".)

How do we get more people into this ministry? The following article which will appear in the February Hope Presbyterian Church monthly church paper can be adapted for yours.

YOU MAY BE READY NOW

We are looking for several members of Hope to be equipped to be Lay Pastors.

The next equipping seminar is March 30 and 31 in Fellowship Hall. The goal of the Lay Pastors Ministry is to provide adequate and effective pastoral care for every member and family of Hope Church by calling forth, equipping and commissioning members to be lay pastors.

You may be ready now to be a lay pastor. This five point test will help you know.

1. Do you have a caring and compassionate spirit?

_____Yes ____No _____Perhaps

2. Do you desire to make a long-term positive difference in to lives of a few select people?

_____Yes _____No _____Perhaps

3. Do you believe that you could be an effective lay minister just by forming a friendly relationship?

_____Yes ____No _____Perhaps

4. Do you realize that for your life to touch another is a healing, encouraging, comforting and therapeutic touch?

_____Yes _____No. _____Perhaps

5. Do you feel pleased with yourself when you take the initiative to reach out to someone?

_____Yes _____No _____Perhaps

Give each "YES" 5 points; each "No" 0 points; each "PERHAPS" 1 point. If your total score is ten or more, you are ready to attend the Lay Pastors Equipping Seminar March 30 & 31 (Fri. 7PM - 10 PM, Sat. 9 AM -5 PM) to learn what the ministry is and decide if it is for you at this time.

Here are some of the ways, in addition to this article, we are "Calling Forth" people into the Lay Pastors Ministry at Hope Church.

- A letter to selected people followed in two weeks by phone calls.
- Announcements in the church paper, bulletin and from the pulpit.
- Personal contacts by the Members of the Ministry Leadership Group.
- Registration table outside the sanctuary for those Sundays preceding the seminar.

AXIOM 49

YOUR NEW YEAR REVIEW

It may be time to review your ministry to see if all the foundation blocks are still in place and not crumbling. Like a building, a strong ministry is strong because it is made out of quality material and sets on a firm foundation. If you see the foundation weakening you know that if you don't repair it, the future of the ministry is doomed.

Check your ministry by examining these 12 foundation blocks. Don't be afraid to ask these tough questions of each of the 12:

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

<p>VISION Believe what this ministry will mean to your people.(Prov. 29:18)</p>	<p>OWNERSHIP "God wants this ministry in our church so we have to make it work."</p>	<p>DESIGN "Wherever the grace of Christ is present it is in search of a form that will adequately express what it."(Avery Dulles)</p>
<p>CALL "You have not chosen me but I have chosen you...."(John 15:16)</p>	<p>EQUIPPING "...Equip the saints for the work of the ministry." (Ephesians 4:12)</p>	<p>ACCOUNTABILITY "It's not what is expected that get's done, it is what is inspected."(Gary Sweeten)</p>
<p>AFFIRMATION Words of encouragement and appreciation with a pat on the back ignite the spirit.</p>	<p>SUPPORT The security of knowing you have one to whom you can turn for help and/or mentoring is imperative.</p>	<p>FELLOWSHIP The community which ministry creates must come together for sharing, growth and renewing.</p>
<p>COMMUNICATION The ministry cannot be strong without frequent verbal and printed contact.</p>	<p>EVALUATION Taking time to see how the ministry is doing will keep it moving forward.</p>	<p>MAINTENANCE This is the nuts and bolts of day-to-day office and administrative work.</p>

AXIOM 50

COMMISSION THEM!

On Sunday morning, April 29, we commissioned another group of newly equipped Lay Pastors in Hope Presbyterian Church. The Elders laid hands on them while Co-Pastor Bob Dickson prayed for each one individually as he also laid his hands on them. This rite goes back at least as far as Moses, "...and he (Eleazer the Priest) laid his hands upon him (Joshua) and commissioned him as the Lord directed through Moses" (Numbers 27:23).

The word "**Commission**", from the Hebrew word *Tsawvau*, means "**Appoint**", "**Charge**", "**Send with Command**". The Oxford Dictionary defines it, "The giving of authority to someone to perform a certain task." Pastoring is of such a high order in the church that the people who do it need to be formally identified, legitimized and authorized publicly.

The commissioning act does two things. **First**, it inwardly confirms God's call to the lay person, giving inner assurance and strength for Spirit-filled ministry. **Second**, It authorizes the ministry. By this act the church's spiritual leader(s) opens the hearts and homes of people to the unique caring ministry of fellow and sister members. To set lay people apart by prayer and laying hands on them makes their pastoring care ministry authentic, both to those giving it, and to those receiving it.

Look at the commissioning ceremony in Numbers 27.

V. 17 The Need for Care, "That the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep which has no shepherd".

V. 18 Chosen by The Lord. "The Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua.....and lay your hand upon him.'
"

V. 19 Public Ceremony, "Cause him to stand before Eleazer the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight."

V. 20 Give Authority, "You shall invest him with some of your authority."

V.V. 22 & 23 The Ceremony, "He took Joshua and caused him to stand before Eleazer the Priest and the whole congregation, and he laid his hands upon and commissioned him...."

The ritual of setting people apart for special ministry continued on through the history of Israel into the church. The Apostles set apart "seven men of good repute" (the first Deacons) for their special assignment by prayer and laying their hands on them. Paul reminded youthful Timothy to remember the occasion "When the council of Elders laid their hands on him." Timothy's gift for pastoral care appears to be related in some definite way to the ceremony.

John Wesley who opened the preaching ministry to scores of lay people identified four stages to their preparation:

1. The Call
2. The Equipping
3. The Commissioning
4. The "Coming Out" (Beginning of Ministry).

It is obvious that he placed great importance on publicly setting them apart to exercise their unique gift and to fulfill God's call to them.

Commissioning called, gifted and equipped lay pastors does the same for them and for the people they serve. To not publicly authenticate their ministry by a meaningful ceremony may indicate that the church does not credit their ministry with the high importance it deserves. It may indicate that the spiritual leaders do not yet accept lay pastoral care as equally authentic to their pastoral care. They are not yet full participants in the "Second Reformation", the Church giving the ministry to the people.

In conclusion, setting aside lay people by prayer and the laying on of hands in the presence of the congregation makes effective pastoral care possible because it **(1) confirms their call, (2) acknowledges their gift, and (3) authenticates their ministry.** A suggested commissioning ceremony is found on page 243 of *'CAN THE PASTOR DO IT ALONE?'*

AXIOM 51

IDLE'S INSIGHTS

Pastor Steven D. Idle, Kirkwood Road Christian Church, Louis, MO wrote this article for their March 1990 Church paper. Mel Steinbron gave the Equipping Seminar March 9-11 for their first lay pastors with the assistance of one of Hope Presbyterian lay pastors, a professional writer, John Prin).

In yesterday's sermon I shared with you an exciting new concept for training and equipping "**lay pastors**" to better handle the growing numbers of people and needs we have here at KRCC. I know for many of you the idea was totally new and maybe even a little "radical."

Today I'd like to share my reasons for wanting a "**Lay Pastors**" ministry at KRCC;

1. It's Biblical (cf. Ex.18, Eph.4)
2. It's a reflection of Christ - serving others (Mt. 20:26).
3. It "de-centralizes" ministry. That's the N.T. pattern (Eph. 4:11-13).
4. It will produce greater harmony and joy within the body.
5. It will aid in the numerical as well as spiritual growth of the body.
6. It acknowledges and encourages the giftedness of others (Rom. 12:6-8).
7. My gifts are not adequate for the growing load of pastoral work.
8. Time restraints prohibit the effectiveness of the "traditional ministry" model. (i.e. "We pay you to do this work!")
9. It will help prevent many of our members from "falling through the cracks" of a growing church.
10. Placing the entire burden of shepherding on just a few is not fair - to them or the people.
11. It will free up more time for prayer and planning for leadership.
12. People want to care for others. We must provide the training and opportunities to do so.

Please be in prayer about this! Don't reject it immediately because it challenges the "traditional model". Remember our goal: 125 "**Lay Pastors**" by the year 2000!

AXIOM 52

CARE-GIVER & CURE-GIVER

One Day Service! One Hour File Developing! Drive thru Fast food! That is the pace our society is accustomed to. One day service will have our care repaired and ready to travel again. There is no need to wait two to three weeks to enjoy photos after mailing a film in, and hunger can be fixed by a quick drive thru Hardness.

At our recent Care Ministry seminar, Jane Brown, lay care ministry director at Meredith Drive Reformed Church, shared with us a message of encouragement concerning the Caregiver verses the Curegiver. The thought I share with you now are derived from her message and/or the book, "Christian Caregiving, a Way of Life" by Kenneth C. Haugk.

We, as caregiver, must not expect to "fix" the problems of those for whom we care with drive-true, one hour, or one day speed. In fact, we must realize it is not our responsibility to "fix" anything no matter no matter how badly we want to. Our job is simply to care, to plant a seed, to be concerned, AND to bring that concern to God.

CHRISTIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CARE
GOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CURE

Realizing that God is the curegiver, we are freed from worry and false expectations. Demands on both ourselves and the care receiver are diminished. Instead, time and energy can be spent developing trust and communicating acceptance and love.

Trusting God to provide results means freedom for us, yet not license to stop caring. Ceasing to worry about results does not entitle us to provide careless care. We plant the seed, God provides the growth. Leave the one day service to Mr. Goodwrence, and the curegiving to God. Realizing that God is the curegiver, we are freer to accept the responsibility to care.

AXIOM 53

A PEOPLE POND?

Lay Pastors, if you can locate your people on the "POND" you will be better able to pastor them. You will know how to (1) Pray for them. (2) Talk with them and (3) Relate to them.

hard core

soft core

no core

drop-outs (indifferent, really fringe people)

HARD CORE MEMBERS - Those individuals who are at the very center of congregational life. They are involved in ministry, regular in worship and participate in one or more of the fellowship or study groups. They feel necessary to the life of the church.

SOFT CORE MEMBERS-Those individuals who are frequently at worship, do what they can, get to some meetings if it is possible and help when convenient. They feel good about their involvement.

NO CORE MEMBERS - Those individuals who attend worship rarely, at Christmas, Baptisms and perhaps a special event. They identify themselves as members of the congregation, but do not feel they need to be a part of its mission and fellowship.

OTHERS - Those who have dropped out and have no intention for becoming active in any way, but would feel hurt if dropped from the membership roll or upset if there were no church.

EXERCISE

1. Draw a "pond". Write the names of your people on it according to their ripple.
2. What do you think accounts for their being in their ripple?
3. What moves a person from one ripple to another, either in or out?
4. How should your praying be affected by this info?
Relationship? Focus of conversation?

AXIOM 54

No fruit without labor

"Whistle while you work." Is the emphasis on "whistle" or "work?" Whistling without working gets nothing done. Working without whistling may be boring, but something gets done.

How about, "You will eat the fruit of your labor." (Ps. 128:2) Would you emphasize "fruit" or "labor?" As every gardener knows, there is no fruit without labor.

We all want our lay pastoral care ministries to bear fruit, right? We want an adequate number of people of doing the ministry so all of our numbers are loved and cared for.

But, it isn't going to happen without **work!** Just plain work! God provides the gifts; we provide **training**. God provides the time; we provide **priorities**. God has given the ministry to us; we provide the **structure** for doing it. God is calling people to minister; we provide the **strategy** for alerting them to His call.

Ah! How sweet the fruit! And how steady the work! You have heard, "Many hands make light work." The "many hands" are what we call our leadership group." Nine of us meet twice a month to manage the Lay Pastors Ministry here at Hope Presbyterian Church.

We are enjoying the fruit while obediently doing the work. We are depending on God's provisions. He is depending on our work. The only limitation on the amount of fruit is the amount and quality of our work. This is an awesome thought.

AXIOM 55

From "Down Under"

The Rev. Ron Johnson, Parish of Bulli, N.S.W., Australia attended Conference '90 in Montgomery last March. The following experts are from an article he wrote upon his return to Australia which appeared in the May 18th issue of Australia's National Anglican Weekly, CHURCH SCENE.

"About two years ago I was greeting people after the morning service when the realization hit me that I was shaking hands with a lady I hadn't noticed for a week or two. Foolishly I asked whether she had been on holiday. Her reply was: "No, I haven't been on holiday. I've just spent six weeks in the hospital."

"Here was a lady who had not been sighted for six weeks and on had known she was ill, nor had anyone missed her!"

"Were we an uncaring church? No, I don't think so. In fact many members are very aware of people's needs and are very faithful in doing what they can to help each other."

"But people were still falling through the cracks!"

"We conducted a little survey, and members of the congregation were able to think of scores of former members who had just appeared from sight. We had made a least three discoveries:

1. That the crisis for pastoral care in the congregation far exceeded our knowledge of them.
2. The the traditional method of trying to care for church members, that is, with the rector or curate making daily rounds like milk man, just does not work.
3. That unless a person is in some kind of trouble there is little in the way of pastoral care happening for the average church member,

and that pastoral care in non-crisis times is just as important as in times of crisis.

"Semebody once said to their preacher after his sermon, 'You're pretty good at telling us what to do, but not so good at telling us how to do it.'"

"It is with this in mind that our church is that our church is indebted to Dr. Melvin Steinbron, who in his book, CAN THE PASTOR DO IT ALONE?, has provided structure we so desperately needed to enable us to better 'tend the flock of god, which is under your charge'." (1 Peter 5:2)

"In the parish of St. Augustine's, Bullie and St. Paul's Woonona, we have implemented the Lay Pastors Ministry model as set in the book and have found it to be a very exciting ministry indeed,"

"We have so far equipped 40 people in basic skills of pastoring, and we are currently running our second series of equipping seminars. Our goal is to strengthen and encourage one another in the faith by providing pastoral care for every member of our church."

Note: Ron Johnson is conducting Equipping Seminars in Australia to help churches get the Lay Pastors Ministry started.

AXIOM 56

PUSHING OR FOLLOWING

Can you believe that I learned something about Pastoral Care while mowing my lawn?

Two weeks ago, I noticed that after cutting the grass, I had a sore arm and shoulder. While cutting this week I happened to notice that in my haste to get it cut, I inadvertently was trying to push the power mower instead of just following it.

I have also tried "pushing" a Care Ministry program. Pushing people. Pushing the Lord. And it leaves you feeling frustrated, disappointed, tired and unfulfilled.

There is a better way - "following". Following the Lord! Following His leading! Letting Him do the work through you! Letting Him lead you through people! People like Dr. Melvin. Melvin Steinbron!

I found his book, CAN THE PASTOR DO IT ALONE? just a few days leaving Clearwater, Florida to become the Minister of Congregational Care at third Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa.

What a find! It provided a model for pastoral care of a congregation by lay people. It not only gave a blueprint, but also the nuts and bolts to do it. It cam our of years of experience by Mel while leading the dynamic Pastoral Care program at college Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio.

I followed it as a Beginning Resource for setting up a systematic pastoral care program. It was so helpful in providing guidelines for structure and organization, for recruiting and training, and for getting off to a good start.

Now, I am following it as a Continuing Reference in the day to day

operation of our Care Ministry. Take for example, last night's meeting of our Care Team, the sponsoring group that supervised our program. We went over Chapter 5, "What a Lay Pastor Does", discussing how the members of the Care Team "have two roles: (1) To pastor and(2) To provide pastoral supervision" (p. 71) to the Lay Pastors under them. We also discussed the meaning and importance of "E" -Example - in the acrostic P.A.C.E. so that in August they may discuss it with the Lay Pastors they supervise. We have found that emphasizing a different letter each month helps Lay Shepherds be informed, keeps ministry focused and develops unity.

I must admit it, that it's natural for me to want to be "pushing". However I'm gradually learning that "following" is better. I'm grateful to Mel for the help he has given me through his book, but most of all through his example.

-Pastor Jim Van Roekel, Third Reformed Church, Pella, Iowa

AXIOM 57

Can the Author do it alone?

Can the one who wrote the book entitled Can the pastor do it alone? to aid in developing a lay pastoring ministry -- can he do it alone?

And, does the Body in the local church need the larger Body? What began rather modestly in Cincinnati less than two decades ago address both of these questions.

It had a rather unpretentious origin -- the development of a lay pastoring ministry at College Hill Presbyterian Church by Dr. Mel Steinbron that has now expanded into international proportions. As a vision that lay people grew in Mel's heart, he proved it by developing a working strategy for equipping lay people to pastor. As pastor and lay people from other churches learned of the developing lay pastoring ministry in College Hill, they began to beat a path to the door requesting assistance and training for their lay pastors ministry. A better "mousetrap" had been discovered!

Such a critical need was being addressed that in 1986 Regal Books asked Dr. Steinbron to write a book. It was published under the title, Can the Pastor Do It Alone? Modest beginning!

Good news, however, cannot be contained! There a growing awareness that other churches needed to learn from the model of lay pastoring at College Hill, and this pioneering church desired to learn from other churches as well. Thus, the first Consultation on Lay Pastoring was held in Cincinnati in 1984 with about 25 attending. the pastor could not do it alone!

Just as a taste of the goodness of Christ causes a hunger for more (Phil. 3:10), the first Consultation created a desire for more help in lay pastor equipping and resources. Four successive Consultations indicated that we not only needed to learn from Mel Steinbron but many others had experience and wisdom to share as well. God seemed to be unleashing the laity for ministry -- the theme of the 1989 Consultation. The goals of the consultation were stated in only three words -- To know, Grow and Glow, but encompassed far-reaching objectives for pastors and lay people alike. It was

obvious the pastor could not do it alone!

But could the author do it alone? Was this only a private vision by a man, Mel Steinbron? And what about the churches. Are spirituals gifts exercised toward the whole church and do we -- should we -- expect of any kind of relationship with or commitment to each other as churches?

Within less than half a decade, the vision of providing equipping and support to other churches by Mel and begun to be shared and owned by others. A Consultation Planning Task Force worked along with Mel to plan each successive consultation. After all, could the author do it alone?

And, although it has not included a subscription fee or formal covenant agreement, a number of pastors and churches by their interest, participation and vision for lay pastoring have become a part of an informal lay pastoring network. Not only does the quarterly "Network News" edited by Mel provide invaluable resources ideas, information and training, it tends to united and bind us in common bonds of labor for Christ.

But to quote Mel's quote of someone else (a good reason to question this writer's editorial credentials!), "What do you do with a baby elephant?" Answer -- "Let it grow up!" Thus the Lay Pastors' Ministry Network is growing from infancy toward adolescence.

That which at one time was primarily a consultation in which participant basically conferred with each other has now become a conference because we have something to offer: vision, experience, equipping. From the eight workshops in the first Consultation, we expanded to included twenty-two equipping seminars of very high quality in the 1990 Conference.

But, can the author do it alone? Can a Body (individual church) do it alone?

Additional growing steps (and pains?) were taken at Montgomery last spring when a Network Leadership Team was formed to stand with mel, share his vision and assume leadership responsibilities. Although steps were a little tenuous and cautious, a mission statement was adopted, and a Network Leadership Team of 15 members was proposed, with a steering committee appointed to begin plans for the 1991 International Conference to be held in

Grand Rapids. Old men are dreaming dreams; younger men are developing a vision; and both men and women are sensing the Spirit's presence. There is a growing conviction that God is in the Lay Pastors' Ministry Network and that it is greater than any one of us or all of us combined.

Where will the Lay Pastors Ministry Network go from here? Only God knows for certain. But, answers to our earlier questions have been somewhat illuminated. Can the author do it alone? Does a Body (local church) need the Body. What do you think?

Vernon F. Holstad, Network Co-Coordinator

AXIOM 58

Your Lay pastors Meeting

The meetings of your lay pastors have a depth greater than just "an important meeting." They are what Loren Mead calls in Action Information "the return from mission." Each meeting is a movement back from mission to community. It is in the familiar community that each lay pastor can experience encouragement, soul nurture and mutual support.

The community of lay pastors needs to hear how god's work has been going in their corner of the battle. Together they can ameliorate the hardship, share the successes and celebrate the ministry.

What the lay pastors have done is the stuff of ministry. To be together, reviewing, and reflecting will send them into their pastoral mission with new resolve, deep commitment and sharp insight.

What, then, are the goals of this meeting of lay pastors? They are four:

1. To worship the Lord who calls us to "Tend the flock";
2. To review and reflect on their ministry by verbally sharing individual experiences, good and bad;
3. To be further equipped for more effective ministry; and
4. To celebrate the ministry so as to be affirmed, encouraged, and renewed in spirit.

AXIOM 59

Calling Forth

Many persons want to give themselves to those tasks or ministries with will make a difference in people's lives and at the same time utilize eir gifts.

According to research carried out in 1990 by Winona Research, Inc. for the Volunteers Center of the United Way of the Minneapolis Area:

1. 29% of the inactive volunteers and 22% of non-volunteers indicated interested in becoming involved.
2. 39% current volunteers expressed a willingness to increase their hourly commitment.
3. Barriers to volunteering include not being asked.
4. Employer encouragement and face recruitment can encourage participation.
5. 50% of the current volunteers became involved because they were asked by someone they know or by the organization.
6. Helping others was the primary reason for volunteering.
7. 90% of the current volunteers indicated satisfaction with their involvement.

The research includes these recommendations:

- a. All involvement should stress the specific difference an individual volunteer is making.
- b. People should be personally asked to be volunteers whenever possible.
- c. A major effort is to be launched to increase volunteer participation.

Implications of this research for the Lay Pastors Ministry:

1. Contact people not already involved in a ministry in the church to consider being Lay Pastors. (1 & 3)

2. Request current Lay Pastors to consider adding to their pastor-group (2)

3. Contacting people personally (face to face) is the most effective way of calling people forth. (4 & 5) (b)

4. Challenge potential Lay Pastors with the opportunity this ministry provides to help others (6)

5. Create way to help Lay pastors be satisfied with what they do. (7) (a)

6. Develop action strategy for "calling forth" which incorporates the research findings and the implications. (c)

NOTE: The numbers and letters in parenthesis refer to the respective research findings and recommendations above.

AXIOM 60

Tips to help bereaved people

At some time all lay pastoral care givers will need to minister to people who have lost loved ones to death. These gestures will help them to be a blessing from God("love with skin on") at a very critical time:

1. Call the deceased person by name. They refer to them by name and will appreciate others doing so.
2. Accept their grief rather than asking them to deny it. Say things such as,"I feel awful. This is a severe loss to you," rather than, "This was meant to be."
3. Listen instead of trying to offer advice. People want to talk about their loved one and their loss. Ask, "Could you tell me more about her?"
4. Attend the funeral or memorial service and make a point to say a few words to them, Assure them of your prayers.
5. Don't expect them to get over their loss quickly. This death will affect them in diminishing degrees through their life time. Their need for your attention will taper off over the months.
6. Remember them on the anniversaries of the death. In case of a miscarriage, remember them on the first anniversary of their loss.

AXIOM 61

What do I need to keep me in the ministry

This question has been asked as a part of many equipping seminars. The answers are grist for the mill of those of you who plan the meetings of your lay pastoral caregivers. Here are some of the common needs. If you will design your meetings with these needs in mind, you will be motivating your people in the ways that will keep them in the ministry.

1. Intense love for God.
2. Love for people.
3. True commitment to god and His church.
4. Encouragement from others once in a while.
5. Steadfast in the study of God's word.
6. A strong sense of accountability.
7. A feeling of being needed.
8. A feeling that I (with God's help) can help make a positive change in someone's life.
9. A feeling that I have led someone to depend on God for their problems.
10. Consistent prayer for the flock.
11. Hearing other lay pastor's experiences.
12. Being appreciated.
13. A servant's heart to serve the Lord.
14. Being pastored by others.
15. Seeing results of my efforts.

AXIOM 62

Lay Pastoral Problem Sources

There are five primary sources for all lay pastoral ministry problems. As cancer is treated most successfully at its primary location, so ministry ailments are most successfully dealt with at their primary source. Moses' resistance to God's call, recorded in Exodus 3 and 4, exposes the five primary sources of all ministry problems.

1. **Self Image** "who am I...?" (Ex. 3:11)
2. **Authority** "Who sent you...?" (Ex. 3:13)
3. **Acceptance** "They will not believe me or listen to me"
(Ex. 4:1)
4. **Gifts** "I am not eloquent...I am slow of speech and tongue."
(Ex. 4:10)
5. **Volition** "Oh, my Lord, send, I pray, some other person."
(Ex. 4:13)

God has an answer for every resistance:

1. **Self Image** "I will be with you." (Ex. 3:12)
2. **Authority** "I have sent you." (Ex. 3:14)
3. **Acceptance** "They will believe you." (Ex. 4:8)
4. **Gifts** "I will teach you." (Ex. 4:12)
5. **Volition** "The anger of the Lord was kindled." (Ex. 4:14)

All five sources are related to hearing God: "I have seen the affliction of my people. I have come down to deliver them....come, I will send you." (Ex. 3:1-10). The problems start with the word "But" (Ex. 3:11)

AXIOM 63

What your ministry may need at this point

When a lay pastoral care ministry has been on line for some time, like other endeavor with a human dimension, it may need a "shot in the arm." One very common problem churches around the country experience with a mature ministry is a loss of significance. It's priority in the lives of many doing the ministry has slipped.

If the ministry in your church shows signs of weariness, here are some things it may need at this point:

1. **RE-LEGITIMIZING** - The top pastoral leadership legitimized the ministry at its beginning with special attention and public support. Your people doing the ministry need to know from the spiritual leaders that what they are doing is important to them and continue to have their approval. Here are some things they can do to re-legitimize your ministry:

- a. Preach on it or refer to it in sermons.
- b. Visit the regularly lay pastors meeting.
- c. Write articles for the church paper
- d. Be available to the lay pastors to deal with their personal or ministry problems.
- e. write letters or notes to individuals lay pastors at appropriate times to affirm them.

2. **RE-ENFORCE SIGNIFICANCE** - Pastoral vitality is reduced in proportion to the loss of significance. Whenever lay pastors begin to procrastinate, to become careless in fulfilling their commitments, and give excuses for not making their contacts and/or not turning in their reports you can know that the probable cause is loss of significance. The ministry is no longer as important to them as it once was. Here are some things you can do:

- a. Request the pastor to do one or more of the stimulating things suggested above.
- b. Arrange for a conference between one or more of the Ministry Leadership group members and individual lay pastors to talk about
 - (1) how their pastoral ministry is going,
 - (2) how they are feeling about it now, and
 - (3) how their commitment might have changed since they started.Where this has been done, most of the people were ready to renew their commitment.
- c. At a regular lay pastors meeting, review the Biblical basis for this

ministry, the original vision which called it forth, and the continuing need for it in your church. Conclude the meeting with a candle light ceremony in which all have the opportunity to share what is in their heart.

d. Have an outside person who knows the lay pastors ministry and its value speak to your people and call them to renewal of their commitment.

e. Have a ministry celebration banquet or a retreat. Call for a renewal of their commitment at the end.

3. RE-FOCUS ON THE BASICS - As with diet and exercise, it is necessary to get back to the basics of the lay pastoral care ministry often. The four leading basics which you will do well to creatively put before your people are:

a. **Calling** - It is imperative that pastoral caregivers have a continuing heightened beliefs that they are giving themselves to a service God wants them to be doing. This is a calling regardless of how they think of it.

b. **Accountability** - Everyone needs to be held accountable. "We need to inspect what we expect." Report, pastoral supervision, and forms of accountability. don't forget the positive side of accountability. It makes affirmation, commendation and a pat on the back possible. Even Mark Twain said he could live for two months on a good pat on the back.

c. **Koinonia** - The lay pastors need to be drawn into fellowship with one another. One of the most effective motivational principles is peer relationships. Provide all opportunities fro the bonding of their lives you can. It will pay off in morale, loyalty, enthusiasm and joyful ministry.

d. **Equipping** - Personal and ministry growth turns people on to what they are doing more than most extrinsic efforts. There is a need for continuing equipping. Providing new menus of equipping from time to time will give the exhilaration of growth plus more confident and comfortable pastoring activity.

The conclusion is that what we are talking about here is nothing more than **support** and **motivation**, two of the bread and butter components of managing a lay pastoral care ministry. These suggestions may salvage a faltering ministry and revitalize a tired one.

AXIOM 64

A Smile

A smile costs nothing but gives much; It enriches those who receive it without making poorer those who give it.

It takes a moment, but the memory of it can last forever.

None is so rich or so mighty that he can get along without it.

And none is so poor but that he can be made rich by it.

A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in business, and is the countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, it is nature's best antidote for trouble.

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen.

For it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours, as none needs a smile as much as he who has no more to give.

(Bob Shrier Copied from "Charlies Call" Second Presbyterian Church Kansas City, MO)

AXIOM 65

How would you respond?

The person has received the letter informing them that you are now their Lay Pastor. You are phoning them to arrange for the First Visit. How should you respond to each conversation?

No. 1 Member: "I've been waiting for your call. When can we get together?"

No. 2 Member: "I don't remember getting a letter. What is this all about?"

No. 3 Member: "We're going to be away for the next 3 months."

No. 4 Member: "I don't really need a Lay Pastor. I have my family and friends as a support group."

No. 5 Member: "I don't know if I need a Lay Pastor. I am an officer and involved in others ways in the church. Perhaps you should give your attention to someone needing you."

No. 6 Member: "Yes, I received the letter, but I need to know more about that you are doing."

No. 7 Member: "Hello. Thank you for calling. We are not available at this time to answer your call. Please leave your message after the beep."

No. 8 Member: "We don't go to Hope Church any more."

NOTE: The above form is for use at a Equipping Seminar or Lay Pastors Meeting.

AXIOM 66

Reflections of a Ministry Leader

At lunch last spring, after I had resigned from the Shepherd Ministry at my church, Mel Steinbron asked me if I would write an article on my reflections of the ministry during those five years. I would like to briefly discuss three key elements. They include: (1) Call or commitment of the laity; (2) Focusing on relationships; and (3) Active and visible support from the Senior Minister.

(1) I believe lay ministers and the leadership team need to feel that God is calling them into this ministry to serve His people. Not everyone has the gifts for lay ministry, and pressuring people to become involved would not be a wise thing to do. I personally felt called or convicted by God to become involved in the Shepherd Ministry at our church. I did not understand that the call was for a leadership position at first, but within time I saw there God was leading me. God instilled an inner drive and motivation within me to get this ministry off the ground. God was leading and I was following. I had a wonderful and hard-working committee and we spent hours together planning, organizing and taking care of administrative details.

2) However, the details of the program must never become more important than the people involved in the ministry. Building relationships with the committee or support team is crucial to the survival of the ministry. These are the people who must own then ministry.

3) While all of this is very important, the most significant stabilizing element is the visible and active involvement of the Senior Minister. Without adequate support from the top, the ministry will not get the recognition and acceptance from the congregation that is needed for the longevity of this ministry. While Associate Ministers, seminary students and lay members can all help and work together, they do not have the leadership clout that is necessary to stabilize and promote this ministry.

One final word: If the Shepherd Ministry is ever truly going to be successful, the congregation must "buy into" the need for and the importance of the ministry in their church. They must also be willing to be part of the ministry.

(Sue Mearkle, Christ Presbyterian Church, Edina, MN)

AXIOM 67

The Spirit of LPM

I spend some of my time with the Lord each morning reading Scripture. Right now I am reading John to discover anew what Jesus was really like so that I might follow him better and be more like him.

The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry, since it is so much on my mind and in my heart, creates a new hermeneutics as I read. In other words, I am seeing Scripture through ministry-coloured glasses. One example: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love." (Jn 13:1)

Here is what I am seeing:

1) He loved "his own". While loving the world, he loves his own in a very special way. Your Lay Pastoral Care Ministry, spent on your remember, is his way of loving his people. "Tend the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:3)

2) He showed them "the full extent of his love." Lay pastors can ponder how Jesus would have them to do this. He did it by washing their feet, and act seen and felt.

I invited you to lead your people in a ministry-tinted reading of John 13.

AXIOM 68

On visiting the sick

Ever visit in a hospital? Most of you have, and those visits are almost always appreciated. Even though I'm involved daily in a Medical Center, I'm constantly learning I the journey toward excellence. One who has helped me in this journey is Rev. Glenn S. Johnson, Director of Chaplaincy Services at Swedish Hospital in Rockford, Illinois. He has suggested some helpful questions to ask yourself before, during, and after such visits:

1. Whose needs am I meeting? Watch for this! Some may visit because it meets their own needs of earning self esteem, providing an opportunity of imposing one's views on a "captive audience", satisfying curiosity, or solving one's own problems. The focus should be on the patient rather than on oneself.

2. What can I be to the patient? Effective helpers are those having a non-possessive warmth, empathy, and genuineness. What you say isn't as important as who you are. The very fact that you're there show that you care.

3. What of my own health, physically/emotionally? We're all germ carries, and should be sensitive to patients in isolation.

4. Is there a sign on the door? The medical staff puts it there to inform you of any cautions in visiting this person.

5. Am I a good listener? Listening is tougher than you think, but it's your best tool in the kit bag of ministry to the ill. Give the person your undivided attention, and listen for feelings between the word expressed. It'll make you a better care giver.

6. What to say or avoid saying? Don't ask details about physical problems. They will volunteer that on their own if they want to.

7. Should I touch the patient? No when the patient is sleeping, or has any infectious disease. Yes, discreetly, to demonstrate caring non-verbally. Jesus did it at appropriate times with great healing benefit.

AXIOM 69

Where did you learn to care?

by Don Hill(Frazer UMC, Alabama)

Many cynics have suggested that people don't care as much as they once did. Then there are others who say that people care too much. In many cases it is obvious they care too much about themselves. Where did caring come from? Was it learned? Can it be taught?

Many behavioral scientists feel that basic caring was probably learned at a very early age. In observing children seem to have a greater sense for caring than others. A closer examination showed that pre-schoolers with younger siblings tended to be better care-givers than those without younger siblings. It was also observed that those who had pets and those that played with toys that promote caring(e.g. dolls, stuffed animals, etc.)were better at showing care as a behavioral attribute.

Caring is a life-long process. If we did not experience it in childhood, it is never too late to learn. Caring is basic to the Christian experience. Throughout the Bible we are encouraged to care for others as Christ cares for us. The fundamental characteristic of a lay minister's program is that of care for others. Paul's words to the Galatians in chapter 6 verse 2 could not be more appropriate for any group than for lay ministers: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." To do this is not always convenient with our schedules or perhaps not even consistent with our personalities. But the more we practice it the more permanent it becomes. Whether we learned to care in childhood or not, it is not too late to learn it now.

(from THE PACER, the Frazer Lay Minister newsletter)

AXIOM 70

HANG IN THERE!

Are you weary? Weary of being a caregiver? The dictionary defines weary a "having one's patience, tolerance, or liking, exhausted; usually with of; as, weary of reading."

The Apostle Paul knew what it meant to be weary. He knew also the people in the church get weary. That's why he wrote these words of encouragement. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

(Galatians 6:9-10)

I think we all become weary at one time or another. How can we overcome being weary? The seminar and the message by Rev. Gary Vande Kamp at the November Care Ministry Weekend, on the theme "Discover Your Ministry", gave me some suggestions. Here are a few ways to overcome:

1. By seeing ourselves as partners in the Care Ministry, just as important as each player on a basketball team. Every caregiver counts.
2. By learning more skills for Christian helping through seminars and personal study. As we see and listen to what others are doing, it helps us to become more effective.
3. By growing in confidence and feelings of self-worth as we use the gifts God has given us to help care for others.
4. By experiencing the joy and satisfaction that comes from caring for the needs of other people.
5. By knowing that you follow Christ's example and do what he wants.

Remember, if we hang in there and do not give up, we will follow reap a harvest. That's a guarantee from God!

AXIOM 71

Ministry of Encouragement

"Therefore, encourage one another....." - I Thessalonians 5:11.

The acronym PAL was given at a seminar for the Lay Shepherds at Third Reformed Church at Pella, Iowa by the visiting speaker. Let it challenge you to flesh it out your meetings.

P - presence

Lay Pastoral care is a ministry of presence. You need personal contact to build the kind of relationship in which effective caring can happen.

A - acceptance

If the one being cared for does not feel accepted by the caregiver, not much care can be given. Reluctance, judgementalism, and an unsmiling face limit acceptance.

L - listening

Let them control the conversation. If we impose our agenda on them they will know we are only interested in ourselves. Good PALS not only listen, but encourage their people to continue talking about what they want to talk about.

AXIOM 72

Dream Big -The Henrietta Mears Story

by Earl Roe, Regal Books, 1990

Some of the gleaning from this book whet one's appetite to read it all. The principles which flow from the life of this remarkably creative Christian leader are powerfully applicable to our lay pastoral care ministries.

1. Your pupils are not bowels to be filled, but torches to be lighted.
2. She wanted her teachers to instruct their pupils to "Know", "Feel", "Do".
3. She never sought to build a bigger Sunday School, but always a better Sunday School.
4. Her secret: Energy and Excellence!
5. She had three qualifications she required of teachers:
 - a. An evident and productive relationship with Jesus Christ;
 - b. A willingness to spend hours in preparation and in training;
 - c. A desire to model christian living as well as to read God's word.
6. She never blamed youth for not going to church, but examined the program to see why it failed to attract them.
7. "Dream Big!" was always her motto.
8. "The amazing thing about love is the more you love others the more they will love you."
9. Every individual was important to Henriette. She had the gift of making each person feel essential.
10. In conversation with someone she always tried to discover what interested the person with whom she was talking.
11. "In this city(Hollywood), know for its moral corruption and superficiality, her life was an open window on the holiness of God, through which many frustrated souls saw beyond the empty materialism of their own empty lives. To them she represented the highest and the best of christian virtues."

AXIOM 73

The Disciple-Making pastor

by Bill Hull, Revell, 1988

These basic principles, ideas and actions for the Lay Pastoral Ministry are copied from or stimulated by this book.

1. The nature of this ministry requires a long-term commitment. Impatience and immediate results cannot be the test of its validity and success. Both the lay pastor and those being pastored need time to grow in giving and receiving pastoral care. Both the giver and receiver are novices in their role. but, since Christ commands it, we must do it and settle in for the long haul.

2. The (senior) pastor must possess convictions concerning lay pastoral care and (a) Preach it from the pulpit, (b) write about it in the church newsletter, and (c) model it by relinquishing pastoral care to equipped and commissioned lay people.

3. The need for this ministry must be seen as critical. If it is not believed to be critically needed, it will not be significant enough in the minds of those doing it to sustain the initial momentum and will succumb to procrastination and default. The lay people will give it a progressively lower priority and will begin to replace it by other worthwhile activities. Describe and document the need. Then challenge the lay pastors and ministry leaders by asking if the need can be met some other way.

4. Pastoring being inaccessible to the congregation will not work. "Either the pastor or recognized designees must be available..." Other - psychologists, salesmen, financial planners, and the like - will be more accessible. "The church must do the same or gain the image of aloofness."

5. People are becoming more "cause-driven". Therefore, establish congregational care as a "cause". Why it is needed and what it will do:

- a. Reach lonely and neglected people.
- b. Build a relationship for mutual enrichment.
- c. Encourage people in their spiritual growth, use of the church, application of Christian principles to personal needs, work, school and life in general.
- d. Be proactive in "nipping" potential crisis in the bud.
- e. Intervene in serious problems- family, stress, depression, employment, etc.
- f. Celebrate significant events with people, therefore bringing the church

into their lives at significant junctures - birthday, anniversary, graduations, births, baptism, job promotions or new job, etc.

g. Mutual support in Christian living. (Buddy system or prayer partner)

6. Communication with the membership is imperative. Since Americans will be more and more used to receiving persuasive communications, the church must use effective communication both to (a) enlist people into the lay pastoral corps, and (b) create a context favorable to accepting pastoral care from lay people. Such communication must acknowledge:

- a. their personal background;
- b. their experiences; and,
- c. their interests.

It is recommended that a professional be involved (either volunteer or paid) in creating informative and persuasive materials.

AXIOM 74

Lay Ministers support desert shield families

The Lay Ministers at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, AL have set up a support structure for families who have relatives involved in the Gulf Crisis. All "Desert Shield Families" are being cared for by a Lay Minister through daily prayer, available, and frequent contact during this anxious time.

A dinner was given by the lay Ministries for all Desert Shield Families on January 12. This gave them an opportunity to meet other people who have relatives in the same units in Saudi Arabia. On the evening of January 15, our Senior Pastor, John Mathison, visited in the homes of several of these families providing additional support and care.

In the last two years since the inception of the Lay Minister Program at Frazer, we have seen God's hand at work meeting needs for members of our congregation. As we look at the speed and ease of assigning 20 families to lay Ministers in the span of a few hours, we are in awe that God would have provided a structure for intensive caring in such a crisis as this. Praise God for the lay Pastor's Movement!!

(-Marie Parma)

AXIOM 75

"I just wish someone would hug me!"

The little girl lingered in the classroom after all the others had left. Reluctantly, with painful heart, she told that her mom was home with a new boyfriend; and she wasn't wanted around. Her dad had a new girlfriend. Her brother was on drugs, and her sister constantly picked at her. She told the teacher, "I just wish someone would hug me!"

Has the Christian community lost its sensitivity to the hurting all around us? More and more in this busy, hurry, hurry world of ours, we seem to say to those hurting, "Be healed," and then we go our merry way.

Dear heart, a warm handshake, a hand laid gently on the shoulder, a quick little hug can give more encouragement than many hours of counseling.

Little girls, little boys, big girls, big boys, men, and women - all need to hear, "I just want you to know that I care about you!"

* * * *

The above clipping from "the Messenger" can be used for the next meeting of your lay pastors in this way:

- 1) Make copies for everyone.
- 2) Divided into groups of three to five.
- 3) Ask them to read the clipping either silently or on read out loud while the others follow on their copy.
- 4) Discuss these questions:
 - a. The little girl had a specific need. Does every person have specific needs of some kind? Do you? What are some kinds of need you have encountered in your flock?
 - b. Has our church lost its sensitivity to people's hurts and needs? Why do you think it has or has not?
 - c. What value is it to a person to hear, "I just want you to know that I care about you."
 - d. What are the implications of this clipping for me in my caring ministry?
- 5) Call the full group together. Debrief by asking some of them to share highlights of their discussion.
- 6) The leader closes this part of the meeting by summarizing the major points and applying them to your ministry.

AXIOM 76

Why Lay Pastors are important

Reason #1 - Church Growth. The churches which will grow in the coming decade will be "pastoral." A church cannot expand its budget enough to be "pastoral" in a comprehensive sense, i.e. meet all the people's pastoral needs. Therefore, it must look beyond ordained, full-time clergy to lay people who have the gifts.

Reason #2 - Individual Fulfillment. Committed people, new or seasoned, are looking for involvement which is significant. As important as board, committee, and other similar tasks are, people are wanting an involvement which changes people's lives.

Reason #3 - Fulfillment of God's charge. We who are responsible for His church have to face up to God's call, "Tend the flock of God!" There is only one way to do this - equip the people of the pew to be pastoral care givers.

Reason #4 - Release the Spiritual Leaders. Moses was released to lead his people more adequately and to give himself to the "larger matters." A common question is, "What will our pastor do if the lay people do the pastoring?" One layman said it rightly, "He can be our spiritual leader." When lay people are using their God-given gift in pastoring, those with the god-given call to spiritual leadership of the congregation will have time to do it.

Reason #5 - Adequate member care. this is the bottom line! And the need is great in our churches.

AXIOM 77

Five steps to solving problems

Got any problem with your ministry? This step-by-step route will help you solve them. One church had fewer than one half of their lay pastors attend the quarterly meeting. The leadership was concerned and followed these steps:

Step #1 Identify, clarify, and describe the problem.

Example: They established the fact that only half of their lay pastors attended the meeting. They were concerned about the implications.

Step #2 Identify the underlying problem(s).

- Example:
- 1) Poor time.
 - 2) Inadequate communication.
 - 3) indifference and apathy.
 - 4) Personal or family time conflicts.
 - 5) Previous meetings not interesting and meaningful.
 - 6) Guilt from not seeing their people.
 - 7) Low-level commitment.
 - 8) Attendance expectation not clear.

Step #3 Determine solution(s).

- Example:
- 1) Personal contact to determine reason(s).
 - 2) Clarify expectations. make sure they know and accept attendance as part of their commitment to the ministry.
 - 3) Plan the best meetings you can, with interest and substance.
 - 4) Accept less than 100% attendance.
 - 5) Be sure the date, place and focus of the meeting is communicated

Step #4 Take action

- Example:
- 1) Phone call to each one prior to meeting.
 - 2) Article in monthly newsletter.
 - 3) Plan and review plans for meeting.
 - 4) Set goal (80% attendance?).

Step #5 Evaluate

Example: The steps were discussed by the leadership group after the next quarterly meeting to determine how effective work was and what else could be done to assure good attendance at the next meeting.

AXIOM 78

How to prevent Lay Leader Burnout

by Roy Oswald, Alban, 1990

The opening words wet your appetite to read on: "How well does your church care for its volunteers? ...All pastors ought to tremble slightly when they ask someone to assume a major role in the parish ... it could mean loss of a sense of fellowship in the parish or a loss of meaning in worship."

Research with 72 lay pastors reveals on in four is experiencing burnout. Oswald calls burnout "the disease of the over-committed." He gives four characteristics of burn-out: 1) Physical and emotional exhaustion -- feeling depleted and spent; 2) Growing cynicism toward others and diminished confidence in others to cooperate or grow; 3) Disillusionment -- loss of idealism -- loss of optimism; 4) self-description -- demeaning one's value to the system, or blaming oneself for the problems one experiences.

Some of the causes of burnout are frustrating meetings, indefinite task description, indefinite terms of office, ineffective or absent evaluation, lack of clear delegation, and failure to express gratitude. Chapter IV fleshes out these causes.

A major alternative to burnout is spiritual renewal. Burnout is less likely to occur when people feel they are being renewed and refreshed spiritually. Our training needs to include learning how to listen to God.

AXIOM 79

Taking Hold of Tomorrow

by Jack W. Hayford, 1989

The author looks at the story of Joshua to show how God works in our futures. God had already provide Israel with the Promised Land. But it remained their responsibility to move forward to actively take hold of what God had already given.

Knowing that God has promised us bright tomorrows, yet still holds us responsible for moving forward and taking hold of what He has in store for us, we can live in peace, hope and assurance that surpasses the world's understanding. Hayford's words about growth are helpful. "This is what growth in Christ is about: "'Growth' is more than merely acquiring a body of information through study, but involves a steady advancement in applying the truth. 'Growth' is never becoming so secure or comfortable in past victories that we become unavailable to move toward new challenges and broader horizons."

His treatment of "submission" is practical. It is not being dominated by another. Christ himself does not want to be our boss. He wants to be our Lord. As "boss" an employer has the right to dictate. As "Lord" Jesus calls us to submission, thereby making it possible for Him to bless us, protect us, prosper us and enrich our lives. Submission makes away for His best to become our blessing.

Since equipping lay people to give pastoral care includes both skills and spirit, this book will equip their spirits.

AXIOM 80

Do you provide intensive care?

by Dr. Synesio Lyra, Jr. Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Florida

The Church of Jesus Christ is identified in Scriptures and elsewhere with manifold symbols or institutions: a bride, a body, an army, a sheepfold. It is also compared with a hospital. In that connection, the minister is viewed as the doctor of the soul, while the members are paramedics, the nurses, the spiritual therapists, and the orderlies. And like any hospital, it must have its intensive care staff.

While any congregation, large or small, provide a measure of care for its members and visitors, the growing need of every church is for intensive care of its constituency. People long for acceptance, for friendship, for genuine love and for many other ingredients the Church has always had to provide, as part of its mission in the world. "The sign of a congregation's capacity to care," wrote James C. Fenhagen, "is not seen in the sensitivity of the clergy, but in the number of people who are being trained and supported in caring for one another."

Although an intensive Care Unit of a regular hospital exercises its expertise in emergency situations, the intensive care we are talking about here must be an ongoing activity among God's People, whether provided within church premises or in the immediate context where people live, work, study or play. The spiritual, emotional and moral advancement of God's children demands greater personal involvement from those they identify as brothers and sisters. Each local congregation needs to determine the best settings for the exercise on intensive care, while providing the necessary training for sensitive individuals who may more fully assume those roles.

As the late John A. Mackay once wrote, "Other religions have their prophets and priests, and even their evangelists, but only the Christian religion has produced an order of shepherds." Fortunately the shepherds need not be limited to ordained clergy; they represent lay men and women unto whom God provides the necessary gifts to insure the lasting impact of their ministry. If you love Christ and have compassion for people, you should consider developing intensive care units in your congregation, making the flock aware of how they may find what you have to offer!

AXIOM 81

How to succeed

Dr. Robert Schuller gave these six autobiographical statements about succeeding at the Institute on Church Leadership last January. You can use these six points to do some significant teaching about the nature of a lay pastoral care ministry. Leave only the blank line where the underlined words appear. Ask the people to fill them in. Then, give them the correct words as you give the teaching. Do not include the explanations in the parenthesis in their copies.

1. "I don't know how to succeed in a hurry."
(It takes time, lots of time.)
2. "I don't know how to succeed alone."
(It takes a team of people.)
3. "I don't know how to succeed painlessly."
(Deny yourself. Take up your cross.)
4. "I don't know how to succeed aimlessly."
(God leads in setting goals and the Spirit gives power.)
5. "I don't know how to succeed permanently."
(Success is temporary. You need to move on.)
6. "I don't know how to succeed without sensitivity to human need."
(Find a need and meet it.)

AXIOM 82

Who can be a lay pastor?

- someone who is **learning** and **growing** in their walk with God.
- someone who is **a good listener and concerned about the feelings of others.**
- someone who is **submissive** to God's will for his/her life.
- someone who really **cares about people and enjoys one-on-one visits.**
- someone who **wants to be available** to help in times of need.
- someone who joyfully **prays** for the concerns of others.
- someone who is **sensitive** to people's hurts and **real** and **genuine** in their sharing.
- someone like **you!**

AXIOM 83

What does "support" mean?

Pastoral staff and ministry leaders are to equip and support those doing the ministry. "Support" is not as specific a concept as "equip". These three figures make it specific:

- 1) SAFETY NET:**
 - Help when need
 - A secure feeling
 - Shared responsibility

- 2) COAT:**
 - Warmth of relationship
 - Protection from cold treatment
 - Comfort of not being alone

- 3) PAT ON BACK:**
 - Affirmation and encouragement
 - Pastoral supervision
 - Articulated satisfaction

AXIOM 84

Having a lay pastors is a "plus" in your life

A person who has the care of a lay pastor has an advantage. Let's look at just one common problem, stress, to see how true this is. Candace Pert, a neuro-pharmacologist with the National Institute of Health says, "Stress puts people at high risk. People who have social support in confronting stress are at an advantage."

Pert gives physiological reasons for this advantage. The exhilaration created by this "social support" triggers the release of certain neuro-peptides into the system. (Depression sets off others.) Neuro-peptides are molecular messengers which link the nervous, immune and endocrine systems. These peptides bind to receptors on a cell, beginning a cascade of biomedical effects. "It's like ringing a doorbell", says Pert. "All kinds of reactions take place inside. The whole metabolism of a cell can be altered."

Lay Pastors are "social support" to their people. They are "plus" in their lives. In the case of a person under stress, the exhilaration caused by love and care release these neuro-peptides into their system, creating an inner state of peacefulness, calm and control.

Neuro-pharmacologists and others professionals may be able to explain some advantages of lay pastoral care in biological or psychological terms, but there has to be may more reasons for the wide range of advantages which only God knows. Without scientific explanation, all He say is, "Tend the flock; bear one another's burden; be slow to speak and quick to listen."

So, lay pastoral care people, just keep on being "love with skin on" to your flock. God will use what you are and what you are doing to give them emotional, social, physical and spiritual advantages. this will happen whether or not anybody ever discovers how it works.

AXIOM 85

Prayer is always be the most important thing

Prayer is and will always be the most important thing we can do to make our lay pastoral care ministry effective, whether our position is lay pastor, ministry leader or clergy. It is significant that **P** is the first letter of **P**ACE.

We are all in favor of prayer, perhaps like we are in favor of good health. But, how do we do it? Jesus told his disciplines how in response to their request, "Lord, teach us to pray."

I have some thoughts on how to pray. They come from two sentences of Jesus' model prayer.

1) Be specific. Like, "Give us this day our daily bread." The specific request was for bread. The better we know our people and the more trusting the relationship, the more specific we can pray. Such specifics will be about family, finances, work, school, travel, health, marriage, morals, life style, relationships, spiritual struggles, church life, etc.

2) Be general. Like "Thy will be done." The general is O.K. for a starter, but needs to move to specifics. Using Colossians 1:4-14 we can pray these things for our people:

That they will know God's will;

That they will live a godly life;

That they will bear fruit;

That they will know God better;

That they will be strengthened with power;

That they will be thankful;

Thank God that He has given them salvation, has rescued them from darkness and brought them into His kingdom.

When we have prayed these specifics and generalities for our people, let's try the same for ourselves. And as we do, let us hear Jesus whispering Mark 11:24 in our ear, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you are receiving it and it will be yours."

AXIOM 86

Mental Imaging

This experience will enable Lay Pastors to visualize themselves contacting specific members of their flock. You can expect them to transfer the visual to the real soon after this is used at your monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly meeting. Introductions:

- 1) Divided into groups of four.
- 2) Ask them to close their eyes and use their imagination.
- 3) Tell them to select the most pleasant person or family in their flock and mentally image these four occasions:
 - a. Phone them. Imagine the conversation. (1 minute)
 - b. Write to them. Imagine the card or letter, the pen, pencil or typewriter and the message. (1 minute)
 - c. Visit them. Construct the purpose or goal, the kind of reception, the conversation, the feelings, the departure and the result. (2 minutes)
 - d. Make out the report. Getting it, sitting down, writing or typing it and how you turn it in. (1 minute)
- 4) Ask them to take turns sharing their imaging with the other three in their group and any thoughts they had about these imagined contacts. (3 minutes maximum for each person)
- 5) Debrief by asking for volunteers to share their experiences, questions, learning or feelings.
- 6) Repeat the process, asking them to select their most unpleasant person or family this time. Why they share, they should not reveal the identity of the person or family.

AXIOM 87

A formula for solving your problems

Problem: The gap between what is and what should be.

Problem: Clearly identify the problem.

Helping: What factors are already favorable to the solution?

Hindering: What factors interfere or block solving the problem?

Goal(s): Set objectives which are specific, achievable & measurable.

Steps: List the steps to be taken to reach the goal. who is responsible? by when are they to be taken?

NOTE: At Hope Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, the Lay Pastors Ministry Leadership Group is working at some knotty problems. We are using this formula which was given by Dr. Paul Ceder, president of The Evangelical Free Church, when he met with our church staff for a day-long retreat last June.

AXIOM 88

And when Jesus saw their faith...Mark 2:5

This significant event out of the life of our Lord has taken on a new meaning about brought a new facet of ministry to our Lay Pastors Ministry Program (use Pastor if you wish), at the Matthew Methodist Church, NC. God has blessed this ministry which uses a rope as a symbol of our holding people in the presence of Christ.

In the Gospel, the good which came to this man lowered through the roof was the result of faith, "their faith" and resulting action. We use a piece of rope to symbolize to others that the Lay Ministers will be holding their care unites and others in the presence of the One who still is present to minister through faith in the world today.

When a piece of rope is shared with another, we share this account from the Gospel and tell them we will be holding them through this symbol in the Lord's presence. We have many who wear it around their wrists, those who tie to their beds and those who do their vest to keep it with them when they go into surgery. These all give witness to the power of this symbol of someone helping to keep them in the presence of the Christ.

This is the firm conviction of our Lay Ministers that this rope symbol has led us to exclaim, "We have never seen anything like this." (Mark 2:12 b).

AXIOM 89

Fall Tune-up for Lay Pastors

The bottom line for our Pastoral Care Ministry is Romans 12: 1 & 2.

1. **"In view of God's mercy"** What has God's mercy meant to me?

2. **"Offer yourselves"**

Why?

In what ways as a Pastoral Care Giver?

3. **"As loving sacrifices"** In caring for others, how can I be a living sacrifice?
(be specific)

4. **"Pleasing to God"** what can there be about my caring that will please God?

5. **"Do not conform to the pattern of this world?"** How might the world's pattern limit my ministry?

6. **"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind"** What renews the mind?

7. **"God's will"** As a Lay Pastor, what is God's will for me?

Instructions for us:

1. Introduce this "Tune-up" form with something like this:

"You became a lay pastor with vision, commitment and enthusiasm. Being equipped and commissioned were high points in your lives. Some of what your ministry has been easy, pleasant and fulfilling. Some has been a struggle. You may have experienced mood swings and commitment spasms. Working this paper will help you know where you are now in your vision, commitment and enthusiasm. Take ten to fifteen minutes to do the paper, then I'll

give you the next step."

2. Divide into groups of four. Ask them to take turns sharing:

Why you are continuing in the ministry;

How you are feeling about it;

How well you feel you are doing it;

What God is saying to you about it.

3. After fifteen minutes, debrief the experience by asking for a few from the whole group to tell what they shared, each volunteer taking only one of the four points.

AXIOM 90

Courage to Pray

by Dr. William C. Brownson

One day, when Jesus finished praying, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." The example of Jesus awakened the desire to learn how to pray.

That same thing has happened to me by the example of Dr. William Brownson, the author of "COURAGE TO PRAY". It started in 1959, when he pastored a church on Chicago's Southside, not far from where I pastored. As we became acquainted, I sensed in him, a gentle, loving spirit and a powerful influence. I was attracted to him.

Later, he was called to teach preaching at Western Theological Seminary in Holland Michigan. While there, his son, Bill, died, he served as President of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, and was called to be radio pastor of the "Words of Hope" radio broadcast of the Reformed Church. It has now expanded to a world-wide ministry. The latest country to be reached is Mongolia.

He writes, "The aim of this book is to encourage you to pray. Real praying isn't easy. Sometimes it can be agonizingly difficult. All of us need wisdom to pray rightly, discipline to structure our efforts, strength to rouse ourselves for the task. But perhaps most of all, we need courage to keep at it."

Part one is entitled "**God's Gifts**". He writes "There can be no doubt about it. We begin with God. Prayer doesn't start with our initiative. It's not a device to get His attention. Prayer is my answer, your answer to God's call."

"Do you realize all that God has done so that you and I can call on Him freely in prayer? He is the gracious, active self-given one. He has revealed to us His **Name**; He has provided for us a **Way**; He has breathed into us His **Spirit**; He has left with us His **Word**." Thoughtful consideration of these gifts will encourage you to pray.

Part two is entitled "**Our Calling**". Its chapters include: Call to Praise: Celebrating God, Call to Thanksgiving: Remembering God's Mercies, Call to Confession: Agreeing with God, Call to Commitment: Offering Ourselves, Call to Petition: Asking for Good Gifts, Call to Intercession: Pleading for Others and Call to Kingdom Concern: Praying for God. This part deals with what we say in our prayers.

Part three is entitled "**New Possibilities**". After seeing prayer as beginning with God, as His gift, then comes seeing prayer as calling. "God provides everything needful and then calls us to response. He spreads the table with good things and then invites us to come, to feast, to pray." How exciting to see what God can do thru our prayers. These are all kinds of possibilities. New possibilities!

At the end of each chapter there are scripture passages for reading and reflections as well as questions for further thought to be answered either privately or in a group setting.

God wants us to pray. It is His gift. He provides everything we need and then calls us to respond. As we respond, we see what He can do.

AXIOM 91

Encourage one another

I have the rare privilege on knowing many of you personally. After four years of extensive traveling in the USA, Canada and Bahamas, giving seminars and doing other peaking, I have met a lot of people in a lot of churches. I tell my friends that I am favored to meet and to know the most wonderful people in the world.

Four years ago I was connected to 200 people because of this ministry. That many were receiving the NETWORK NEWS. The only way of getting on the mailing list is to inquiry by phone or letter about the ministry, or material, invite me to give a seminar or specially request it. I have intentionally avoided building as large a mailing list as possible. The mailing list is now 1000. This means that I have connected with 800 people in four years. And the number continues to grow at the rate of two to five a week. Together we are probably ministering to half million people.

We are really a network. I say "we" because you are all connected with one another. The ministry we have in common - the pastoral care ministry - makes us brothers and sisters in Christ and in ministry. Visible and invisible bonding is taking places because of this.

Since we are connected, I believe the words of I Thessalonians 5:11 apply, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up."

AXIOM 92

A Lay Shepherd is...

*** someone who realizes they don't have all the answers, but realizes their role as a friend and supporter, not expert or authority.

*** someone who does not make decisions for others, but assists others in finding their own solutions.

*** someone who takes time to "do the little things," send a card, make a call, bring a flower, bake someone something.

*** someone who makes a call in spite of fear.

*** someone who can keep on caring even though there may not be any response from their flock.

*** someone who realizes that only through close communication with god will they have the strength to help others.

AXIOM 93

Problem solver?

A Lay Pastor is not a problem solver, but a bodily presence during the problem - "love with skin on it."

A Lay Pastor is not called expected to be great person of great wisdom and training so as to give expert advice, guidance and instruction, but is expected to pray for and with people.

A Lay Pastor is not called to counsel others, but is to be a supportive and caring friend, and example and, at times, a spiritual advisor.

A Lay Pastor is not to act as a para professional, but is to be "a friend who will stand by."

A Lay Pastor is not a rescuer, but a lover.

AXIOM 94

On Pastors relinquishing the Ministry

The pastor must commit himself to withdrawing from the ministry *de facto* when he passes it to the laity. If he does not do it in words, but not actions, the lay people will feel deceived and progress in giving the ministry to the people will suffer defeat.

Example: A layman offered to make hospital and nursing home visits. The pastor agreed to it and passed the necessary information to the man. He made visits faithfully for several weeks. He was developing expertise and was being fulfilled in doing significant ministry. The people were accepting his ministry. He was affirmed by many words of gratitude and an occasional hand-written note. However, when he reported his visits to his pastor he was usually told something like this, "Oh yes, I know all about him. I visited him yesterday." After repeated responses like this the layman began to wonder why he was giving his time and making the necessary sacrifices to conscientiously visit when the pastor had not changed his habit of visiting everyone. The layman originally offered to do this because it was obvious that the pastor was burning himself out by trying to do too much. The layman finally quit making the visits. The hospital and nursing home ministry reverted to its former style. Nothing was changed...except now there was one seriously disillusioned, somewhat hurt, a little angry and unfulfilled layman. The pastor continued trying to do it all.

Why do clergy find it difficult to relinquish ministry?

1. They don't know they are to give the ministry to the people. They continue to operate with the old mind-set.
2. They do not believe a lay person can do a satisfactory job. They cannot do it as well as they.
3. They are threatened by someone doing "their ministry."
4. They are jealous, especially when members tell them how much they appreciated the visit by the lay person.
5. They are afraid they will be criticized for not doing their work.

What is the answer to this problem?

1. Believe Ephesians 4:11 & 12. Accept the design God has given for ministering to His people, "Prepare God's people for works of service."
2. Have confidence in the reality of lay pastor. Accept a different style of ministry as being equally effective.
3. Instead of being threatened, say "Praise God, His way is working."
4. Confess jealousy and other negative feelings, repent, let God turn sinful feelings into rejoicing.
5. Preach and teach Ephesians 4:11 & 12 until the people of the congregation understand that the pastor is the equipper for ministry and they are the doers of ministry.

AXIOM 95

Building a relationship(the elements)

1. LISTENING

scene: You are talking with one of your people. She discloses that she got criticized at the office and is feeling really down.

A "TRUST - ENHANCING RESPONSE": "It sounds like you are upset. why don't we talk about it?"

A "TRUST - BUSTING RESPONSE" would be, "I've had a tough day too."

The first response validates her feelings. The second discounts them. Howard Markman, psychologist and co-director of the Center for Married and Family Studies at the University of Denver says, "To continue the validation mode, stay with discussing the problem, don't try to solve it. More than a solution, most people just want an ear."

2. PRAYING

scene: You are phoning one of your people. After some small talk you tell him you have been praying for him,"In fact, I mentioned you by name when I was in prayer this morning. I asked God to make life good for you and your family."

Then add, "Are there any requests you have, any concerns or situations, or needs I could be praying about as I am praying for you again."

After getting the answer, "If you want to pray for me, here are two things you can talk to God about and a third to thank Him for..."

3. CONTACT

scene: A relationship is of such a nature that it will never stay the same. It will always be either deepening or declining. It can only decline if people are not in contact.

The contacts can be of a great variety in kind and significance. KIND: Phone call, card or letter, home visit, lunch, visit to place of work or business, chance meeting at church, grocery store or sports event.

SIGNIFICANCE: Ranging from very brief and casual to planned and sharing experiences and faith in depth.

A minimum of one contact of some kind of each month is required to maintain a relationship. A minimum of two home visits or other intentional face to face contact a year is required to deepen the relationship. The more significant the contact, the deeper the relationship.

4. HELPING

scene: A bonding of two lives takes place when giving help. it is equally bonding to receive help.

One Lay Pastor helped one of his families wallpaper some of their rooms. Their relationship was deepened by this shared experience.

Another Lay Pastor accepted meals brought into her home by some of her people when she was sick. Their relationship deepened because of this.

Therefore, be alert to ways you can offer to help your people in addition to making it known that you are available in time of need. And, do not hesitate to ask your people for help when you need it.

AXIOM 96

How to serve the Lord with gladness

or

("What makes a successful Lay Pastor")

1. **ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE.**

All have bad experiences. See the good in these, for example, take note of what you have learned from these bad experiences. Focus on this. All have good experiences. Be encouraged by this.

2. **TAKE TIME TO TALK.**

Lack of communication is to a relationship what lack of is to a plant. Regular watering is best, even though the plant will come back after neglect.

3. **MAKE THE RELATIONSHIP MUTUAL.**

One-sided relationships are at best a disappointment. At worst, they are resented, smothering, paternalistic and counterproductive.

4. **SURPRISE THEM.**

People are conditioned to express care only in time of trouble. Cards, phone calls or home visits at the time of graduation, anniversaries, births, etc. are bonding contacts.

5. **SET GOALS.**

To set goals defines your desires and directs your energies toward accomplishing them. Setting goals keeps your commitment from sagging.

6. **USE YOUR IMAGINATION IN PRAYER.**

As you pray, fantasize so as to get how you will contact your people before your eyes. Imagine how you will approach them, what you will say to them, their response, etc. It may not happen this exact way but something good will take place.

7. **ACT LIKE A LOVER.**

The basic and continuing elements of your pastoring relationship is love. Love reaches out. Love is patient. Love keeps no score of wrongs (and the other qualities of love as listed in I Corinthians 13).

8. **SET LIMITS FOR YOURSELF.**

Don't over-commit yourself. Be realistic. Do not commit yourself to change a person, to solve their problems, care for all their needs, etc. Keep to P.A.C.E. Unrealistic idealism sets one up for failure, generate feelings of guilt, guarantees discouragement and makes one a candidate for burnout.

AXIOM 97

How do you measure success?

One of the toughest things in life is to keep going when you don't feel like you are doing very well. That's true in marriage, in parenting, in a job, in school, and in ministry. But how do you measure how well you are doing in the various areas of your life?

Your grade depends on your evaluation tool, doesn't it? Sometimes our tool is perfection--God's moral standard. Often it is not a fixed standard at all -- we just go by what significant other people tell us. At other times we measure our performance against a very subjective (and perhaps fuzzy) set of values that we have internationalized somewhere along the way.

It is particularly difficult to measure success when we are looking at how we are doing with other people. A major reason why I am drawn to tasks related to taxes, accounting, and computers is that I get feedback --I quickly know whether I did something right or wrong. But in most of life activities--people things--it is often years before I hear that I was helpful. That sense of success is pretty elusive. And several of you have told me you feel that was about your Care Coordinator ministry--it is tough to know that you are doing well.

I wish I could easily measure how well you are doing. You and I both know that we don't measure the important things. Instead we measure "pointers"--how many contacts are being made; who we are missing. But occasionally someone will affirm you--a thank-you note, a few words of gratitude, a friendliness when you make your contact.

As always, your primary sense of satisfaction (of success) needs to come from relying on what our Lord has said to you. Listen to His words once more.

"Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you...I was a stranger and **you** invited me in...I was sick and **you** looked after **me**...?"

AXIOM 98

Checking our focus

<u>Commitment</u> (Made at Seminar)	<u>Focus</u> (How do I do this?)
1. Commitment to PACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prayer: Set a time each day -Available: They feel free to call, being there for them -Contact: Various kinds; phone, mail, face to face -Example: Always trying to lead a Christ centered life
2. Commitment of Self to Jesus Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -By being regular in Bible Study and prayer -By asking daily for forgiveness -By asking for guidance for the day -By asking for ideas to encourage others
3. Commitment of time and energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make good news of time, know what to eliminate -Do not sacrifice family -Separate "Good" from "Best" -Seek advice of other Christians
4. commitment of years, to pastor as long as the Lord leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Let the Lord lead -Keep focus on commitment
5. Commitment to continue being equipped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take advantage of opportunities like the Tom Sine Event -Attend Lay Pastors Fellowships -Make time to pray
6. Commitment to accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reports in on time -Follow-up on prayer requests -Pause and take stock of where I am
7. Commitment to the church and its leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Encourage & affirm pastors and leaders -Be aware of what is going on in Session -Gifts of tithe -Listening seriously
8. Commitment to lay pastors Fellowship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan ahead and set time aside -Put priority on fellowship -Set time aside to renew

AXIOM 99

Becoming what you want to be

(A message for Lay Pastoral Care-Giver)

Vince Lombardi, in his heyday as coach of the legendary Green Bay Packers football team said, "My job is to make my men do what they don't want to do so they can become what they want to be." He was speaking, of course, of the discipline of training, the tediousness of working on small skills and the rigors of practice. They wanted to be championship players, but there was no way of being that without the grueling demands of doing those things they were not particularly fond of doing.

You are a Lay Pastor. You want to be a successful, effective Lay Pastor. You want to make a difference in people's lives. You intend to fulfill your commitment to pray for your people regularly, be available to them, contact them regularly and be an example to them. You want to be a good servant of your Lord in caring for His people.

To become the kind of Lay pastor you want to be will require doing some things you don't particularly like to do. That's what Vince Lombardi said about becoming the kind of football player the members of the Green Bay Packers team wanted to be. It takes discipline. It requires giving attention to a little things. It takes persistence. It demands praying for your people faithfully even when you don't particularly feel like praying. You need to make contacts even when they are most difficult to make due to your busyness or their aloofness.

As each football player's passion to be a championship player overrode his dislike of the discipline imposed by the coach, so your passion to be a championship Lay Pastor will override your dislike of the discipline imposed by your Coach, Jesus Christ. You will bite the bullet when necessary to pray regularly, to be available, to make your contacts, and to be exemplary. Also to get your reports in and to look forward to the next Lay Pastors Fellowship.

The Lord is your Coach. Does it sound like him to say, "My job is to make my Lay Pastors do what they don't want to do so they can become what they want to be?" Really, that is a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 4:2, "It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." What do you want to be? Lay Pastors on the whole want to be:

1. Faithful to their commitments to.....
...pray for their people regularly;

- ...be available in times of need or celebration;
 - ...contact their people regularly;
 - ...set the best example they are capable of.
2. Difference-makers in their people's lives.
 3. Lovers of every last one of their people, especially of those who are least receptive.
 4. Deepening their relationships.
 5. Growing in patience and perseverance.
 6. Growing in the caring skill of listening, accepting, sensitivity, empathy, warmth and respect.
 7. Obedient to Christ and maturing in the faith.

AXIOM 100

Why have the network and conference

1. We are committed to encouraging and supporting the leaders of existing lay pastoral care ministries.
2. We are committed to help improve the quality and integrity of existing lay pastoral care ministries.
3. We are committed to create a fellowship among the leaders of lay pastoral care ministries so they can get to know one another and learn from one another.
4. We desire to affirm the lay people who are doing the ministry.
5. We are called to enable churches unfamiliar with the Lay Pastors Ministry to learn about it.
6. We are called to help interested churches start a Lay Pastors Ministry.
7. We are called to intentionally promote the ministry. It is "franchisable".
8. We see the need to provide for the growth of the Ministry nationally and internationally by enlisting, equipping and giving support to member of an "Adversary Group" who will communicate and coordinate the Lay Pastors Ministry in their region.

AXIOM 101

Difference-Makers

That's what they are.

These three questions are often asked about our lay Pastors Ministry.

"What is a Lay pastor?"

"What do you use the work 'pastor'?"

"What does a Lay Pastors do?"

The following responses help to answer these and other questions:

1. The two words, "Lay" and "Pastor" need to be seen as one. Lay Pastors are lay people, not professionals, who are reaching out to other Hope members with TLC. They are volunteer ministers, not vocational ministers. The vocational minister's pastoral care is usually given in response to a crisis. The volunteer minister's pastoral care is on a continuing basis, relating on behalf of Christ and His church when life is good and when life is troublesome. A vocational pastor cannot keep in touch with a thousand or even a hundred people on a continuing basis.

2. The mandate in I Peter 5, "Be shepherd of God's flock" means that God's people need to be prayed for and embraced consistently, not just when they have problems. "Shepherd" is translated from the Greek word, "POIMAINO", which can also be translated "pastor". The fact is that God has given a good number of the members of the church pastoral gifts just for this purpose. There are a lot of lay people who give as much TLC (or more) than the professional pastor can. This means that they truly are pastors.

3. A Lay Pastor is a "Difference-Maker" in other people's lives. How? By **praying** for them regularly, being **available** to them, and **contacting** them regularly - with TLC. "Difference-Makers", That's what they are.

A Lay Pastor has between five and ten households to pray for, be available to, and to contact. We need many, many additional people who are ready to be "Difference Makers". If this need is a challenge to you, you will want to pray about being a Lay Pastor.

AXIOM 102

Q/A about Lay Pastors Ministry

I have been assigned a Lay pastor: does the pastoral staff think that I have a problem?

No! You have been selected at random to receive the ministry of a lay pastor. The long-range goal of the Lay Pastors Ministry is that every member of Hope will be pastored by lay people.

What can I expect from my Lay Pastor?

First of all, they would like to visit with you face to face to get acquainted and tell you about the ministry. After that they would be in contact with you on a regular basis, be praying for you and your specific requests and be available to you as needs arise.

What if I have a serious illness, family crisis or death in the family?

The pastoral staff, as always, will be available to minister to you. You could have a lay pastor contact them for you. In times like these your Lay Pastor will be supporting you and praying for you along with the ministry to the "professional" pastors.

I am over-committed right now, what will my Lay Pastor expect from me?

Your Lay Pastor will be praying for you to be open to building a relationship of caring and trust. There are no meetings to attend or requirements on your part. Your willingness to receive your Lay Pastor will be both a blessing in your life and the fulfillment of God's call to each of us to give and receive ministry.

Is this a re-make of the former Shepherd Ministry?

No! This model was developed by Dr. Mel Steinbron at college Hill Presbyterian in Cincinnati, Ohio, thirteen years ago. It is a ministry of caring for members of Hope by assigning a Lay pastor to a number of families, but with the different approach of focus on building one-on-one caring relationships instead of trying to develop neighbourhood fellowship groups like the former Shepherd Ministry.

Who is responsible for the leadership of the Lay Pastors Ministry?

A small group of people who are committed to give direction and management to the ministry, called the Lay Pastors Ministry Leadership Group.

AXIOM 103

For Your Newsletter

"The Shepherd's Staff", the Lay Pastoral Care monthly newsletter for the Lay Pastors (they call them "Lay Shepherds") of the Third Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa gave an issue to the question, "Is Encouragement Your Ministry?" They enlisted people to write articles on the following:

1. Encouragement is...
2. Some ways to encourage other we...(methods of encouragement)
 - a. The ministry of spoken words
 - b. The ministry of writing
 - c. The ministry of listening and being there
 - d. The ministry of touch
 - e. The ministry of hospitality
 - f. The ministry of finances, giving
 - g. The ministry of physical assistance, a helping hand
 - h. The ministry of prayer

AXIOM 104

Some pastoral caring tips from "Dear Abby"

Scenario: "Dear Abby: More than a year ago, my husband lost his job of 21 years when his company was sold. This last year has been the most grueling, saddest year of our lives. It has brought a drastic change in our lifestyle, the threat of losing our home of 20 years, lower grades for my children and a host of other traumas. But one of the most painful realities has been the lack of support from my friends....."someone who's Been There"(St. Paul Dispatch 12/24/ 99)

Suggested Actions: (From the "Dear Abby" letter)

1. Call the families of the unemployed often. They need to know that someone is there for them.
2. Invite them to your house even though they may not be able to reciprocate for a while.
3. don't suggest counseling just because they are unhappy. Of course, they are unhappy - it is a sad time in their lives. The majority of people in this situation needs friends, not counselors.
4. Ask if you can circulate their resume. Remember, less than 10percent of jobs are received through ads. Most of are received through networking.
5. Be understanding. When someone has one major problem, it is so easy to become short-tempered, run-down and unhappy.

Principles Underlying the "Suggested Actions"

1. Contact
2. Hospitality
3. Friendship
4. Help
5. Empathy

Note: There are five basic pastoral care principles.

Laboratory Use:

1. Provide copies of only the scenario.
2. Divided into twos, threes or fours to discuss the scenario and propose pastoral actions.
3. After ten to fifteen minutes, debrief their experience by writing the proposed actions on an overhead transparency or chalkboard as they call them out.
4. Identify the pastoring principle in each proposed action.

5. Ask the small group to create their own scenario, perhaps using the experience of one of their households. Then ask them to use the principles to propose actions.

6. Debrief by asking a few groups to share their scenario, proposed actions and pastoral principles with the whole group.

Note: Alternative use - Provide copies of the "**Scenario**", and "**Suggested Actions**" and "**Principles**" to discuss. Then, begin with number five under "Laboratory Use."

AXIOM 105

How to maximize

I believe both you and I have the same commitment to excellence. Whatever God is calling us to, we feel must do it the very best we can possibly do it. Right?!! This is one of the points in Jesus' parable of the talents. One man increased by two; the other by five. But based on the different amounts given to start with, both increased 100%. Both did the very best they could with what they had.

God has given you and me different amounts of "talent", and He has placed us in different places. Some places will produce a much higher percentage of returns than others. But, each of us is committed to give it our very best.

We want our ministry to produce return. We seek ways to improve it so it will produce more "love with skin on it." Here are four basic ways to get our ministry to yield the maximum.

- 1) ASSESS IT'S STRENGTHS. List them on paper.
- 2) ASSESS IT'S WEAKNESS. Write them down, too.
- 3) STRENGTH YOUR LEADERSHIP GROUP. Inspire them; motivate them; build their vision; pray with them. Share your assessments and get theirs.
- 4) RE-ENERGIZE YOUR LAY PASTORS. You can do one or two the following: Have a "Day of Renewal"; Create clusters for fellowship and sharing; assign prayer partners; Conduct personal interview with each Lay pastors; Institute an annual ministry celebration events; Spice up your newsletter; Create opportunities for sharing their ministry with your congregation or groups.

AXIOM 106

Bruce Larson's keynote address

"Pastoral Care of the Congregation by Lay People is the number one theme for our day." What a statement to be made by one of America's foremost Christian leaders.

His seven main points were:

1. "Be there"
2. "Listen"
3. "Explore options"
4. "Pray"
5. "Be prepared to hear people's confessions"
6. "Be ready to introduce people to Jesus as Saviour"
7. "Help to introduce people to a life of significance"
(to be the best they can be")

His two concluding remarks were:

1. "We need to redefine our purpose."
2. "Deploy lay people into ministry."

AXIOM 107

Specialized Ministries

Everybody knows that we live in an age of specialization. What many people do not realize is that even specialized areas of activity have several specialized subdivisions. This is true in the sciences, in the technical fields, and in many other areas of human involvement. Therefore, the Christian ministry is not excluded!

Long gone are the days when a minister executed every single function in his congregation as the sole officer. Although this may still remain through in some small churches, God's people are finally aware of the fact that no minister is omni-competent. As a result, lay or ordained individuals are being added to the staff of congregations to specialize in the areas which correspond with their gifted-ness, talents, temperament and, hopefully, passion as well.

While all this is primary true of full-time, paid positions, it can also be the case with volunteer lay ministers in any congregation. More specially, this is so with lay pastors in the manifold aspects of care-giving.

Seek out the area where you most comfortably fit and where your contribution, instead of getting over involved and eventually facing burn-out. Here are a few areas of service in one or two of which you may desire to focus and direct your best efforts to see it fully realized in the ministry of your local church.

1. Sponsoring a new member. i. e., being that initial human link to someone who is joining your church and who needs gradually to be introduced to others, while learning all that is to be learned about congregation and its ministry.

2. Hospital visitation, which may limit you to one hospital or two, in proximity to your residence or place of employment.

3. Nursing home visitation, where you may concentrate on an individual or two during what may, hopefully, be a temporary stay.

4. Ministering to shut-ins, which may take a variety of shapes and fulfill a diversity of needs, such as driving one to the bank, the doctor, the hairdresser, or house-cleaning once per week, bringing a meal, reading, answering mail, or simply visiting that person.

5. Ministering to people in grief during the length of that entire process, which varies from person to person, or specializing on widows and their unique needs.

6. Peer counseling, by being available in an informal setting, to listen attentively and confidentially to a fellow Christian in need of clarification and help on any given issue one may be able to provide.

The above is a very incomplete list, but it enables one to recognize how vast are the areas of potential involvement as Lay Pastor at a local congregation.

AXIOM 108

Book, The quest for quality caring

The Master Teacher used parables to teach great, and sometimes incendiary, truths. Even though the stories were very interesting, their purpose was to make difficult and profound realities more easily understood, parable and memorable.

Dr. Haugk has exactly used Jesus' method. The reader follows the Australian Koala, Kalawaka, in his world travels to discover what quality ("koality") caring is. Brief two to five-page chapters each deal with one quality. "Quality caring is: genuine, empathic, patient, available, present, confrontation, dependable, accepting, unpretentious, selfless.

The second section of the book deals in the same brief style with what quality caring is not. The reader continues to follow his or her koala friend around to observe kalawaka's "Guide to Quality Caring": receive graciously, initiative, focus on others' needs, etc. This action is the third action.

The book will help lay pastors and ministry leaders

- 1) improve their ability to relate to others,
- 2) develop and deepen relationships, and
- 3) effectively deal with difficult people and circumstances.

It is an excellent equipping tool for individual growth, group study, or the continuing equipping of the gathered pastoral care givers.

AXIOM 109

40-minute Meeting on Love and Care

THEME: God loves and cares for us. We respond by loving Him and caring for His people.

LAB EXPERIENCE:

1. (10 min) Have your group individually ponder the maxim above. Then write:

a. God is showing His love to me in these two ways

1) _____

2) _____

b. God is caring for me in these two ways

1) _____

2) _____

c. God knows I am loving Him because

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

d. This is what "caring for His people" means

2. (10 min) Divide your group into small groups of four to share what they wrote. Encourage them all to make comments, ask questions or give additional insights during each person's sharing.

3. (12 min) Have one person in each of the small groups read I John 4:7-21. Follow this by re-reading the following verses one at a time, discussing how those words apply, first to the maximum; and second to the ways they are caring for their people. I John 4:11, I John 4:19, I John 5:3.

4. (5 min) Ask them to pray for one another by name, building their prayers out of what was shared in their small group.

5. (3 min) Close by forming a large circle, joining hands to sing "We are one in the bond of love", or other appropriate song.

AXIOM 110

Use this for one of your meetings

Cathy Gerring, Pro-golfer, one of the hottest in the LPGA in 1991 said this, "I would like to say when I walk away from the game that I'd played the best I could pray, that I was competitive and that I didn't give up." ("Compass Reading", NWA magazine, June 1991)

This is an example of what Lay Pastors should be saying to themselves after making a contact: "I would like to say when I walk away or hang up after a contact....

.....I did the best I could;
.....I was loving;
.....I will not give up."

Three questions emerge from this self talk:

- 1) How can I do the best I can and how can I know that I did the best I could?
- 2) What does "loving" really mean? How can I know I was loving?
- 3) What will keep me from giving up when the going is tough and what will keep me from sloughing off when there is no crisis to stimulate me?

How to use above meeting: Give a copy of all the above to groups of two, four or six. Give the groups six to 15 minutes, depending on their size, to discuss the questions. Then, ask them to share their findings with the total group. Follow the sharing with a 10 to 15 minute teaching on the three questions.

AXIOM 111

Principles of motivation

Do you agree? The toughest challenge we who lead lay pastoral care ministries face is motivation. We need to encourage, fire up, and sustain the vision of our lay pastors. We have to be motivators.

Our lay pastoral care people lose steam. God's people have always lost steam. Deut. 1:38 records his counsel to Moses regarding Joshua, "Encourage him." centuries later the same counsel from god is, "Encourage one another." Read it in I Thes. 5:11 and again in Heb. 3:13 and 10:25 to get the impact of our call to motivate.

Here are four principles we must internalize if we are to be motivators of our care-giving people:

1. **Our motivation is from God.** Steam is generated in our boilers when we spend time with him. I have to discover this over and over, almost daily in fact.
2. **Our People's motivation is from us.** The steam generated in our time with God excites us for the ministry. Our excitement is contagious.
3. **The people they care for will motivate them.** The motivation is in the ministry. If they do their ministry well, it will excite them. We need to help them do it well by equipping and support.
4. **Motivation is mutual.** We encourage one another. This happens when we get together. Nothing keeps me excited about our ministry, after praying about it, like talking with one of our lay pastors and hearing first hand what God is doing through them.

God is the original sources of motivation like the sun is the original source of all the light in our world. As God brightens our vision and generates energy for this ministry within us, the motivational chain reaction is powerful! If our people's commitment weakens, vision dims, enthusiasm fades and performance slows, we who lead need to take a look at how we have spent the past week talking with God about our role in this ministry and its success.

AXIOM 112

Lay Pastors A & A Survey

(A & A=Activity and Attitude)

(This forms used at Hope Church recently and is yielding valuable information to the ministry leaders.)

You can help us improve the Lay Pastors' Ministry by completing this survey form. Please deposit it with your next report. We thank you!

1. How long have you been a Lay Pastor?

_____years _____months

2. What are three of your most **satisfying** lay pastoral experiences?

3. What are three of your most **frustrating** lay pastoral experience?

4. I have made this many contacts in the past six months:

_____home visits _____other face-to-face _____telephone
_____mail _____other

5. What capacities/strengths have you developed through lay pastoring?

6. what do you believe you still need to work on?

7. Do you know what your dominant spiritual gift is?

_____yes _____no

If your answer is yes, what it is?_____

If you answer is yes, have you been able to use it in pastoring?

_____yes _____no _____not sure

If your answer is no or not sure, do you want help in discovering what it is?

_____yes _____no _____some time perhaps

8. Do you think you have the support you need form your leaders?

_____yes _____no _____yes and no

9. How many hours a month (average) do you spend on your ministry?

_____estimated hours

10. Place an "X" on the line where you were when you first started your pastoring and a exclamation mark (!) where you believe you are now. Then draw an arrow (-->) between the "X" and exclamation mark to indicate the direction you are moving.

uninterested

excited

unchallenged

challenged

unmotivated

motivated

How do you feel about the distance and/or direction?

___super ___good ___so-so ___struggling ___failure

11. How long do you see yourself continuing as a lay pastor?

___until the Lord leads me into some other ministry

___another year at least

___I would like to out now

12. Comments

AXIOM 113

Hang in there

This is for you--you who have not yet broken through to friendship with the one who has resisted you. The story is told of a pastor whom struggle with a ministry which seemed to bear no fruit. One night in his dream he saw himself trying to break apart a larger rock with a hammer.

He applied blow after blow to the rock, yet not so much as one chip appeared. Feeling like a failure, he raised the hammer one last time, and when the hammer came down, it split the rock in two! All of the other blows had prepared the rock for that final blow which produced the desired result.

Let's think this through together. (1) Some people are hesitant to accept us or return our friendship, no matter how striking our attempts are to be friendly. (2) Some people need to see our long-term commitment before open will open to us. (3) The Lord may be using your repeated blows of love to soften a hard heart so he can reach them through another's ministry in the future. OR. ...(4) Maybe the next attempted contact, or the next. You don't know which will be the "one last time" so you keep at it, knowing that God is doing something through you which you cannot yet see. Hang in there!

AXIOM 114

Are Lay Pastors Counselors

The answer to the question "Are lay pastors counselors?" depends on your definition of counselor. The dictionary gives two ways to understand the word: (1) One who gives advice or suggestions; and (2) One who advises people professionally. It is time to release this word from professional exclusiveness to lay usefulness.

The legitimacy of lay usage hit me when I was reading Colossians 3. Verse 16 uses the word in its inclusive rather than exclusive understanding, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and counsel one another..."

The Greek word translated counsel (nouthete'o) in NIV is translated admonish in KJV and RSV. It means "to put to mind," "to caution," "to reprove gently," "to warn," or "to exhort." This kind of counsel goes on all the time between friends whose lives have bonded. They are not giving advice professionally but it is effectual advice none the less. And effectual means "sufficient to produce and effect." In this sense, lay pastors are counselors! We can pick up this lay pastoral role in other Scripture:

"You are competent to instruct (nouthete'o) one another." Rom. 15:14, Paul to the Christians at Rome.

"....counseling (nouthete'o) everyone so we may present everyone perfect in Christ." Col. 1:28, Paul to the Colossians Christians.

"Respect those who admonish(nouthete'o) you."
I Thes. 5:12, Paul to the Christians in Thessalonica.

The concept of counseling is a step beyond just being there. The simple definition of lay pastoring, "love with skin on it," is widened to include giving advice and practical suggestions. It includes cautions, warning and friendly reproof. Such guidance, within the context of a Christian caring relationship, is counseling. As we see in the Scriptures above, God expects Christians to give this kind of love.

AXIOM 115

No Such Thing As Failure

How often do you feel that as a Lay Pastor you have failed? But you don't have to feel that you are a failure. Don't think in opposites such as success or failure. Think only in the opposites of "learner" or "non-learner." Learning how to make the next attempt at contacting a person when the last one didn't turn out too well means you are a "learner," not a "failure." Learning to get at it the next time rather than procrastinate again makes you a "learner," not a "failure."

You are a "learner," not a "failure" when you have gotten some ideas on how to relate to resistant household after bombing out for the past six months. At least, if you have learned patience, persistence with sensitivity, faithfulness in prayer, and how to continue loving when none is returned, you are a "learner," positively not a "failure."

Seeing yourself as a "learner" rather than a "failure" makes you a true disciple of Jesus. They were unable to heal the man's son. They were ineffective in some relationships. They wanted to call fire down from heaven on some people who resisted them. Self interest betrayed their true motive for following Jesus. They gave up on some people. Did Jesus ever call them failures? Of course not. He saw what we would call failures "teachable times." We can never do anything so badly or be so delinquent in our commitment that we can learn nothing from the mess. In fact, the worse the condition we created, the more we can learn from it.

Seeing yourself as either a "learner" or "non-learner" is right. Seeing yourself as a "failure" is self defeating because you have not been able to change failure to success. But, even if you see yourself as a "non-learner" there is hope, for you can learn from the disappointment or defeat. And when you have learned you are a "learner" not a "failure." As long as you are a "learner" you can never, never, never be a "failure!"

AXIOM 116

What it takes to maintain a ministry

"Starting a shepherding program is easy, maintaining the shepherding ministry is another matter." This sentence introduced a workshop on a shepherding ministry by a very successful which has had a shepherding ministry on line for several years. Their structure, equipping and strategy is very similar to the Lay Pastors Ministry as we know it.

So we could paraphrase the sentence to read, "starting a lay pastors' ministry is easy; maintaining the lay pastors' ministry is another matter." In the passage from idealism to reality, many churches have experienced the same adjustment in ministry which many couples experience in marriage. Getting it started is easy; maintaining it is a challenge. Like with a relationship, a ministry, a ministry doesn't go on its own momentum.

The maxim, "A relationship worth having is worth working at." The idea of "working" implies commitment, persistence, creativity and a lot of "holy sweat." What sort of "working" does it take to maintain a lay pastoral care ministry? Consider these six ways of working at your ministry:

1. Regular meetings of the Leadership Group.

This is the group which has the ownership of the ministry. They need to grow in their understanding of ministry principles, to work at ministry problem, to conduct evaluations and be creative in making the ministry as effective as possible.

2. Ample support and encouragement of the Lay Pastors.

The structure provides for their pastoral care. It needs to be effective. Positive verbal or written affirmation by significant people goes a long way.

3. Persistence is accountability.

Follow up on delinquent reports, failure to attend meetings and lack of response to equipping opportunities.

4. Consistency in communication.

Keep a quality news letter coming regularly to the lay pastors. Write about the ministry regularly in the church paper. Keep the leadership of the church briefed on accomplishments and benefits.

5. Quality meetings of the Lay Pastors.

It should be regularly held and include worship, equipping, sharing experiences (preferably in small group), giving ministry information and fellowship around refreshments.

6. Be a part of the International Lay Pastors Ministry Network.

attend the annual conferences as often as possible; share the Network News; attend local and regional meetings of lay pastoral ministry churches.

AXIOM 117

Book Review *Caring without Wearing*

Carol Travilla, 1990

A Small book in size; a big book in impact. The first four chapters deal with caring for others. The last four deal with caring for yourself. It is not a book on "burnout," but it surely will help prevent it.

The first statement in the Preface establishes the importance of the subject, "Caring for another is at the about caring and support." Caring is not only at the heart of Christianity, it is at the heart of the Lay Pastors' Ministry.

The book deals with the basic principles of caring. You will recognize them and be grateful someone has made them understandable. Example: Understanding and acceptance are the first two principles of caring. One section deals with listening as our most valuable skill. Simple-to-do exercises for either one individual or a group lead us into operationally understanding and experiencing active listening.

The second section takes the reader through the reasons people who reach out to others often suffer disappointment and burnout. Travilla lists five unrealistic expectations which hinder efforts to care. After dealing with the wearing and warning signs, she leads you through seven principles of self care. It's all set in a Christ-centered context.

The author is licensed psychiatric in private practice. She, along with her husband Ken, who is on the pastoral staff of Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, give day-long seminars on "Caring Without Wearing."

AXIOM 118

Just do it

Whether we are listening the ministry or doing the ministry, one element plagues us all - inertia. One definition for "inertia" is "the property of matter by which it remains in a stat of rest." A gentle definition is "slowness to take action." The kind of pastoral care we give, "love with skin on it," or "ministry of presence" usually does not have to be done today. Nor does it have to be done tomorrow or even this week. And therein lies our problem. Unless there is a crisis we tend to be inert.

But P.A.C.E cries our to be done! And done regularly! God is our model for caring in non-crisis times. Parenting models in non-crisis times. Love is always needed. Prayer is always needed, as is affirmation, encouragement, and Christian presence.

God has spoken quit sternly to me the past months about my tendency to inertia. Let me share some of that sternness:

Ps. 1:2 - **"Whatever he does prospers."** (No do; no prosper.)

Ps. 128:2 - **"You shall eat the fruit of your labor."** (No labor; no fruit.)

Col. 1:10 - **"Being fruit in every good work."** (No good work; no fruit)

The relationship between doing and prospering, between labor and fruit is very clear --no labor; no fruit. No visit or phone call; no care. No action; no results. It's just that simple Regardless of intentions, our inertia kills our ministry.

Jesus calls us to overcome inertia. "This is my father's glory, that you bear much fruit." He is our model, "I brought glory to you (his father) on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." The Nike slogan, "JUST DO IT" is also mine. Is there something overdue you should get at right now?

AXIOM 119

How do get more people to be Lay Pastor?

Many ministry leaders are asking the question, "How do we get more people to be lay pastors?" Within a ten-day period in October, I learned of three churches which had to cancel their equipping events because of insufficient registrations. One was the church I serve, so I am very well acquainted with the disappointment and frustration which accompanies the decision to cancel.

If these three churches had a cancel, my guess is that others have had to do the same at times. "Calling forth" sufficient numbers of people has its problem. The fact is that my mail, phone and travels indicate that getting enough people to be lay pastors is a continuing problem many of us have in common.

Let's not look at this need for people as a problem, but as one of our most vigorous challenges. Discouragement is one of the devil's deadliest weapons. Don't let him get you! Here are six things we can do to rise to the challenge:

1. **THINK POSITIVE.** Look at how far you have come.
 - a. Look at the people doing the ministry
 - b. Look at the people being blessed by the ministry
 - c. Affirm that God wants this ministry in your church and has called you to make it happen.

NOTE: The love and care being given is more than people had before you started the ministry. Celebrate the part of the cup which is full.

2. **PUT "CALLING FORTH" ON HOLD.** Our Ministry Leadership Group has put enlistment on hold for one year. Praise God for lay people who have ownership of our ministry! We will use this year to strengthen the ministry by working at its weaknesses, giving support to those doing the ministry and creating the strategy for moving ahead. We will not be struggling to "call forth" additional people.

3. **CREATE STRATEGY.** We'll ask ourselves at least three questions. The answers should lead to productive action.
 - a. What have we done? (Evaluate)
 - b. What more can we do? (Dream)
 - c. What can we do differently? (Be creative)

4. **PERSONAL CONTACTS.** We need to accept the fact that from this point

on announcements and letters will not do the job. Personal contact will.

- a. Ask god in prayer about those you should contact.
- b. Ask lay pastors to enlist people from their flocks.
- c. Ask everyone involved in the ministry plus officers and other church leaders to talk other people.
- d. Prayerfully formulate a list of people you feel should consider being lay pastors, write them a letter and follow the follow the letter with a personal contact.

5. **ACCUMULATE NAMES.** As you contact people, keep a list of those who are not ready to consider being lay pastors now but who are open to being contacted again in six months or a year.

6. **PRAY.** For guidance; for commitment; in general (to reach your goal); specifically (for certain individuals); regularly and with desperation.

Here are six things our dilemma may be saying:

1. **IT IS A TIME OF TESTING.** Our commitment, obedience to the Lord and ability to persevere through tough times is put the test.
2. **LOW CONGREGATIONAL COMMITMENT.** Many people's priorities deaden their spirit to God's call to ministry.
3. **ALL AVAILABLE PEOPLE ARE DOING MINISTRY.** "...the laborers are few."
4. **CREATIVITY STRATEGY IS NEEDED.** Break away from previous methods. Learn from other churches.
5. **OUR EXPECTATIONS WERE UNREALISTIC.** Our projections for the future were generated by the first response to our call for people to be lay pastors, or by our enthusiasm for the ministry. It will take much effort and patience to "call forth" all we need to cover our membership.
6. **OUR DEPENDENCE MUST BE ON THE LORD.** It is his ministry. We cannot do it ourselves. "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers.."

It is easy to drift into a mix of myth and truth when we begin to struggle with what seems to be a failure. Here are four myth-truth mixes:

1. **WE NEED MORE APPEAL FROM THE PULPIT.** Maybe, maybe not. Too much can be counter productive, and annoyance to people, bordering on harassment.
2. **THE MINISTRY IS FAILING.** It might be. But more likely it is only being slowed down in implementation. The delay provides an opportunity to

evaluate and strengthen the ministry.

3. **PEOPLE DON'T WANT OR NEED THIS MINISTRY.** All people need TLC. All people need someone praying for them. God calls us to "tend the flock." It's not a matter of "want."

4. **WE ARE ASKING TOO MUCH OF PEOPLE.** It may seem this way to people hearing the call for lay pastors, but two truths expose this myth for what it is:

a. It is God who is calling people to give themselves, not us. We are only the messengers.

b. Many people are not putting the Lord first in their lives. It is not that we are asking too much; it is that many people have their lives so full that they cannot hear God's call. The ministry is already at a minimum care level. Doing less soon becomes doing nothings.

What are you doing to call people into your ministry? Please tell by letter or phone and we'll share it in the next issue. Here is your chance to help other churches.

AXIOM 120

Do you have an answer?

Starting with this issue of *NETWORK NEWS* we will give answers to questions you have about lay pastoral care. As I traveled around the country, answer my phone and read letters, I have found these six questions to be the most frequently asked:

1. How much time does it take to be a lay pastor?
2. How do you select people to be lay pastors?
3. How do you assign people to lay pastors?
4. What do you do about the people who do not feel pastored unless the clergy pastoring them?
5. What do you do about the people who do not have lay pastors?
6. How do you determine who is to have lay pastors?

All of you have questions. Many of you have answers. Please let me have your questions. I have answers. It may not be a complete answer and it may not be useful to you, but it will help you to get some kind of answer.

If you have an answer to one of these six questions, let me have it. You can expand your ministry and make a difference to others by sharing your insights from your experience.

QUESTION: How much time does it take to be a lay pastor?

ANSWER: People considering being a lay pastor want at least a ballpark of the time commitment. There are so many variables that it is difficult to give a specific number of hours it will take each month. Two variables: 1) *The needs of your people*. If one lands in the hospital it will take more time for a few days or weeks. If one is a mature Christian and active in the church it may take only a few minutes each month. 2) *Your availability*. The time given has to coincide with the time you have available. Only a lay pastor could spend two hours a week visiting a nursing home resident. Another could only drop in for a short visit once a month.

The average time lay pastors spend are between two and ten hours a month, including making out the report. We asked two of our lay pastors at an equipping seminar how much time they spend. They had very different answers, but one thing they agreed on was that it didn't take as much as time as thought it would before they started.

The care of lay pastors' people becomes *their* ministry. They know the need. They know their availability and commitment. The decision is theirs.

And they pray and fulfill God's call they will be able to adapt their schedules, assess their people's needs and strike a balance between what they feel they *ought* to do and what they actually *can* do. Two to ten hours a month is a fair answer and a fair amount of time, give or take an hour or two.

AXIOM 121

For the next meeting of your Lay Pastors

This idea is for the part of your meeting where you divide your lay pastors into groups for a sharing time. Follow these steps after you have them in groups of eight or less.

1. Give them a paper with Psalm 27: 4a on it, "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after..." Follow this with the question, "What is the one thing I want to ask of the Lord regarding my ministry?"
2. Speak *briefly* about identifying one of the many questions they want to make of God regarding their ministry. It can be for themselves as a lay pastor or for one of their households.
3. Each share his or her request with the group, including some additional information as to why this "one thing" has priority over other possible requests.
4. Each one make his or her request of God in prayer while still in the group. Matthew 7:7--"Ask and it will be given you" and James 4: 2--"You do not have because you do not ask" will encourage them to ask in faith. They should take turns praying out loud. If some do not feel comfortable praying in front of others, they can pray silently, touching the shoulder of the one next to them when they have finished to signal their turn.
5. Ask them to write their request on the paper, to continue asking God in their private prayers through the weeks and to share at their next meeting how God responded to their request.
6. Give a teaching on the "one thing" given in psalm 27:4. You may want to include Solomon's request to God, recorded in 1 Kings 3:3-14.

AXIOM 122

A Paraphrase of Luke 8:11-15

This is the meaning of parable: The seed is the care offered by a lay pastor. Those along the path are the ones who bear about the care, but they treat as unimportant. The devil comes and takes away the offer from their hearts so they cannot receive care and be loved.

Those on the rock are the ones who receive the care with joy when it is offered, but they have no root. They receive it for a while, but because they feel threatened by a continuing relationship, they fall away.

The care that fell among thorns stands for those who receive it, but as they go on their way they are choked with worries, riches and pleasures. The caring relationship does not mature.

But the care on good soil stand for those with a noble and good heart, who receive the care, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times the care that was given.

The Meaning of the Parable

The sower is a lay pastor. The seed is the caring initiative.

1. Some fell on the path. The seed could not enter the soil because it was hard. It was trampled on and the birds ate it.

The recipient's spirit is resistant--hard. The care cannot penetrate. It is refused, disregarded and even despised trampled. It is completely rejected as is the lay pastor. The person is as though no care and had been offered--the devil removes it.

SUMMARY: The caring initiative is refused. There is absolutely no acceptance.

2. Some fell on rocky places. The seed grew rapidly because of shallow, warm soil. When the sun rose it withered because there was no moisture.

The recipient responds with immediate enthusiastic delight. The lay pastor is thrilled. The promise of a good relationship is sweet. However, because the person is given to emotional and tentative responses without the ability for meaningful and continuing relationship, the initial joy dies and the relationship dies.

SUMMARY: The initiative, at first accepted, does not last. The promising relationship dies.

3. Some fell among thorns. The seed did not grow alone. Along with it grew thorns. The thorns, competing for the available moisture and nutrition, outgrew the good plants. They, therefore, could not mature.

The recipient accepts the caring initiative. A mutually endearing relationship begins to develop. However, worries, struggles with family, job, finances and intentional pursuit of pleasures gradually take over. The relationship is disappointing because it never matures.

SUMMARY: The relationship, initially showing signs of growth, comes to an end: or, at best, is barely alive. It is stunted and undeveloped.

4. Some fell on good soil. The seed grew, producing strong plants. The roots grew deep. The weeds were eliminated. The soil was cultivated. The plants had sufficient moisture and nutrition. They produced, some more than a hundredfold.

The recipients accept the caring. A mutually endearing relationship develops. Both lay pastor and people have great joy.

SUMMARY: The care is gratefully accepted to varying degrees. A mutual relationship develops. The lay pastor receives more than he or she gives.

AXIOM 123

Five Unique Contributions Lay Pastors

Make To Their Church

1. Strengthens its heart.

The life of the church exists in two dimensions:

- 1) Loving God;
- 2) Loving others.

Jesus gave these as the first and second commandment. When Paul lists the spiritual gifts they are always in the context of love. Loving and caring are at the center of the church. You are helping your church keep centered.

2. Assures its future.

All mainline denominations have been losing members for several decades. With some spectacular exceptions, other churches have also been declining.

In *The New Realities*, Peter Drucker sights this decline and predicts that it will continue on into the new century with many churches, if not denominations, phasing out. The exception to this, he continues, will be churches which are pastoral. By "pastoral" he means giving attention to people and their needs. Lay pastoral care will not only assure your church of a future, but will be a major contribution to its growth.

3. Pro-actively ameliorates people's problems.

The caring relationship, as it develops, will help people "nip" their problems in the bud.

Because the care is recognized as real, genuine and natural, a person will find it easier to ask for help before a threatening problem assumes crisis proportions.

Because a lay pastor knows his people well, he or she can recognize needs before people can bring themselves to ask for help.

4. Models a lay ministry that works.

The lay pastors ministry will be known in the church as a viable ministry carried on by lay people, a proof that lay people can do most of what the oriented clergy do with some equipping and support. This will encourage other lay people to commit themselves to significant ministry and encourage the clergy to relinquish ministry to lay people.

5. Provides an example of translating belief into biography.

The purpose of faith, Bible knowledge, theology, Christian nurture, spiritual

maturity and commitment is to do service for the Lord. It can be said with caution, but with certainty, that sharing one's faith maybe more important than knowing one's faith.

Contemplation is not an end in itself, but is the means to doing effective ministry. "Faith without works is dead." You are a living example of this Biblical truth.

AXIOM 124

Patterns for pastoring

Jesus is our model for caring for people? Two things which are true of him are to be seen as patterns for the pastoral care we to give people. First, **the incarnation**. He was God in human flesh as he called to the world --Christmas. Second, **the cross**. He gave himself for us --Good Friday.

As we take a closer look at these two patterns we will see more completely what God has called us to be and do as pastors of our people, lay or professional (volunteer or vocational).

THE INCARNATION By coming into human history in the person of Jesus Christ, God said, "I am here for you." Being there for another is the essence of both the incarnation and pastoral care. "Being there for another" implies denial of self. Our pattern "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant"--Philippines 2:7.

Effective pastoral care often requires leaving the comfortable and the familiar, even the planned, to be with another in their struggle of celebration. Know that in being there for another you are following the pattern of your Lord. He intended the incarnation to continue through you for as God was present in the world in Christ, Christ is present to your people through you--Colossians 1:27.

THE CROSS It was on the cross that the ultimate in giving one's self was demonstrated. The pattern Jesus created on the cross was giving one's self for another. Jesus did not die for himself. He died for you and for me. The essence of caring is giving ourselves at the expense of our comfort and convenience. God's plan for Jesus was to give himself for us, not to stay comfortable. It was for him to die for us, certainly not an act of convenience. God's plan is for us to give ourselves to another regardless of the personal cost to us.

It takes a brave lay pastor to ask these two questions:

- 1) How am I there for my people?
- 2) How am I giving myself for my people?

Pray and you will be brave! Then, because he will be blessing his people through your acts, God will lift your life to new levels of meaning, fulfillment and joy. You will be there for your people; you will be giving yourself to them. The incarnation and the cross--what patterns for pastoring! With these patterns in mind, we are ready to rephrase the two questions:

- 1) How will I be there for my people?
- 2) How will I be giving myself to my people?

AXIOM 125

What every lay pastor can do: Encouragement

If your heart is broken, is there someone to pick up the pieces? Better yet, are you yourself a mender of broken heart? Can you help heal the hurts of others who may need your support? People are very poor who cannot enter their's lives nor allow someone to enter theirs.

Nevertheless, in the community of faith, "when other helpers fail and comforts flee," in addition of Him who remains the "Help of the helpless" the Christian is not abandoned; fellow believers are there with a key which opens many doors. That Key is encouragement!

In my years of experience in ministry, it has become quite obvious that is does not take too much to be an encourager. Furthermore, almost anyone can become a source of encouragement to another. And those laboring as lay pastors in any congregation will readily recognize that encouragement inevitably becomes a central aspect of their ministry.

Negatively speaking, the daily blows anyone faces and all the indignities life hurls at us, make encouragement one of the most needed ingredients in rebuilding lives. Positively, on the other hand, encouragement also is needed by those doing well, that they may remain on course and even excel in what they are seeking to achieve.

Sometimes a smile we give, a word we say, or any positive gesture we make, may keep a person from committing suicide or, at least, it can bring someone out of the darkness of despair into the light of a new, very decisive day.

Among God's people, too many individuals are missing the encouragement inherent in the faith they have embraced; they are not utilizing the spiritual resources available, in solving personal problems and living a full, abundant, fulfilling life.

How can you, then, fulfill a significant ministry of encouragement? Here are a few suggestions:

- 1) **Availability,** If people recognize you to be an encourager, they need to know when and how to find you in their times of special need. It may be through a phone call, by approaching you after a church function, or by being able to go where the person is who needs your encouragement. You must let others know that.

2) **Prayer.** There is hardly anything which encourages a fellow Christian more than the assurance that genuine prayers are being offered in his or her behalf. As you offer to pray for someone, be sure you do that not merely **for** the need requested but also **with** the person in question. Do not do that only once but several times. Inquiring, as you go along, on the progress being made. When being present to someone is difficult or impossible, confirm that you prayed through a letter, a card or a phone call.

3) **Hospitality.** A hospitable heart shall remain one of the major tests of true caring. Someone boldly affirmed one time: "I don't care how much you know till I know how much you care!" Although this relates to availability, it is not exactly the same thing. A hospitable heart entails hearing one out with empathy, of showing not just a momentary but a continuing interest in a person, in giving that individual one's undivided attention.

4) **Action.** Although one's words may be healing in nature, encouragement is mostly achieved through tangible action. The work of Mother Teresa of Calcutta gained worldwide attention not just because she verbalizes compassion for the poorest of the poor, but because she allows many who lived their entire lives in the streets, to die with dignity, many of whom expire in her own arms. You, too, may drive a needy person to a doctor, the market, or a church meeting. You may cut a flower from your garden and give it to someone. You may hug, phone, visit or write someone, bringing utter joy to that person. You may also go, literally, out of your way to surprise someone with a positive, loving gesture.

As old, familiar hymn challenges: "Dare to be a Daniel." I would also challenge you to dare being a Barnabas, whose name signifies a "son of encouragement, of consolation."

Encouragement may not solve a problem or cure an ill. But it lightens the burden one would carry and diminishes the sadness one must face.

Encouragement is a highly spiritual ingredient in the Christian life for it ultimately flows from the very heart of God through us, His channels of blessing. With that in mind, answer for yourself these questions posed by Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe and excel as an encourager:

Do you refresh anybody? When you are with people, does the life of God flow through you so that you refresh people? Or do you dry people out? Do you bore people spiritually? Lay pastors, you have a ready-made opportunity to encourage certain special people, those in your flock.

AXIOM 126

Another Paraphrase of Luke 8:11-15

(From a "Calling Forth" perspective)

This is the meaning of the parable: The seed the call to be a lay pastor. Those along the path are the ones who hear the call but they are deaf to it. The devil comes and takes away the call from their hearts so they cannot respond to it and become a lay pastor.

Those on the rock are the ones who begin their ministry with joy, but they have not root. They do it for a while, but because of rejection and other problems they fall away.

The call that fell among thorns stands for those who receive it, but as they go on their way they are choked with worries, riches and pleasures. They gradually cease ministry; or, at best, they do very little and do that grudgingly.

But the call on good soil stands for those who receive the call with a noble and good heart, who do the ministry, and by persevering produce a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times the time and effort put into it.

AXIOM 127

Perfection

Perfection is being right.
Perfection is fear.
Perfection is anger and
frustration.
Perfection is control.
Perfection is judgement.
Perfection is taking.
Perfection is doubt.
Perfection is pressure.
Perfection is the
destination.

Excellent is willing to be wrong.
Excellent is taking a risk.
Excellence is powerful.
Excellence is spontaneous.
Excellence is accepting.
Excellence is giving.
Excellence is confidence.
Excellence is natural.
Excellence is the journey.

-Anonymous

AXIOM 128

Needed: Love with skin on it

"There has never been a time in our history when the hearts of people were more needy that they are today. What I long to see is a lay movement of renewal in which the love Christ is incarnated in individuals," so wrote Terry Taylor, President of The US. Navigators.

Your lay pastoral care ministry, whether called "Shepherd Ministry," "Care Partner Ministry," "Lay Pastors Ministry," or whatever, is incarnating the love of Christ in the lives of your ministers. Do you recognize it as such? You who manage this ministry in your church and you who are doing the ministry need to know that you are the incarnation of Christ's love to your people.

If that seems an exaggeration of the truth, look at Colossians 1:27, "...the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory." To see what you truly are from God's position helps you know the significance of who you are and what you are doing.

These should be no sagging of responsibility and no lagging in action --PACE--when you see the importance of what God and your church has called you to do. Just as Jesus was God in human flesh, Christ's love with skin on it. Your call is to be there for them, listening, sharing, doing; yes, and even touching and hugging when appropriate.

Never forget, you are involved in a movement which God has raised up to care for his people the way he wants his people cared for. And that, according to I Peter 5:1-4 is "willingly," "eagerly," and "exemplary;" and according to Colossians 3:12-17, "compassionately," "kindly," "humbly," "patiently," and "lovingly." What a privilege to be Christ's love with skin on it. How desperately you are needed!

AXIOM 129

The one lost sheep Matthew 18:12-13

Read the parable. Do you have the one Jesus is talking of: strayed away, aloof, resistant, rebellious, independent, cut off, separated---LOST? And all by choice. No one is to blame but himself.

One of these three reasons may account for their lostness:

1) Sin. The desire to gratify the flesh became stronger than the desire to worship God. It felt better to be with non-Christian people than to be with the people of God. Whether overtly intentional or subtly deceived, the result is the same--LOST.

2) Re-arranged values. Pleasure and wealth became more valuable than spiritual life. Their perspective changed and they were drawn away.

3) Replaced relationship. Being unequally yoked in courtship, marriage, business, or recreation gradually separated the person from brothers and sisters in Christ. They are no longer "one in the bond of love" with Christians.

Now that he or she is lost, what do you do? Cut him off? Shake off the dust? Break fellowship? Forget him? Concentrate your efforts on the "ninety-nine?" Drop them for the easy way which is comfortable, gratifying and affirming?

What would Jesus have you do? He calls you to concentrate on the one--pray, creatively contact, be patient and persist with sensitivity. Find where he is and empathize, understand, respect and accept. go looking for him. Leave your place of comfort and security. Risk the loss of convenience and peacefulness. Agonize and search. Have your heart broken and feelings torn by thorns of continued rejection. Know that the flock is not complete without them. Believe that the Father is not willing that any be lost.

Keep looking and searching until he or she is found and brought back. Then rejoice - in heaven and in your heart. The pay-off is happiness for your and happiness for the one you brought back.

AXIOM 130

Do you have the answer?

Starting with the last issue, we began to answer questions you have about lay pastoral care. Send or phone your questions. We solicit your comments. You may have other answers which come from your experience. We will print them if appropriate.

QUESTION: How do you select people to be lay pastors?

ANSWER: There are two kinds of answer: 1) The method of selection, and 2) The qualifications or standards. The *method* can range from prayerfully enlisting those you believe would be effective lay pastors to making an open invitation to everyone interested. In either case, you will need to determine the *qualifications*.

When "the twelve" decided they needed people to "serve tables," they considered people who were of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom (Acts 6). These were their criteria. Here is a list we suggest:

- 1) They are to profess Jesus Christ as savior and Lord;
- 2) They are to be members of the church;
- 3) Their life is to indicate some maturity in the faith and relationships;
- 4) They are to evidence pastoral gifts;
- 5) They must in some way believe that God wants them to do this ministry (called);
- 6) They must be available for equipping and ministering, not already over-committed.

AXIOM 131

Results in Ministry

Two words spell out my desire for results in the ministry I do for the Lord - *effective* and *productive*. You want that too, right? We want what we are doing to be effective and productive. And that desire is pleasing to our Lord.

This desire surfaced for me while reading II Peter one morning, "For if you possess these qualities (listed in 1:5-7) in increasing measure, they will keep you from being *ineffective* and *unproductive*..." (1:8).

"These qualities" are faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, persistence, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Faith is the foundation (1:1). We are to add these other seven qualities in increasing measure. Then, just like adding respect, thoughtfulness, romantic initiatives and other qualities in increasing measure to marriage makes our relationship effective and productive, adding goodness, knowledge, etc. to our faith makes our pastoral care effective and productive.

I spend a lot of time in the seminars I give on the priority of **being**. **Doing** is of second importance. What we **are** is more important than what we **do**. In my years of seeing the Lay Pastors Ministry alive in individuals and churches I have observed that there is a direct connection between possessing "these qualities in increasing measure" and the effectiveness and productivity of ministry.

Paul's key to effectiveness and productivity was in keeping the faith (II Timothy 4:7); therefore he counseled Timothy to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace: (2:2) If he pursued these, the work would get done.

What does this say to you who manage the lay pastoral care ministry in your church and those of you who are doing the pastoring? Value your faith. Add to it goodness, knowledge, self-control, etc...in increasing measure. Do this and your ministry will be *effective* and *productive*.

AXIOM 132

They can do it

Lay pastors can do it! They often give more effective pastoral care than we professional pastors. Read this eye-opener news story from the March 6, 2002 issue of the *St.Paul Pioneer Press*.

"Arlene DeCandia, founder and president of Riverwood Conference Center in Monticello, was named Minnesota Small Business Person of the Year on Friday by the Small Business Administration.....While Riverwood prospered to become the nation's largest privately owned center in recent years, two other Twin Cities conference centers ran into financial difficulty.

"'The No.1 key to success is caring staff,' DeCandai aid...'Forget degrees and credentials; look for caring people.'"

You and I are saying the same thing about looking for people to be lay pastors (care partners, shepherds or whatever you call them): "For degreed and credentialed people can't do all the fact is, many of them have preaching, teaching, counseling and/or administrative gifts rather than pastoring gifts.

So, we continue looking for "caring people" to do what Riverwood was created to do - host corporate meetings - we can expect our churches to prosper by engaging "caring people" to do what Jesus created his church to do. They are "No.1 key to success."

AXIOM 133

Reports, Reports, reports

"..Filling out the monthly reports was a hassle." This observation was part of an article in an lay pastoral care newsletter of a church which was closing out its ministry. That reports are a hassle is no surprise. Part of our equipping seminar alerts lay pastors to this "necessary evil." But we also give the reasons for reports. There are three:

- 1) reports keep the leadership informed about just how the ministry is going;
- 2) reports are a means of accountability, something we all need if God's work is to flourish as he wants; and
- 3) Jesus' model of ministry included reporting - "When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done." (Luke 9:10).

Reporting, for many people, not all by any means, is a chore, a hassle. But, it is essential. God holds us accountable and we need to hold one another accountable. If lay pastors were football players, they would understand what the legendary coach of the famous Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi, said when he asked what he did, "My job is to make men do what they don't want to do so they can become what they want to be."

If you don't like making reports, know that it is one of those things we all have to do to make ministry successful. Accountability is one of the "Twelve Foundation Blocks" (see my Monograph) undergirding Christian ministry.

Ministry leaders can do at least one thing which will make reporting more palatable: respond. If lay pastors get no response month after month they conclude that no one reads them, that it is useless "busy work," and who wants to do that!

Here is what we are doing for the months of March and April. Members of the Lay Pastors Ministry Leadership Group will respond to the reports. These are the guidelines:

- 1) Read the reports carefully
- 2) Be alert to what the reports tell us about the lay pastors
- 3) Pray for the lay pastors and their people
- 4) Phone the lay pastors
- 5) Thank them for the report. Make such comments as:
 - "You are doing a good job."
 - "I commend you for..."
 - "It looks like you may be having some difficulty with..."

- Ask appropriate questions about the report or their ministry
- 6) Ask if there is anything the Leadership Group can do to make their ministry more effective or convenient.
 - 7) Ask if there is anything they want to tell the Leadership Group
 - 8) Ask if there are prayer requests and pray with them over the phone.

AXIOM 134

What do you expect?

The expectations we have of ourselves and the people we care for largely determine how we feel about our ministry. What we expect from ourselves and our people must be:

- 1) Realistic
- 2) Not overly ambitious
- 3) But sufficiently ambitious to stretch us.

We need to be aware of our expectations. They can lie just beneath our consciousness, undetected by our minds, but powerfully impacting our spirits with a miserable sense of failure, feelings of frustration and guilt. Ask yourself honestly in an intentional time of reflection and prayer, "Just what do I expect from my people"? This gives your expectations a chance to surface so you can deal with them. Your process may be something like the following.

First, what I expect of myself:

Expectation: "If I do what I should do, my people will accept me and love me."

Reality: "Some people will not accept me and love me or any other lay pastor."

Expectation: "I am the right person for this job these people will change and grow."

Reality: "My task as a lay pastor is not to change people, but to love them (PACE them). Their time for growth may not be now but now is the time for me to care for them. God is responsible for change and growth. I am responsible for loving and modeling."

Expectation: "I should be happy with my ministry, myself and my people all of the time."

Reality: "Sometimes nothing goes right and I am unhappy, even disgusted or at least frustrated with myself, the ministry and my people. My calling is not to feel good, but to be faithful in spite of bad feelings."

Next, what I expect from my people:

Expectation: "Everyone will be glad to see me."

Reality: "Some are not glad to see me. It is better to say to myself, 'I will be glad to see them.'"

Expectation: "Everyone will want me to help them."

Reality: Some are not open to help no matter how critical their need and some people have their own support system - friends or family. It is better to say, "I will give myself to help each one to the extent they need me and are open to my help."

Expectation: "These people will accept me eagerly because God has called me to care for them."

Reality: It may be that God gave them to care for because he knows they need someone praying for them and loving them, not because he knew they would accept me. After all, he gave his son, knowing people would reject him.

Expectation: (A negative) "No one will accept me."

Reality: Some will accept me and some will not. Of those who accept me, some will be very warm and some quite cool toward me. It is best to say, "Some may not accept, but I will accept them and give myself to them anyway."

Expectation: "I'll have to admit it, I am a perfectionist. I expect to do this ministry perfectly."

Reality: I am not perfect, the ministry is not perfect and my people are not perfect. I'll accept any level of expertise while I work to improve. Any way, the effectiveness of my caring is not dependent on my doing it to perfection but doing it faithfully and in the power of the Holy Spirit. He will use what I do in a perfect way.

AXIOM 135

A View from Within

Well, you've heard about it, you've read about it, you've discussed it, committed to it and now you're doing it! Or are you? And what is **It**? Why, shepherding, of course, but what is shepherding? What does it mean to you? There are as much answers to that last question as there are shepherds or "lay pastor."

How do you view your role? Do you see it as a job to be done as quickly and as painlessly as possible, skimming through your conversations with little intimacy or depth? Do you rush through the contacts as if the primary goal of shepherding were to put a check mark beside a name and turn in the paper work?

Or as you one of the those shepherds who procrastinate and avoid contacting your parishioners until you run out of time and end up skipping the next supervisory meetings because you have nothing to report? And then feel guilty? And then doesn't call because you're embarrassed that you haven't called? And you really don't know why you agreed to do this anyway?

Perhaps, however, you are a shepherd who received your assignment with a sense of curiosity and excitement, enthusiastically looking forward to meeting and getting to know a whole new group of people. You are realistic in your approach to shepherding, knowing that some of your relationships will be full of joy, some filled with troubles, that some people might be difficult while others could become your close friends.

Which view of shepherding do you have? A wise person once said, "A task without vision is drudgery; a vision without a task is a dream; a vision and a task together is the hope of the world."

In our case, a vision and a task together is the hope of a shepherding ministry. Without vision, your view of shepherding will be one of the first two depicted above. It will turn into drudgery, a task to "get through," for better or worse. The true meaning of shepherding one another will be the lost and will eventually fade away as one more superfluous church program.

Neither can you have a vision of what you're trying to accomplish without giving it structure and guidance. Dream that aren't founded in reality are doomed to failure. A shepherding program must have a central purpose with defined goals, and individual shepherds must know what their specific

responsibilities are toward their assigned families and must be committed to fulfilling the goals of the shepherding program in their church. They must "catch" the corporate vision while accomplishing individual tasks.

It is important, this shepherding business? Who is the new member going to talk to on Sunday morning? Their shepherd, perhaps? Who is the single parent going to turn to when help is needed? Maybe their shepherd. Where can a person go who just needs some company and friendly companionship? Who do people share their joys with? How do they find out where they might be needed? How are our busy ministers going to keep track of everyone in their congregation if we don't help by shepherding one another and by keeping them informed?

A congregation that is being shepherded feels cared for because they are cared for? They share their problems and concerns because it has become "safe" to do so. They share themselves with others because they are wanted. They become a part of the church family because they are welcomed into it. They learn to love others because they themselves are loved.

You can give this gift of love to your church by doing a joyful and enthusiastic member of your own shepherding ministry, by living and acting out Christ's love for us all. Catch the makes dreams come true. Perform the tasks assigned to you with that vision planted firmly in your heart. And remember this, it is by combining vision with task that you bring ministry to life and make dreams come true.

This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. John15:12

Becky Offutt, Washington D.C.
Member of the National Lay Pastors Network
Leadership Team

AXIOM 136

Communication: the Key to Relationships

A Pastor calling from Swift Current, Saskatchewan for the second time in three weeks said in the course of our conversation, "Communication is the key to relationships, isn't it?" Even though I had only met him over the phone it was obvious that we had a good relationship developing. I agreed that the key to relationship is sharing experience, thoughts, feelings, faith and plans.

Since caring takes place in a relationship and relationships are created by communication, the dynamics of what is going on between me and this pastor help to understand one of the basic principles of pastoral care: *the absolute imperative of lay pastors contacting their people regularly*. He has taken the initiative of contacting me and I like what is happening so well that I invited him to call me every few weeks. A mutually beneficial relationship has been created by this one-sided beginning.

Let's trace what's happening. The development will encourage lay pastors to continue being in communication with their people.

- 1) I was an author, completely unknown to this person.
- 2) We became as acquainted as you can over the phone, exchanging ministry and personal information.
- 3) We are hoping for the chance to meet soon.
- 4) The bonding will be more complete when we have the chance to talk eye-ball-to-eye-ball.

Now, let's apply this pastoral care relationships.

- 1) You start with people you know only by name. (In many churches there are exceptions to this.)
- 2) A formal acquaintance is made.
- 3) Through one-sided initiatives the formal acquaintance becomes a mutual but distant friendships.
- 4) Through regular communication the distance friendship gives way to personal, pleasant and mutual relationship. Now, pastoral care at a deep level can take place. You care about each other.

P.A.C.E gives the structure and the organized ministry gives the discipline for faithful communication.

AXIOM 137

Getting Your Ministry to the Center of Your Church

How to position your Lay Pastors Ministry at the center of your church:

1) Get it written into the mission statement.

Example: Immanuel's Church in Silver Spring, Maryland includes it in their five-point mission statement based on Ephesians 4:11 - The church will be Apostolic, Prophetic, Evangelic, Pastoral and Teaching.

2) Incorporate it into the goal statements.

Example: By a certain date you will have a Lay Pastors Ministry on line (or increase it to a certain size).

3) Official action by the official board to share in the ownership of the Lay Pastors Ministry. Update state of the ministry frequently.

4) Communicate the ministry to the congregation via church paper, bulletins, pulpit announcements, etc., regularly.

5) Make the ministry effective so it has a good image in the minds of the people doing and receiving it. The word will get around.

AXIOM 138

Transcendence, significance and community

People in our culture are searching for three values. Since these are basic human needs, fulfilled only by beliefs, commitments and actions consistent with our Creator's nature, we can know that people in our churches are seeking them.

However, people in our churches and out of them are trying to fulfill these needs in abortive ways:

Transcendence - TV programs and movies dealing with the supernatural, mystical and occult; New Age beliefs and activities, evaluating sports stars, entertainers and political figures to bigger-than-life profiles.

Significance - Hoping to find it in things, money and success.

Community - Seeking it in sex, gangs, social activities and the like.

To call people into pastoral care ministry, equip, commission and support them is to do them a great favor. We open their lives to fulfillment in their search for.

Transcendence - They are linking their lives with God in doing his work by the power of his supernatural Spirit;

Significance - Making a difference in someone's life generates positive and lasting feelings of worth and importance;

Community - To care for a part of God's family is to participate in true community.

AXIOM 139

"Nifty" Strategy for Calling Forth

After a couple of years of bulletin boards, pastoral letter, notices in the church bulletin and speaking to our Sunday School classes, our Communication Coordinators, Danny and Judy Harrison, came up with a new strategy for reaching potential Lay Ministers.

At our spring quarterly equipping, all Lay Ministers were asked to nominate from their circle of friendships up to four people whom they felt would be good Lay Ministers. A letter was sent to each person on the list explaining the need for more Lay Ministers. A follow-up call was made to invite each person to a fellowship and informational dinner. Twelve to fourteen people were at each dinner. There were great fellowship, delicious food, and an inspiring time of sharing about lay ministry.

Many questions were asked and answered. Every person who came to the dinner filled out an application to be a Lay Minister. What a great way of encouraging people to sign up for lay ministry!

If your strategies for calling forth are beginning to grow state, try this "nifty" approach...

- N** - Nominate potential Lay Ministers
- I** - Invite them to a dinner
- F** - Fellowship with good food
- T** - Tell them about lay ministry
- Y** - Yield to the Holy Spirit to call them into the ministry

AXIOM 140

Re-evaluating Can Be Helpful

Submitted by Joyce Janson, Pastoral Care Assistant, Sunshine Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Lay Pastoring is a two-way ministry. We expect our lay pastors to be a blessed by their ministry as they are to be a blessing to their families. We feel this is a necessary element to keep our lay pastors encouraged by and excited about their involvement in the Lay Pastors Ministry.

Sunshine Ministries in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a large congregation of nearly 1000 families. It would be ideal if we had enough lay pastors to assign one to each family but that's an impossibility. An alternative and more realistic goal is to assign our lay pastors to those who don't have other meaningful relationships within the church family.

But even those assignment need to be re-evaluated from time to time. As our congregational members become "plugged-in" to the life of our church, the contacts of a lay pastors are still appreciated but not as necessary as when they were first assigned, usually 2 to 3 years earlier. To be involved in the church and have a lay pastor is a bonus situation. But in large congregations, while some have many contacts through various involvements, other have none and are "waiting" for a lay pastor.

We decided our lay pastors should stay in touch with those families who are involved on an more limited basis, "releasing" them from their group and making room for a new assignment. We encourage those who've been "released" to become lay pastors themselves. In this we utilize our lay pastors where they are most needed, bring few families into existing groups, and encourage those who were once ministered to by the Lay Pastors Ministry to begin ministering to others.

But how do we decide when it's time to "release" a family or individual from our groups? This past March we used our monthly meeting to complete a questionnaire on each family. By briefly working through the evaluations on a case-by-case basis, the lay pastor and the shepherd decided together who should remain in the group and who could be "released."

At the conclusion of that time the lay pastors brought all their evaluation sheets to me (Pastoral Care Assistant) to discuss any changes or addition. Since our shepherds take responsibility for 5 to 10 lay pastors, they met with each one individually for about ten minutes. While our lay pastors were awaiting their time with their shepherds, we shared refreshments and encouraged brainstorming and an idea exchange. It was a successful and valuable meeting. Within an hour and a half, we accomplished a major task.

AXIOM 141

Your Lay Pastors Meetings

The regular meetings are more significant than just "an important meeting." They are what Loren Mead calls "the return from mission." Each meeting is a movement back from "mission" to "community." It is in the sanctuary of the familiar "community" that each person can get encouragement, nurture and support for "mission."

The community of lay pastors needs to hear how God's work has been going in their corner. Together they can ameliorate the hardships, share the successes and celebrate the ministry.

What the lay pastors do between meetings is true ministry. To be together reviewing and reflecting will send them back into their pastoral mission with new resolve, deeper commitment and sharpened insight.

There are four goals for these meetings:

1. To worship the Lord who calls us;
2. To review and reflect on ministry by verbally sharing individual experiences, good and bad;
3. To be further equipped; and
4. To celebrate the ministry so as to be affirmed, encouraged and renewed in spirit.

AXIOM 142

Bottom line

The "bottom line" is what makes all the difference! Whether it's business business or the Lord's business the important thing is the bottom line because it determines whether a business expands, maintains status quo or down-sizes.

What is the "bottom line" in the Lord's business? To give this question a sharp focus, what is the "bottom line" for the Lay Pastors Ministry? The answer is one word: prayer. Prayer determines whether the Lay Pastors Ministry in a church rises or falls, whether it expands, maintains status quo or down-size.

While few would dispute the vital role of prayer, few of us really believe it when judged by how much and how seriously we pray. I have been praying for years and, like many people reading this, I have been off again, on again. A book by Lloyd Ogilvia, *Conversation with God* has recharged my prayer battery. I have always been a great believer in the power of God released through prayer. I teach it and preach it wherever I go. Many of you have heard me say that prayer is the most important thing a lay pastor or leaders of lay pastoral care ministries can do.

These days I am believing in prayer more than ever and praying more with more faith. I believe that God will do what Jesus taught, "I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name..Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete." Praise God, I am believing and doing that. After (1) praising God, (2) admitting my sin, (3) being grateful and, after (4) spending about five minutes in silence, (5) I start on my "prayer shopping list", some items for others, some for this international ministry and some for myself.

I need a list when I go to the grocery store so I will get everything we need. The same is true of praying. It is a very specific list. "Fun" isn't the best word, but that's what it is every time I check off another requested answered.

AXIOM 143

Don't ever give up

Have you ever been tempted to give up on your lay pastoral care ministry? Don't! Some churches have. For a church to give up on this ministry when the going is tough is analogous to a person giving up on life when the chips are down and, in a depressed state, committing suicide.

An example of hanging on (persevering as Romans 5:3 and Hebrews 10:36; 11:27 and 12:1 puts it) is the daily paper, *USA Today*. It was labeled by analysts as "the most unprofitable newspaper in the world." For 10 years it lost money, \$600-million of it. The 11th year (1993) was profitable. The vision of the company's former president, Allen Neuharth, "to build the nation's newspaper," supplied the energy which kept it going through very difficult years.

The *St. Paul Discipleship* reported on January 10th, 1994 that *USA Today* after 10 long years has:

- 1) Establish itself as a fixture in American life;
- 2) Won readers despite much resistance;
- 3) Changed many journalists' attitudes about news coverage;
- 4) Published other publishers toward high quality color printing, more graphics, shorter articles and more summaries of news events.

What do we learn from this national daily?

- 1) We have a worthwhile "product", a ministry the people of our churches need and really want when they get it regularly;
- 2) The ministry is driven by vision, sometimes the vision of just one person;
- 3) Consistent pastoral care by laity will win people over in spite of resistance;
- 4) The success of this venture will change many vocational pastors attitude about the effectiveness of volunteer pastors' ministry;
- 5) The effectiveness of this ministry is pushing other churches (and even denominational leaders and seminaries) toward the Biblical teaching about every-member ministry.

We have to commit ourselves to at least these five actions:

- 1) Quality must be our hallmark;
- 2) Effective communication (publicity and promotion) must be consistently done;
- 3) Evaluation must be done frequently to be sure that what we are doing is being done the best way we are capable of doing it;

- 4) Vision has to be renewed regularly through prayer and brought to life in performance;
- 5) Perseverance with excellence has to be our goal.

Three words sum up what I believe the Lord may be saying to those who are on the verge of dropping the Lay Pastors Ministry: **Don't give up!**

AXIOM 144

More on Listening

If you wish to enter the world of those who are broken or closed in upon themselves, it is important to learn their language.

Learning a language is not just learning french or Spanish or German. It is learning to understand what people are really saying. the non-verbal as well as the verbal language. The verbal, exterior language is the beginning and is absolutely necessary, but you must go deeper and discern what it means to listen:

to listen deeply to another, to the cry flowing from the heart, in order to understand people, both in their pain and in their gift;

to understand what they are truly asking so that you can hold their wound, their pain and all the flows from it: violence, anger or depression, self-centeredness and limitless demands; the suffocating urge to possess, the refusal to let go;

to accept these compassion, without judging, without condemning...

If you come in this way, open, listening humbly, without judging, then gradually you will discover that you are trusted. Your heart will be touched. You will begin to discover the secret of communion.

---Jean Vanier, *The Broken Body*

Lord let me hear, hear more and more,
Hear the sounds of great rejoicing, hear a person barely sigh,
Hear the ring out truth and hollowness of those who live a lie,
Hear the wail of starving people who will die,
Hear the voice of our Lord in the cry,
Lord let me hear.

-- Ross Langmead, *On the Road*

AXIOM 145

Lay Pastors have what America wants

Researchers tell us that a great number of people are looking for love, the kind of love lay pastors have to give. The best definition of lay pastoral care, as you know, is "love with skin on it." That is the kind of warm and genuine relationship people are wanting.

Dr. Pepper Schwartz, Professor of Sociology at the University of Washington, commenting on the romantic themes of movies and TV shows, dating services and the personal ads in newspapers(SWM/NSTD is booking for SWF/NSTD), said recently, " I think the romances we see now are a break from the serious issues we have to deal with today, *a kinder, gentler emotional world we long for* from time to time."

***"Don't hold back; give yourself!
Don't think you have little to give;
you have lots to give"...***

Although he was speaking most directly of single men and women (39% of America's adult population) his observation regarding the kind of world "we long for" includes most of population. Lay Pastors, that's what you have to give -- kindness and gentleness, the kind of love you offer. Don't hold back; give yourself! Don't think you have little to give; you have lots to give -- that "kinder, gentler." genuine relationship. Let it come through! Let it germinate and enlarge in your spirit during your personal time with the Lord as you pray for your people. Then let it push through into your lives in your personal contacts, letters, cards, phone calls or other ways you have of letting them know you care.

What do you need to do today to be "love with skin on" to your people, to be that kinder and gentler person in their lives. Jesus must have had something like this in mind when he gave the new commandment, "Love one another." He knew this is what people would be longing for and therefore chose you to give it.

AXIOM 146

The Lay Pastors Ministry is one of sweet "P's"

PRAYER

- It is a ministry of prayer
- Prayer is the most important thing you can do.
- Prayer will do many things:
 - a. It will build a relationship between prayer and pray-or.
 - b. It will generate creative contacts.
 - c. It will heighten your concern for people you prayer for.
 - d. It will deepen your sense of responsibility for them.

PRESENCE

- It is a ministry of presence.
- It is not a problem solving ministry but a "being with" ministry.
- It is neither a counseling nor a discipling ministry but both may take place in "being with."
- Ways of being present: visit, phone, cards, letters, thoughts.

'PRECIATION

- It is a ministry where you are appreciated.
- You are appreciated by those you care for.
- You appreciate the privilege of serving the Lord, making a difference in someone's life and serving your church.

PROCRASTINATION

- It is a ministry of pitfalls and perils.
- Procrastination is one of the biggest problems you face.

WHY?

- a. Pastoral Care doesn't have to be done today.
- b. It probably doesn't need to be done this week.
- c. Putting off contacts produces lethargy and indifference.
(Be thankful for reports that set deadlines for us)

PROBLEMS

- It is a ministry of challenging difficulties.
- Problems test your commitment and call to this ministry.
- Many problems have no solution, at least by us. So we have to settle for "being with" people in their struggles.
- Jesus never said ministry as "grace builder," building patience, forgiveness and perseverance into our lives.
- Problems are offset by at least 90% successes.

PAY-OFFS

- It is a ministry of rewards and prizes.
- One of the greatest prizes for faithful ministry is the joy of doing ministry for the Lord who has gifted and called us.
- The ministry leads to many serendipities (unexpected pleasantries).
- The greatest reward is the future "crown of glory "(1 Peter 5:4).

PETER

- It is a ministry called forth by the Christ Shepherd through the Apostle Peter - *1 Peter 5:1-4*.
- "Tend the flock of God that is your charge." (RSV)
- "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care." (NIV)
- In doing it we know we are doing something our Lord calls forth.

AXIOM 147

About goals and obstacles in ministry

The "Ask Dave" is a featured column in St. Paul Pioneer Press. "Dave" is Dave Winfield, a popular player for the Twins. Kids are invited to call questions in to be answered by him. One asked, "were the obstacles you had to overcome to reach your goal of becoming a professional baseball player?"

His answer helps us lay pastors deal with our obstacles. And it stimulates us to identify our goals, goal for caring for the people of God has given us to pastor. His answer: "Everyone who has a goal in life is met by obstacles. The key is how to overcome them."

Three of the obstacles he continued are the same lay pastors have to overcome:

1. "Suffering a couple of injuries."

We don't get physical injuries but we do get hurt emotionally. Rejection hurts our feelings. People not coming to us in times of need bruises our ego. Our spirit is nearly broken by indifference. We are fatigued by so much to do.

2. "Adjusting..."

We, too, have to adjust our schedules, our likes and dislikes of people, our focus so we truly listen more and talk less, our self perception so we see ourselves as ministers instead of volunteers. Oh, those adjustments are hard to make.

3. "I had to learn techniques and skills to enable me to succeed..."

The basic equipping at the beginning just doesn't cut it for the long haul either in baseball or pastoring. One has to keep learning and building expertise.

Your goal is to be an authentic and effective pastor. This means to **P A C E** your people faithfully, build an endearing and enduring relationship with them, and grow in your love for them. It means using the spiritual gift(s) God has given you and regularly renewing your answer to his call to be a lay pastor. It also means to set short-term goals which feed into your mega-goal of being a good pastor. Is it time again to review your goals on your knees?

Dave Winfield's final words are a challenge to everyone doing ministry. "I put on blinders to distractions and die whatever was necessary to be successful in my field, and you can too." *The same holds true for lay pastors!*

AXIOM 148

God has brought forth the Lay Pastors Ministry

God created...and he continues to create. New babies and the acreage the volcano has added to the island of Hawaii the past few years are evidence.

God has brought forth the Lay Pastors Ministry...and he continues to extend its borders. New churches getting the ministry on line and the structural expansion internationally are evidence.

Look at What God has done to the structure of this movement just since January of this year:

1. Provided a gifted consultant to lead the National Leadership Team in strategic planning;
2. Led an individual to give "seed money" to make both the planning and doing the plans possible;
3. Gave unity of mind and spirit to take giant steps, ensuring the future of this ministry;
4. Provided a staff to work with the Leadership Team and Advisory group: President, Executive Director, Secretary and Board of Directors.

The structure is only important in that it gives the people involved the ability to all move in the same direction, just like the skeletal of one's body gives it the ability to move all parts in the same direction. The people listed by office above(Executive Director, etc) will make wise use of this new structure because of what they are. Their character is described by the acronym FISF, a good Christian symbol:

F - Faithful (*1 Cor. 4:2, Matt.25:21*)

I - Integrity ("*What you see is what you get*")

S - Selfless (*Lk. (9:23)*)

H - Happy (*Matt. 16:24; Phil.4:4*)

The future of Lay Pastors Ministry is assured by the continuing creative work of God.

AXIOM 149

An Inventory of Relationships

Here is a way of finding out for yourself how your relationship is developing or how you stand with each of your people. In your heart of hearts, and in the presence of Jesus, take each of your people for a walk through these 12 areas. Place a check mark in front of the choices that describe your relationships, contact your Pastoring Leader.

1. CARE:

- a. I care about this person more than they care about me.
- b. This person cares about me more than I care about them.

2. SEE POTENTIAL:

- a. I can see great potential for this person.
- b. This person does not seem to have much potential

3. ON PEDESTAL:

- a. I am putting this person on a pedestal.
- b. This person is putting me on a pedestal.

4. THOUGHTS:

- a. I think very highly of this person.
- b. I am not able to think positively about this person.

5. COMPATIBILITY:

- a. I am totally compatible with this person.
- b. I am somewhat compatible with this person.
- c. I am somewhat incompatible with this person.
- d. I am totally incompatible with this person.

6. SPIRITUAL LIFE:

- a. I am elated with this person's spiritual life progress
- b. I am disappointed with this person's spiritual life progress.

7. OPENNESS:

- a. This person is quite open to me.
- b. This person does not seem to be open to me.

8. PRAYER:

- a. It is to know what to pray for specifically for this person.
- b. It is difficulty to know what to pray for specifically for this person.

9. SHARING:

a. This person has shared some of the deeper things of his or her life with me.

b. This person has never shared any of the deeper things of his or her life with me.

10. FONDNESS:

a. Inwardly I really like this person.

b. Inwardly I am unable to really like this person.

11. RESPECT:

a. I have great respect for this person.

b. I am not able to have much respect for this person.

12. SIMILARITIES:

a. We seem to have similar goals, attitudes and values in life.

b. We do not seem to have much in common.

AXIOM 150

I need somebody with skin on

A little boy sat by the road. He was sobbing one sad day -- for from the local orphanage he had run away.

The chaplain searching for him, found by the way. He sat down close beside the boy, "Tommy" he did say, "why did you run away?"

"My son, my son, please don't run. Don't you know it's true that the tender Father in heaven dearly cares for you; He dearly cares for you."

The boy looked up with tear-filled eyes, and thoughtfully replied, "Kind sir, I know what you say is true and cannot be denied, it cannot, it cannot be denied, be denied.

"But I need somebody with skin on; somebody that I can touch; someone whose warm human arms I can feel, who will let me know they love me very much.

"It will help me to know about God's great love, it will help me to take this strong hand -- if someone will just show what he's like. Through someone I can best understand."

We all need somebody with skin on; somebody that we can touch; someone whose warm human arms I can feel, who will let me know they love me very much.

So, be somebody with skin on.
There's someone whose life you can touch.

AXIOM 151

Guidelines For Assigning

A frequent question at seminars is, "How do you go about assigning people to lay pastors?" The following process and guidelines are used by Hope Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis after people have been equipped and accepted.

1. A designated task force of the Ministry Leadership group will meet to make the assignments within one week after the equipping seminar.
2. Prayer is the first order of business, asking the Holy Spirit to guide the decision-making process.
3. The following guidelines are used:
 - a. Lay Pastors' request, staff recommendations and other requests are honored if possible. Most names are from Priority #1 and #2 lists. (Priority #1 are households only peripherally involved and those whose only church activity is Sunday morning worship. Priority #2 are households involved in the church life but whose involvement does not include caring relationships.)
 - b. Assign between 5 and 10 households to each lay pastor.
 - c. Take into account gender, age, family, temperament, occupation, marital status, church activity, community involvement, social status, personal and spiritual maturity. Strive for compatibility while working toward giving each lay pastor a "mix" of people.
 - d. Some assignments should be obviously avoided such as assigning a 23-year-old single girl to a 25-year-old single man or a single person to a married couple of a similar age, etc. While providing a "mix," avoid unnecessarily tempting "matches."
4. Log the assigned households and pertinent information such as names, address, phone number, children, ages, marital status on a special form. Mail this to the lay pastors for their review and acceptance or modification. A cover letter includes;
 - a. Confirmation of their call to be a lay pastor.
 - b. Affirmation of their decision to be a lay pastor.
 - c. Process and schedule for returning the signed form
 - d. Information on follow-up activity such as returning the forms to the lay pastors, notification of the households and scheduling the initial contact.
 - e. Forms returned by the lay pastors are reviewed, revised as necessary and

processed to produce the final assignment lists.

5. Using the finalized lists, send letters to assigned households information them that they now have a lay pastor, who it is, and asking them to expect a contact from their lay pastor in the near future. The lay pastors are give the copy, the lay pastors initiate the contacts for the "first visit."

NOTE: Lay Pastors should have a supply of Brochures, Availability Cards, First Visit and Monthly Report forms.

AXIOM 152

Sometimes It takes a long time

We live in a fast culture. We are accustomed to everything from fast food to the fast lane. We expect things to happen quickly. We are impatient. If it doesn't happen over night we are ready to abandon it and get to something that will happen now.

This is okay for many things, but some things cannot be accelerated. It still takes nine months for a baby. It takes 12 to 20 years for a complete education. Most relationships take time to mature. Trust, commitment, bonding and acceptance take time.

Consider the Chinese bamboo. The bamboo seed requires watering and fertilizing for four years. During that time nothing seems to be happening to the seed. During the fifth year the stalk bursts through the ground and within six weeks the bamboo grows 90 feet.

Consider lay pastoral care. Relationship takes any kind of pastoral care possible, lay or clergy (volunteer or vocational). And with many people, it takes a long, long time to build the relationship. Friendship, trust, confidence, acceptance, commitment and bonding do not happen over night.

Lay Pastors usually find that they strike up a relationship rapidly with some of their people. But it seems that others are not open at all to their caring initiatives. The normal behavior, then, is to spend time with those who accept the lay pastor with open arms and to avoid or neglect the others.

When we hear the Scripture clearly, "Tend the flock of God which is your charge," God means to care for the slow ones as well as the fast ones. You happen to have some of the slow ones. What do you do? Consider the Chinese bamboo. Keep watering and fertilizing the relationship with prayer, love and appropriate contacts. Be faithful. Keep doing it. It seems nothing is happening, but, believe God and the process. Something is happening! It may take five years but so be it. It will happen. The relationship will come. So will the word, "Well done good and faithful servant."

P

AXIOM 153

Clergy, Please Read!

Several months ago we were requested to write an article for pastors who are resisting a lay pastoral care ministry. The following was excerpted from the newsletter issued by St. John's Lutheran Church in Stacy, Minnesota last December. These words from Al Valarious will say more than any article we might write on the subject.

Dear friends in Christ,

On Sunday, December 5th, fur more people will be commissioned as lay shepherds...

The lay shepherding program has given a new dimension to my ministry as your pastor. I can't begin to express how grateful I am to the lay shepherds for assisting me in the care of the congregation. Fifty-nine new members (24 families) joined our congregation this year. The ability to include these new people into the life of our congregation is significantly increased through the ministry of the lay shepherds.

It has also been a great pleasure for me to train the shepherds to do ministry. So far we've had three retreats together during witch the following topics were discussed:

- 1) How to Understand God's will;
- 2) Holiness; and
- 3) How to Deal With Hot Topics Such As Abortion, Suicide and Premarital Cohabitation.

We also meet quarterly for fellowship and support.

These training sessions give me an opportunity to teach. It give me the same experience Jesus had as he trained his apostles. The lay ministry has become a strong motivating factor for me as pastor of the congregation... Lay year the lay shepherds donated over 1,350 hours of ministry.

AXIOM 154

How to Publish a (Near) Perfect Church Newsletter

By Robert W. Fisher, Communication. 145pgs.

Do you need some help in putting out a better newsletter? Then let Robert W. Fisher of Canton, Ohio help you.

Several years ago, as a Methodist minister, he sensed many churches were looking for help, so he began "Communication Resources" to meet the need. Since then he has become a newsletter specialist and a real help. His insights and suggestions have been put together in How To Publish A (Near) Perfect Newsletter.

What are the basic requirements for a good newsletter? There are four:

- 1) It must be attractive so as to catch people's attention;
- 2) It must get them to read it;
- 3) It must possess a genuineness which will make it believed;
- 4) It must secure decision and get action.

Fisher' book deals with all four of them in as easy-to-read format.

The "Introduction" will make you aware that he has been in the shoes of those putting out newsletters. He knows whereof he speaks.

Some of the chapter title will begin to help you see he covers the subject from A to Z. For example:

- "The Mission Of Your Newsletter"
- "Using Volunteers"
- "What To Write"
- "Primer On News Writing"
- "Targeting Your Audience"
- "The Editor's Three Hats"
- "Design and Layout Basics"
- "Using Graphic, Photographs"
- "Organizing Your Newsletter Material"
- "Adding Interviews"
- "Reporting Sensitive Issues"
- "Duplicating and Distributing"

He concludes with suggestions on "Rating Your Letter" and "Surveying Your Readers." He provides a sample questionnaire. This is the most helpful book that I have come across since the '60s when I first became involved with church newsletters.

AXIOM 155

One Lay Pastor's Story

Debbie Treadway, a lay pastor at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, told her personal ministry story during the worship services Sunday, April 24, the closing event of CONFERENCE '94. (Note that at Frazer lay pastors are known as "lay ministers" and the Lay Pastors Ministry as the "Lay Minister Program")

Debbie's story:

"I don't know if any of you in the congregation today have had the feeling in your Christian life, as I have had, that I just don't do enough to serve the Lord in one-on-one ministry to others. Despite being heavily involved in other church ministries, about five years ago, I felt that I wasn't fulfilling a call on my life to care for others one-on-one. That is when I decided to become a part of what was at that time a fairly new ministry - the Lay Ministry Program.

"Frazer's Lay Ministry Program is designed to be an arm of the church staff to help lay people minister to other lay people in all types of situation. Much as we would sometimes like to think that the staff can be everywhere and do everything, no church staff, no matter how gifted, can possibly minister to every need of everyone in their congregation. Every congregation has members who are gifted in many areas, and within this congregation are people who can pray, be available to others, contact others and be an example beyond what the Lord expects of all of us as Christians. Some members of this church possess the gifts to be part of this ministry, but for a variety of reasons, may feel unsure about answering a possible call of God to participate. I challenge you not to be afraid to answer that call.

"The Lay Ministry Program provide training to equip you to handle problems, comfort people in their grief and share joys and sorrows. It also provides resources to turn to if families' individual problems or the responsibility of being a lay minister occasionally seem overwhelming. But the most important qualification for success in this ministry is caring about the families assigned and being faithful to God and his call.

"This ministry and the Frazer families I have seen fortunate enough to care for, many of whom were strangers at the beginning, have given me much more than I could ever give to them. This church needs more lay ministers, and if you think your gifts lie in this area, I urge you to prayerfully consider becoming a part of this ministry. The blessings are immeasurable."

AXIOM 156

Caning for Old People

The following was an article written by Linda E. Tofte, Director of Lay Pastoring of aley United Methodist Church in Beavercreek, Ohio. It appeared in a recent issue of their newsletter, Care Gram.

"Two months ago I attended an all day seminar on caring for older persons which was sponsored by The Spiritual Health Care Forum of Greater Dayton. The presenter was David B. Oliver, Ph.D., a specialist in the field of aging, with a special focus on the frail elderly.

"One of the first things Dr. Oliver asked us was if anyone attending the seminar was an uncomfortableness dealing with older people. Virtually all hands went up. 'Your uncomfortableness is limiting to you and devastating to the people you serve,' was his reply. We don't want to see ourselves reflected in the eyes of someone who is old, sick and/or frail, so our visits get shorter and less frequent.

"All of us come into contact with older people, in our families or perhaps in our flocks. It is extremely important that we turn our fears over to God and focus not on ourselves but on how we can accord worth and hope to them.

" It's helpful to learn about the physical aspects of aging and dying. Dr. Oliver reminded us that 'none of get out of this alive.' Then learn about the psychological, social and spiritual situation of the elderly people you care for. Ask questions - 'Who's loving you now?' 'Who do you rely on for support?' 'Do you believe in God?'

"Listening is crucial. Be patient, as speech is often slow. The same stories are repeated over and over - put a new twist on things by asking if you can tell it to the older person, or ask if he/she can explain more about one particular aspect of that favorite story. If you know the person well, go one step beyond listening ask for their advice/opinion on something that's important to you.

"In general, doctrine and creed are much less important to the elderly than spirituality. God is their confident - He won't die like most of their friends have! The Psalms are very popular because they speak about life situations. Singing or listening to the old hymns is always welcome."

AXIOM 157

Two Scriptures

Jesus' barbed responses to the Sadducees' trick question fits many churches in the 90s, "is not this way you are wrong, that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?" Tow of the Scriptures many do not know are.

Ephesians 4:11&12 -- Pastors are to equip God's people to do ministry.

I Peter 5:1-4 -- Your charge is to care for God's people, the members of your church.

The power many do not know is the Holy Spirit(Acts 1:8). Heb. 4:12 informs us that this power is released we activate the Scriptures.

The Sadducees's position on the resurrection was determined by (1) tradition, (2) reason, and (3) arrogance. It is as though these three elements - theology they inherited, the best cognitive powers they could muster and their pompous spirits - conspired to create the illusion of being right. But Jesus said they were wrong.

The position on lay ministry held by too many of us (I include both clergy and laity) is also the product of tradition, reason and arrogance. We are caught in the same web. Though the theological issue is different we are just as wrong, just as deluded, and just as threatened.

Like the Sadducees, we also known our tradition - the pastor does the ministry and the people receive it. We also use our best minds to come up with studies and programs based on our tradition. We also are arrogant, unaware of our delusion and therefore very slow to make the paradigm shift to the Scriptures and to the power.

This sticky web explains why the tenacious expenditure of human resources, energy and money are without corresponding results. It also explains so much of the frustration, discouragement, anger and burn-out among both clergy and laity. Too many of us "know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God." It isn't that we don't know *about* them or *where they come from*; it's that we "see but do not perceive and hear but do not understand."

But there is good news! I am sending an ever increasing number of churches making a major paradigm shift from the traditional way of doing ministry to knowing both the Scriptures and Power. I am glad you are among those!

AXIOM 158

What to do when a ministry is faltering

I often tell people that no ministry goes by itself including the Lay Pastors Ministry. They seem to know what I am saying and agree. If you are going to have a successful ministry you have to be always working at it.

After some few years many ministry leaders begin to see signs that indicate the ministry may be needing some special attention., Reports indicate less activity by some. The enthusiasm of some has waned. The inability to get through to some people leave a feeling of frustration, disgust and/or failure. Attendance at the regular meeting is slipping.

Some of you, as you read this, may be saying, "That's us." The following guidelines will save your ministry from further decline, arrest it in its tracks and give it new life. Here at Hope Church we are in the process of following these guidelines.

1. Assess the situation so you are dealing with facts, not just impressions.
2. Consider it a possibility, not a problem. It's easier and more fun to work with possibilities. Have you ever heard this:

A most remarkable man

Commends a very remarkable plan.

You can do what you want

If you don't think you can't;

So don't you think you can't, think you can.

3. Know that you have some decisions to make.
4. Check your vision, your support (how many share ownership), your passion (where your heart is), your resources.
5. Pray and counsel your leaders.
6. In whatever ways you need to reorganize and renew, set your goals and make your plans. Be prayerfully creative and specific.
7. Make whatever changes you need to make, "letting the chips fall where they may." Some changes may be: make adjustments in policies and procedures; secure new leadership; move from negative talk to positive; terminate the ministry -- if it's dead, either bury it or resurrect it.

AXIOM 159

Do Lay Pastors have what Doctors do not have?

One of the big issues in American government currently is our president's health care proposal. The diagnoses of most political pundits is that the vital signs indicate a near-death condition. Senator Phil Gramm(R-Tex.) said, "The only difference between the Clinton health plan and Elvis Presley is that Elvis may still be somewhere out there alive."

The biggest problem, however, with the president's plan is not what most critics cite, according to Arthur Caplan, director of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at the University of Minnesota. In his weekly editorial in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, he wrote, "what the average American knows is missing from the health care system is humaneness.

His professional judgement is that in the hospitals, clinics, doctor's offices of nursing homes "no one has any time to talk." He included doctors, social workers and nurses in this judgement. He contends that no one is supporting the patient and the family "emotionally, psychologically and spirituality."

Caplan's final salvo: "The president needs to tell the American people that he wants to put an end to the impersonal, uncaring world that too often characterizes American health care."

The message in this for us who are concerned that about the pastoral care of the members of our churches is that we have what is missing in the care given by health care providers - care, Christian TLC!

If any lay pastors are thinking that they are not doing anything important by just being with a person, by just being there for them, by just listening, by just loving, by just being an example of what a caring person is, know now and forever that what you are doing, in the words of biomedical ethicist Caplan, is basic to all caring. You are supporting people "emotionally, psychologically and spirituality."

Apparently training cannot produce a caring spirit and money cannot buy it. But you have it to give. This is what Jesus meant when he called Peter to "Take care of my sheep." It is what Peter meant when he wrote, "Tend the flock of God." Lay Pastors, you are doing what God called you to do and what your church equipped and commissioned you to do. How can anyone feel he or she is not doing anything important when they are being God's "love with skin on it!" You have what most doctors and other health care providers are not giving. God gave it to you so you can give it to your people regularly and freely.

"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" - Jesus(John 13:17)

AXIOM 160

Lay People do the keeping

Lay Pastoring is a rapidly growing phenomenon. It's linked to God's activity of renewal within the Church universal. It's refreshing to be a part of this long awaited movement of the Holy Spirit. God is doing an old thing in a new time. Shepherding one's brothers and sisters was around before Cain and Abel. We are called to become our brother's keeper! That's the way God intended ministry to be lived.

One of the new strategies for doing church in the future comes from Carl F. George. In reading through his book "Prepare Your Church for the Future" I came upon a chapter entitled "Structure Cells to Do Pastoral Care." According to Dr. George, the Meta-Church of the future will be made up of small cells of ten-or-so -people. These cells will include two kinds: Care-centered nurture groups and task groups.

Interestingly, the clue that will hold the nurture group together is not strong biblical teaching or active social praxis, but pastoral care. Dr. George contends that the lay leader of each nurturing group will function as a pastor. What is remarkable is that the vision that guides George's Meta-Church concept is one of pastoral care.

For over seventeen years, Dr. Melvin Steinbron has been heralding a similar message: Let Lay People Do It! God calls and gifts lay people to pastoral ministry. It is my experience that called Laypeople will become responsible keepers. If given the opportunity, they will invest their time, energy, and money to learn the skills required to do a competent job of pastoring.

AXIOM 161

The "E" of P.A.C.E. an Example of Faith

Being an example is the difficult fourth of the fourfold commitment by lay pastors. The other three are easier to understand, easier to do and easier to know whether you have done than or not. Look at the four:

P-Prayer

You know how to do this, how often you do it and how well.

A-Available

You told them you are available and that stands. You know how to be available.

C-Contact

The "rule of thumb" is one contact a month, two of which are to be home visits in a year's span. You know whether you are doing it.

E-Example

How do you this? How do you know if or when you have done it? How much is enough? Just what is expected?

A true life vignette of being an example is given by Ronald Flowers in the Winter(1994) true of Leadership. He struggled with how to be an example. Leaders are to be examples, but examples of what?

His wife, Karen, was sure that people needed to see the real person, not a projected image of perfection. "Do you know what I think?" she asked. "I think they need to hear about some of the struggles we have as a family, too...It would be good for them to know that we and the kids go through similar experiences of temper outbursts and anger, conflicts of wills, quarreling, and that we sometimes hurt one another's feelings, just as everyone else does."

Ronald's position was that people should not look at him but at Christ. His faults should not be seen by those he ministered to.

These two ways of how we believe we should be seen by our people, perfect or imperfect, is our struggle. Do we hide our true selves from people for whom we are to be an example of do we "let it all hang out?"

Most people initially recoil at the idea of being an example for the flock. They ask, "who am I to be an example?" Knowing themselves, the inward question is, "what kind of an example am I?" or, "How can I be an example?"

The common idea is that to be a Christian example requires that we be perfect. And we all know that the only perfect one is Jesus. But, God has not called us to be a faultless representation of what a Christian is. Our people already have the perfect example, Jesus!

What they need now is not another perfect person, but an imperfect one like themselves, one who has found Christ and continues to be his even though visibly faulty. They need an example of another human who, in spite of weakness and failure, continues in their walk with Christ and are excited about worship and services. They are helped by having such an example.

AXIOM 162

How do you spell LOVE?

Spell it TEAR:

- T - time
- E - empathy
- A - acceptance
- R - respect

Add another "A" and spell it TEA²R:

- T - time
- E - empathy
- A - acceptance
- A - affection
- R - respect

TIME: When we truly love one another, we have time for them. In fact, we will spend as much time as we possibly can with them. Taking time to talk with one of our flock at either a planned or chance meeting tells them they are a significant person in our lives. If we have to get going as soon as we can respectfully get away without being rude and exposing our indifference to them, they pick up our signal that they are not really important to us. Our show of polite interest fails to disguise our true inner state of detachment and aloofness. Taking time for them tells them we love them.

EMPATHY: Being with a person does not necessarily mean "being with." Physical presence may not be any more than just physical presence, coming short of emotional and spiritual presence. We need someone to be with us in much more than a physical sense, one who understands us and our life situation whether happy or sad, disheartened or celebrating, healthy or hurting. We need one who is involved with our thoughts and feelings as much as another human being can be involved. Sympathy does something for us. It says a person is aware of our plight, but our spirit cries out for far more than that. We need someone who enters into our condition, ameliorating our pain or enhancing our joy. By feeling with a person, we are telling them we love them.

ACCEPTANCE: We are to accept all persons! This is another way of saying that we are to love all persons. Granted, some people are difficult to accept. Differences of all kinds separate us from one another: cultural, age,

social, behavioral, physical and others. ***When lay pastors are assigned a flock of people to care for, there are bound to be some who are not "our kind." But they are God's "kind."*** He loves them, Because of their new birth, God accepts them. Acceptance goes far beyond consenting to have them in our flock. Even beyond praying for them and contacting them. It is taking them into our heart, letting them be who they are without judging them or being critical of them. It is seeing that their "objectionable difference" are like the variety of answers which make a garden beautiful. To the extent we seek to fully know them, understand them, see the beauty of their person, take them as they are and unconditionally accept them into our hearts, we are telling them we love them.

AFFECTION: Jesus' new command to love one another includes both our hearts and head. He used the word "agape," which in a narrow sense, means to desire the best for a person at whatever the cost to you. In its wider use, it includes having affection for that perfection. When Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him, twice he used "agape," the narrow sense of love, and once, "phileo," the wider sense. He combined love from the head, the kind of love which can be commanded(to will the best for another) with love from the heart, the kind of love generated by two people having things in common. A thermometer registering affection would rise to different heights for each person in a lay pastor's flock, but it would register degrees of affection for each one.

It is not possible to have affection for everything one does and is, but it is possible to have affection for the person. People pick up on the warmth of affection. It is a way of telling them we love them.

RESPECT: Paul wrote that we are to honor one another above ourselves. This is respect. Everyone is superior to us in several ways. Respecting them is observing their superiority, affirming them in it, and sincerely holding them in high regard. They will be aware of our respect subconsciously if not consciously and feel loved. This is one kind of respect. Another kind of respect is holding a person in high regard no matter what they do or do not do. It is acknowledging that a person has a God-given right to be what they wish to be, to do with their lives what they will. God has respect for them as freewill human beings. This does not mean that he proves of what they are but it does mean that he respects their right to be that (or do that). He does not strike them dead when they turn from his way. Respect acts like a detergent on our judgmentalism. God will judge. He calls us to love. Respect is way of telling people we love them.

AXIOM 163

From the *Traditional* to the *New* in Six Steps

How does a church get from where it is to where it wants to be? How does it take part in the "Second Reformation?" How does it extricate itself from the traditional model so it can be different?

FIRST: The spiritual leader must be committed to giving the ministry to the people.

SECOND: This Commitment needs to be shared with the other leadership of the church - the staff and the official board.

THIRD: It needs to be preached from the pulpit and taught in the educational classes of the church.

"The emphasis in the ministry of the laity is something that must be kept constantly before the church. An occasional sermon is not sufficient. It needs to be taught in Sunday School and preached from pulpit. Lay people should be given opportunities to witness this concept before the congregation."

-John Mathison, Montgomery, Alabama

FOURTH: Structures must be created in which lay people can use their gifts in ministry. Lay people must be involved in creating the structures.

Example: Creating a structure for the pastoral care of the congregation. Enlist a small group of three to twelve people - depending on the size of the congregation - who, along with the pastor or other staff person will work together in identifying the need, exploring what other churches are doing, and selecting a model to adopt or adapt. This group, then, will have the "ownership" of this ministry for development, implementation and maintenance.

FIFTH: The clergy will give the ministry to the people by relinquishing it. His role will be seen more and more by both himself and the members of the church as equipper, supporter and spiritual leader.

SIXTH: The structures and the ministries need to be evaluated regularly to see if they are being productive and if they are doing what they were created to do.

AXIOM 164

LISTEN...

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked.

When I asked you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked that you listen - not talk or do - just hear me.

Advice is cheap' fifty cents will get you Dear Abby and Billy Graham in the same newspaper.

And I can do for myself, I'm not helpless. Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

But, when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, Then I can quit trying to convince you and get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling.

And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice. Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what's behind them.

Don't give me advice or try to fix things; Just listen, and let me work it out for myself.

-Author Unknown

AXIOM 165

People's Emotional Impact on you

People affect our emotions. Feelings, sometimes very deep, are generated by what people do. Just in a part II Corinthians we are amazed at the variety of ways in which people impacted Paul's inner state:

Distressed - 2:3	Thankful - 2:14
Joyful - 2:3; 7:4,7	Affection - 6:12
Anguish of heart - 2:4	Encouraged - 7:4,13
Many tears - 2:4	Delighted - 7:13
Depth of love - 2:4; 11:11	Confident - 7:16
Grieved - 2:5. 12:21	Concerned - 8:16

This is how the Christians in Corinth affected Paul emotionally. How are your people affecting you? Which ones affects you in which ways?

Example: One is always glad to see you. Impact: joyful, depth of love, delighted.

One resists your initiatives. Impact: concern, discouraged, disgusted, feelings of failure.

One is away from the Lord in their spiritual journey. Impact: anguish, tears, grieved, concerned.

Pray for each one of your people separately. While you pray, be in touch with your feelings about him, her, or them. You may need to pray about your feelings if you identified some of them to be judgemental, negative or in other ways unhealthy.

AXIOM 166

God is doing the new thing

A pastor had the children gathered around him for the children's sermon. "This morning, boys and girls, we are going to talk about squirrels. And when I say "squirrels", what do you think of?"

One boy's hand shot up, "It makes me think of God." This took the pastor by surprise. "What is there about squirrels that makes you think of God?" The boy shot back, "I know you didn't get us up here to talk about squirrels!"

People are on to me, too. No matter what I agree to speak on or what the announced topic is, I talk about the new thing God is doing in his church - giving the ministry to the people. Isaiah wrote, "See, I am doing a new thing; now it spring forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

God is doing this new thing in his church all over the world. It is the "Second Reformation."

God is doing a new thing in Lay Pastoral Care Services through strategic planning, seed money to hire staff, and moving to intentional "marketing" (which we have never done in our 16 years).

God is doing a new thing in my seminars, conferences and speaking engagements. This past year I have been with seven churches at the birth of their Lay Pastors Ministries, equipping their first group of lay pastors. I have been "on the road" more than any previous year. Expansion continues. Also, I am in the process of writing my second book on lay pastoral care.

God is doing a new thing in you, through you, in your church, and in your ministry. "Do you perceive it!" What a thrill for all of us to be a part of this "new thing!" For the full message from God, put 1 Tim. 6:20 with Isaiah, Guard (the new thing) that has been entrusted to your care."

AXIOM 167

A Study of "Grace"

Grace is one of the significant words in the Lay Pastors Ministry vocabulary. The foundational Biblical passage of Ephesians 4:7-13 introduces us to grace, "But to each one of us has been given as Christ apportioned it." The Greek word translated grace is charis.

Charis (grace) means that which gives joy, pleasure and delight. It also means goodwill, loving-kindness and favor. In practical use it reads, "the kindness of master toward his inferiors or servants, and so of God toward humans." It also contains the idea of kindness which bestow upon on what he or she is not deserving.

So, other words for a grace are favor, goodness, generosity, good-will, and kindness.

The quality of God's grace toward us is the focus of Ephesians 1:7-8, "In him (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us..." Grace is forgiving, rich and lavishly given, and Paul writes about two forms of God's rich grace lavished on his people:

1. First, salvation. "It is by grace you have been saved." Ephesians 2:5 & 8. God's favor, goodness, kindness and generosity forgives us and accepts us into his family.

2. Second, ministry. "To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it...for works of service (ministry)." Ephesians 4:7 & 8. God's favor, goodness, kindness and generosity calls us forgiven people into ministry. He opens to us the great privilege of working with him in caring for his people.

The first favor, salvation, is common knowledge among Christians. Since Martin Luther and John Calvin championed the cause of salvation by faith alone, the church has believed that it is by God's grace through faith that we are saved.

The second favor, ministry, is not commonly seen by Christians as a form of God's grace. But, ministry is a generous gift from God just as much as salvation is. We don't deserve to participate in God's work any more than we deserve to be accepted into his family. We are faulty, rebellious, sinful people whether receiving God's gift of salvation or his gift of ministry. Both salvation and ministry given us great joy, delight and pleasure.

Lay pastors who know that their call to minister is a generous act of God, and who are using their spiritual gifts to do God's work, are happy, fulfilled and have found LIFE! Caring for God's people is seen to be a privilege and experienced as a enrichment of life. The final and ultimate favor of God is given by Jesus, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." (1 Peter 5:4)

AXIOM 168

Empathy: The Heart of Lay Pastoring

What is empathy? It is important to our ministry? A casual investigation of the term empathy leaves one with little focus. the concept itself has diverse meaning and uses. Still It is our conviction that empathy lies at the heart of lay pastoring.

How do we react when we make a visitor a phone call to one of our flock and they drop a bomb? they tell us that this is th worst week of their life. Their closet friend or a dearest loved one died unexpectedly and tragically whatever we do be couched in empathy. Regardless of the words we say, empathy makes the difference.

In a recent pastoral care journal article I read that the word empathy "sometimes means one thing, sometimes another, until now it does not mean anything." The American Heritage Dictionary defines empathy as "identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives." An internationally known psychiatrist sees empathy as "the capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person."

It seems to have a great deal to with mutual understanding and relationship. Empathy has less to do with theory, technique, interpreter or theology. In other words, it has less to do with what we say and do as with who we are and promise to become. It is our person and our relationships which shape and enable care to take place.

The Holy Spirit's gift of mercy is like empathy (Romans 12:8). Mercy is defined as the supernatural ability to sympathize with and minister to hurting people. It is extraordinary ability to come-along-side of those who are suffering, meeting them at their place of greatest, immediate need (physical, mental, and/or emotional).

Empathy is as indispensable to the lay pastoral care giver as oxygen. A person with the gifts of mercy will sense when people are hurting in some way and come to their aid. To change the metaphor, empathy is the music behinds our words. We may also refer to it as the way to the spirit behind the letter, to read between the lines, to get at another level. In short, empathy is a style of knowing and relating.

Empathy or mercy is the responsibility of all lay person. It has to do with original creation and re-creation. Jesus said, "Bless are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matt. 5:7). Jesus also exhorted all believers to "Be

merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). The parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:37 sheds light upon the action of relating with empathy to the hurting person. The person with the gifts of mercy will relate empathically because they are created by God to do so. Our capacity and responsibility to act empathically reflects our being made in the image of God.

Empathic stance, as a style of lay pastoral care, is an expression of the *imago Dei* (image of God). We might affirm that Jesus Christ incarnated God's empathic stance, God's love (agape) for us, and in so doing modeled how we are to relate to others and to God.

AXIOM 169

Defining the Environment

Lay Pastoral Care Services (LPCS) is unique among ministries. It endeavors to incorporate two biblical concepts into the church's practice. To be specific, LPCS is busy creating an environment for the on-going happy marriage between the ministry of the laity concept and the pastoral care concept. This is fascinating. Holy Spirit-lead process.

I believe that the theory and practices of lay pastoring is thoroughly biblical and needs constant attention. It is my hope to use this column to narrow the gap that may exist between above mentioned concepts. I want to keep it simple but challenging. My over-all purpose is to use words to encourage the competencies and confidence of lay pastoring practitioners.

Melvin Steinbron calls lay pastors "love with skin on." Oliver Wendell Holmes commented: "A word is not crystal, transparent and unchanged, it is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and the time in which it is used." It is my prayer that the words used in this and other Network News columns may excite you to live out your call to lay pastoring in your own particular settings.

Merging the two notions (the ministry of the laity concept and the pastoral care concept) into concrete reality should provide you with information that is conceptually robust and practically relevant. In the words of William Shakespeare: "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action."

AXIOM 170

Bulli/Woonona Anglican Church "certifies" their Lay Pastors

The Lay Pastors Ministry in the Bulli/Woonona Anglican Church in Bulli, NSW, Australia has produced a certificate for their Lay Pastors. The purpose of their certificates is three-fold:

The First purpose:

It will be a reminder of the authority you have to minister in our church.

- * You have the authority of Jesus Christ to minister in His Name!
- * You have the authority of the Holy Spirit who has given your certain gifts to use in ministry.
- * You have the authority of this church which has commissioned you and set you apart for this ministry.

The Second purpose for the certificate is that it will be a reminder to you of the importance of the ministry you have undertaken:

- * There are at least 21 commands in the New Testament with the word "one another" or "each other" attached to them.
- * The Lay Pastors Ministry is designed to help each and every church member experience the blessings God wants us to have as His people.
- * This can only happen as each one of us puts into practice God's "one another" commands.
- * And as Lay Pastors show them the way and are a model for others to follow, the certificates will help you realize just how important you are to the health and vitality of our church as a whole.

The Third purpose is that it will be a reminder of the commitments you have made to Jesus Christ:

- * To the people committed to your care;
- * And to your church.
- * The commitments really make up the job description and character development of the Lay Pastor, and will help you focus on what you are called to be, and on what you are called to do.

AXIOM 171

A Lay Pastor's Ministry Folio

Note" A"portfolio" is the office and function of minister of state. A "ministryfolio" is the office and function of a minister of Christ. The folio is given in Matthew 10.

The Office is Disciple.

The Functions are:

1. Called v.1 - Jesus is in charge. He called them to him. This is the mark of a disciple.
2. Authority v. 1 - Jesus authorizes you. You have a right to pastor people. Difference between authority and power.
3. Sent v.5 - Commissioned. Definite ministry with support. Significance and fulfillment flow from this action.
4. Relationship v. 1 - "Enter the home" Personal, friendly, being on their turf and page.
5. Competence vv. 19, 20 - Our competence is not ourselves; it is in him. See II Corinthians 2:5, 6.
6. Courage v. 26 -"do not be afraid." You don't know a lot about how you will be received, you may be anxious.
7. Sacrifice v. 38 - A cross. There is no ministry without a cross. We are stretched beyond our comfort zone.
8. Obedience v. 38 - "Follow me" This is another mark of a disciple and a condition for fruitful ministry.
9. Incarnational Principle v. 40 - There is depth to our contacts. We are "Love with skin on it."
10. Reward v. 42 - There is a "pay off." See I Peter 5:4; see Psalm 128:2 "We shall eat the fruit of our labors."
11. Equipping 11:1 "After Jesus had finished instructing..." They were prepared in spirit and specifics.
12. Accountable Luke 9:10 - "When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done." Complete the loop.

AXIOM 172

How to mobilize

A few days after being asked to make a presentation to Hope Church's annual session (official board) retreat on "Mobilizing the Laity," I got the 1995 Fuller Evangelistic Association catalogue in the mail. I turned to the Mobilizing Lay Ministers section and to my surprise I saw my book, *Can the Pastors do it alone?*, again listed.

I humbly realize that this book and the Lay Pastors Ministry is being used by God in a significant continuing way. Here are some fresh thoughts about mobilizing the laity.

First, from Paul Stevens in his book, *The Equipping Pastor*: "Without every-member ministry, we have unlived biblical truths, unstrategic leadership deployment, untapped resources in the congregations, and an unreached world."

Next, the dictionary definition of mobilize is "to assemble (troops) for service." But we usually mean more than assembling people. We mean the four-phase action of:

1) MOBILIZE - Preach and teach every-member ministry, cast a vision, tell the ministry needs and call people to action.

2) EQUIP - An essential component of the process is to "prepare God's people for work of service." It is wrong to ask people to do ministry unless we are ready to equip them.

3) DEPLOY - Send them forth with a clear understanding of what to do, setting them aside for ministry at a public meeting.

4) RENDEZVOUS - The process is not complete without coming together for celebration, further equipping, evaluation and fellowship.

The strict meaning of mobilize, "to assemble for service," is one of the peskiest we have. This and other problems, affirmations, challenges and questions will be dealt with by committed and competent leaders at annual conferences.

AXIOM 173

Why should Lay Pastors Pray?

For several months we've been asking all of you to pray that Conference will be all God intends it to be. This emphasis stimulates me to say a few words about the importance of prayer. Nothing is more significant in the spiritual life of a Lay Pastor than prayer.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are essential. Worship is important. Reading and hearing the Word of God is paramount. Taking the Good news into all the world is inescapable. But without prayer all these are empty rituals and religious fossils.

The indispensable element which connects worship, sacrament, discipleship, and Scripture with the reality of lay pastoring is prayer. Prayer is the atmosphere within which our lay pastoral ministry lives and breathes. Without prayer, faith and ministry suffocates and dies. Prayer is that personal encounter with God which gives meaning, strength, comfort, and joy to the one lay pastoring. When we pray, God speaks in and through our prayers.

I will briefly outline four specific reasons why lay pastors pray.

First, lay pastors pray to discover the will of God for their ministry. Prayer serves as a way of checking our course and making sure that what we are doing is leading along the path that God has chosen for our ministry. Prayer does not give us the answer to every specific question we have about how we are to minister, but it can certainly give direction to our ministry.

Second, lay pastors pray to gain perspective on their ministry. In prayer we stand before the presence of the mysterious, powerful, and loving God who is origin and destiny of our lives. In that encounter, we realize that God is the reality on which all things hinge. Prayer helps to see that even the smallest and more remote services can be valuable and important if they subsist with God and for God.

Third, lay pastors pray to achieve peace of mind. When we understand the will of God for our ministry and that the value and importance of our ministry depends on our relationship to God, we also realize we are safe. No Fear! We know that our ministry can and does have importance and value because it is cherished and valued by God. Prayer leaves us with the feeling of peace concerning the ministry we are called to fulfill.

Finally, lay prayer to strength their spiritual connection with those to whom they minister. We pray for others and they pray for us. Pray brings us closer to those we minister with. It results in deeds of compassion and helpfulness, even empathy. Pain shared is pain simplified and made sufferable.

Why should Lay Pastors pray? Because we can and must if we are to be the ministers God calls us to be.

AXIOM 174

Giving Prayer Its Proper Place

Similar to giving prayer the priority position in our PACE model of lay pastoring, Sunshine Community Church (host church for conference '95) is giving priority position in their planning. With the new year came an urgency to get the sub-committees for our upcoming April conference in motion. We began that work by devoting our January equipping meeting to the topic of prayer. Through guest speakers we reminded our Lay Pastors of the importance of incorporating prayer into their individual ministries. Added to that is a new responsibility; to incorporate prayer into their sub-committee work for conference '95.

To give prayer its proper place ensures us of God's gifts of His:

Presence	Power
Perspective	Protection
Peace	Provision

With that in mind, the SCC Lay Pastors have requested that their church prayer groups join them in prayer for all areas of pre-conference planning. The leaders of Sunshine Prayer groups have pledged prayer support from now until April 16. They have also pledged on-going prayer coverage during the week of the Conference and their availability to be present as prayer partners during the hours of the Conference.

Sunshine's Conference '95 plans include a prayer room - open to all conference attendees, workshop leaders, guest, and Board members. Let's not underestimate the power of prayer! Let's recognize it is its priority position within our ministry and for '95 Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

AXIOM 175

Who should make the call?

Never send the pastor out to visit the person who has not been in church for two or three Sundays. The Lay Pastor is the one to do it. The usual line of reasoning is that the pastor is the one who knows how to do these things. But, like a lot of other things we think only the pastor can do best, this is a myth. The Lay Pastor can do it best!

Why? First, the Pastor is a neutral person. It may be that the person has something against the pastor. He or she will be free to tell you about this, but would not "dare" tell the pastor. Second, the pastor is an authority figure. For better or worse that is the fact. This raises an emotional barrier against dealing with the absence. The Lay Pastor does not carry this liability.

It is one of the responsibilities to which a Lay Pastor is called when commissioned. It is one of the ways of caring. Your care for the person includes caring about their worship participation. Lay pastors know this but may be hesitant to make the visit because of not knowing what to do. Here are some tips:

- 1) Be alert to the absence. After two (or three at the most) absence in a row, plan to visit the person before the next Sunday. Pray and go.
- 2) Listen to them. Do not judge, criticize or lecture them. Know that if you will listen to their story they are likely to be back the next Sunday. Never be defensive. Don't think you have to defend the church, the board, the choir, the program, the pastor or whoever has injured, disappointed or angered them.

Just listen. A wise old owl sat in an oak,
 The more he was the less he spoke;
 The less he spoke the more he heard;
 Why can't we be like that wise bird!

(From Can the Pastor do it alone? pg. 114)

- 3) Talk about the reason(s) they give, mostly by what is often called "active listening" (or "reflective listening"). See yourself as a mirror, reflecting what they say but repeating it back in your own words. The reason they give may be. "The sermons are too long." Instead of agreeing or disagreeing, your reflective responses would go something like this, "You are saying that you would feel better about attending church if Pastor_____ didn't preach so long."

This kind of response will tell him or her that it is okay to keep talking about it. If you continue fielding his or her statements by reflection them, the person will keep telling more. After enough of this, thank them for being honest and frank and ask if you can expect to see them next Sunday morning.

Statistics show that 85% of absent people return to worship the next Sunday after such a visit is made. Too many churches have no system for being alert to absences and making the visit. Churches with lay pastors have the system. All we need to do is use our system; namely, the Lay Pastor getting right on it and making the visit before another Sunday has gone by.

AXIOM 176

Roadblock or Paving Stones?

You want to be a successful lay pastor. God provides the paving stones which lead to success as he did for Joshua, "... then you shall have success." Our problem is that the paving stones look like roadblocks.

First there is fear. A new lay pastor feels fear about making the first contact. Is fear a roadblock which will shut down movement or is it a paving stone to use in reaching success? It can be either.

Fear provides the energy to do your best in a new venture. When you're afraid, you are ready to trust God. Fear becomes the "trust God" paving stone. When you're afraid, you sense sharpen, you have more adrenaline, more precise focus and more energy. There are psychosomatic paving stones. Never forget that God wired you psychosomatically. His intent is for fear to produce paving stone, not roadblocks.

Granted, fear is uncomfortable. As much as you want to move directly from fear to success, you have to deal with feeling uncomfortable. Accept the feeling but do not let it block your action. Instead, use it as a paving stone. You will be more than adequately compensated by the success of your visit. It does not take long for you to discover that fear-induced discomfort gives way to joy when you move ahead and make the contact.

Then there is guilt. Every lay pastor has felt guilty at times for procrastinating, neglecting, doing something wrong or leaving something unfinished. Unless you use guilt as a paving stone it will be a massive roadblock. Guilt is anger at yourself. However guilt provides the energy to confess your omissions and to change. It makes you face up to your faults. By confessing to God you transform the roadblock to a paving stone.

Guilt is the catalyst for resting your priorities, for positioning your ministry where your Lord puts it, at the top so you will get it done. The change guilt produces is renewed commitment to P.A.C.E. your people regularly enthusiasm and in the power of the spirit. Miraculously, instead of guilt being a roadblock, it becomes a paving stone on your road to success.

Next is discouragement. Who of us has not been discouraged? The middle part of the word, *coeur*, means heart in French. Encouragement is courage, strength from the heart. To be discouraged means that our

courage, our heart, has been taken away.

The cause of discouragement are both subjective and objective. You may feel discouraged. It seems people are not responding, that your caring initiatives are not appreciated, that your attempted contacts are useless. "It seems." All subjective; you really are being rejected, that a person really is not changing, that a relationship is really not developing. All objective; it's the way it really is.

There are two ways discouragements can be paving stones rather than roadblocks. First, talk with God about your discouragement and its subjective or objective causes. He will encourage you. He will remove the "dis" from "discourage" and replace it with "en." He is the great encourager! Second, be with other lay pastors. Meet with them at the monthly or quarterly meetings. Share your true feelings. Tell it like it is. As you do this, the I Thessalonians 4:11 principle will be at work, "Encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

God gave you gift for your caring ministry. He called you to do it. By turning what looks like roadblocks into paving stones you have discovered the way to be a successful lay pastor, "...then you [too] will have success."

AXIOM 177

Have you ever wondered?

There are many people giving many kinds of care: doctors, dentists, social workers, psychologists, teachers, parents, neighbours, friends, pastors, etc., etc., etc. What is different about the care you, a Lay Pastor, give your people? Is it different? If so, what is different about it?

Jesus gives us the answer: "I tell you the truth, anyone who gives a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward." (Mark 9:41).

In these words of Jesus, find the three ways you care is both "Pastoral" and "Christian." When you think you have found them, read on.

(1) "Gives" - one has to be present to give a cup of water. See yourself, present with one of your people, teaching out to them; (2) "In my name" - Caring in Jesus' name is both an attitude and an act; (3) "Because you belong to Christ" - your association with Jesus says a lot to the people to whom you reach out.

Here are three ways you can be sure your care is distinctively pastoral and Christian:

1. YOUR PRESENCE

Since you are a Christian without intention your presence will give off a Christian aroma. ("Your reputation goes before you.") Because you represent their church, you are a member of their Christian family reaching out to them. This gives Christian overtones to your caring initiatives.

2. BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT GENERATING A SENSE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

a) Articulate the faith. Examples: (1) If there are problems you can say, "Believe God will help you." (2) If it is joyful event, "It seems that God has chosen you for special blessing."

b) Prayer *for* and *with* people. Either assure them you will pray for them, or pray with them on the spot. Praying *with* them right then is the better of the two.

3. ACCEPT THE STAKE YOU HAVE IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES

a) Desire their spiritual growth, and do what you can to facilitate that growth.

b) Grieve over their known weakness and sins. Note: There is a great difference between being judgment and being pastoral¹

c) Concern yourself with their church participation.

d) Know that you are a member of your church's pastoral team.

AXIOM 178

For one of your meetings

To enrich the meeting experience and to lead your lay pastors in reflecting on their faith and ministry, use the following activity.

1. Copy several quotations and/or Bible verses on a paper to distribute to your lay pastors for this part of your meeting.
2. Get your people into groups of four or six to share their thoughts about the quotations or Bible verses. A minimum of 20 minutes should be given to this.
3. Ask them to take the items one by one and answer these questions:
 - a. What do I understand this to mean?
 - b. What is there to learn from it?
 - c. What can I do with it in my life or my ministry?
4. At predetermined time, ask them to begin to pray for one another, building their prayers out of the specifics they heard from the others.
5. Reassemble. Ask for some comments on what they shared, what they learned and how it felt to be talking and praying about these items. Some suggested quotations:

1. "Work without vision is drudgery; vision without work is a dream; vision and work together make a rewarding ministry."

-source unknown

2. "Attention to God must be your primary religious activity, and this for the strictly practical reason that without that attention to God, all other religious activities will lose their worth."

-Evelyn Underhill, quoted in Rivers in the Desert

3. "Often people in trouble do not need our words; they need us. They need our love, our caring, our compassion, our affirmation, practical support and our encouragement."

-Henry Gariepy in Portraits of Perseverance

4. "This very remarkable man commends a most remarkable plan. You can do what you want if you don't think you can't. So don't think you can't; think you can."

-Charles Inge Rivers in the Desert

An Outline For A Good Sermon On Lay Ministry

The following sermon outline was created by a member of our Network, Rev. Jim Van Roekel, Des Moines, Iowa. He preached it in Berwick Community Church (UCC) November 6, 1994. The church board also made a study of it early this year. It is good sermon on lay ministry, with applications to the Lay Pastors Ministry. It also makes a good study for people managing the Lay Pastors Ministry, groups in a church concerned about lay ministry and, as the Berwick board found, a good study for a church board.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Scripture - Exodus 18: 13-26

Introduction: Attending of a football game. Ask: "What do you think is the most satisfying thing for each member of the team: 1) To be on the bench watching it happen, or) To be on the field making it happen?" The answer is obvious. Likewise, in our church everyone wants to make it happen. This is "Every Member Ministry," everybody playing on the Lord's team.

I. Observations on leadership

- A. Jethro assumes the role of "consultant" to Moses
 - 1. He makes an observation on Moses' leadership of God's people (v.14)
 - 2. He gives advice about improvements in Moses' leadership (vv. 19-23)
- B. Jethro's counsel is given in two parts:
 - 1. Recognition of weak leadership
 - 2. Recommendation of strong leadership

II. Recognition of weak leadership

- A. Unrealistic expectations of self
 - 1. The goal was good (v. 15)
 - 2. The method of reaching the goal was 'not good" (v. 14)
 - a. It was a "one-man ministry"
 - b. Needed: Both a good goal and realistic methods
- B. Stressed-out leader (v.18)
 - a. Limitation of time and energy
 - b. Drained emotions (v. 14)
- C. Frustrated people (v. 14)
 - a. Worn out
 - b. Needed: change in methods

III. Recommendation for strong leadership

- A. Realistic expectations (vv. 21-22)
 - 1. A shared ministry
 - 2. "Many hands make light work"
- B. Selected qualified people (v. 21)
("People," not angels)
 - 1. Able people
 - 2. God-fearing people
 - 3. Trustworthy and honest people

Note: the focus was on character
- C. Delegate responsibility (v. 21)
 - 1. By appointing people
 - 2. By training people (v. 20)

Note: implies a job description and ability
- D. Experience fulfillment (success) (v.22)
 - 1. The people are satisfied (v.23)
 - 2. The leader is strong (vv. 22-23)

Conclusion: A successful church, like a winning game, focuses on every member in ministry - playing and making it happen.

AXIOM 180

Listening Activity

The people who had the most influence in my spiritual growth all seem to hold one thing in common: All of them communicated the feeling that they cared for me. One of the primary ways in which they expressed that caring was through their ability to be good listeners.

We all that active listening is an important way to share the love of Christ with others. We all want to be good listeners. We all feel that we could use more skill in this area. Yet, where do we go for lessons in how to listen more effectively? The BOOKS IN PRINT volumes in the local library reveal a great scarcity of books on this subject. Why? Is it because most people think they know how to listen and would therefore not buy a book on the subject? Or is it because the people who write books think that listening is like breathing, and that we know how to do it without instruction? Whatever the reason, few practical resources are available to help Christians increase their skill in this important ministry.

The following paragraphs provide the fundamentals of active listening. Any individual can grasp these in a few minutes. Perfecting the skill takes continued practice. A one- or two-session discussion by a class or group can greatly enhance the ability of individuals to apply the insights gained from reviewing these principles.

Active listening is possible because we can hear at a faster rate than we can speak. Normal conversation is usually 80 to 120 words a minute. Most of us can hear and compute over 600 words a minutes. This means there is "lag time" in our listening that we can cause to understand what another person is saying to us. In active listening, we set aside our judgmental attitude about the content of what the other person says and use this lag time to increase understanding and show care.

Active listening involves three basic skills: (1) paraphrasing, (2) perception checking, and (3) creative questioning. By looking at each other one separately and illustrating how it works, we can see how to integrate these skills into our conversational patterns.

PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing is merely stating back to someone what you hear him or here saying. By remembering two rules, we can make paraphrasing a tool for increased understanding. The first rule is that we are not judge what the other person says. The second rule is that we are to put into our own words

what we heard the other person say.

The following is an example of active listening in which the listener uses paraphrasing:

Sally: I do not talk much about God because I feel funny even using the word God.

Susan: What I hear you saying is that you are uncomfortable talking about God.

When we first try to paraphrase, the process has a strange sound to it. Only by practice do we recognize how much it helps people to express themselves better, and thus, grow more comfortable in using it.

"What I hear you saying is" is a good phrase with which to start our practice. But if we practice paraphrasing a lot we will get tired of that phrases. With practice we will learn other phrases that are just as effective and feel more natural to us, phrases such as:

"You are saying..."

"Are you saying...?"

"What I heard was..."

Sometimes, we can paraphrasing in our own words with a question such as "You are uncomfortable speaking about God?" We must be sure, however, that a question we invent does not probe deeply for new information or show alarm of any kind. It must merely rephrase the meaning of, and especially the feeling of, what the person just said.

Paraphrasing is both a check for understanding and a positive feedback mechanism. Paraphrasing gives the other person a chance to correct what you heard or what you thought he or she meant, in case you misunderstood it. But most important of all, paraphrasing says to the other person, "Susan understands me. She listened so closely that she is telling me what I said. She really does care."

PERCEPTION CHECKING

Only about 7 percent of the meaning of what we say is communicated in the formal meaning of the words we use. About 43 percent of what we say comes across in the vocal pitch, volume, intonation, and rate of our voice. The remaining 50 percent of our communication with another person is contained in our nonverbal language. This includes our facial expressions, the use of our hands, and the tension of posture of our body. Our eyes are as important as our ears in the process of communication and active listening. Therefore, when we talk on the phone, only 50 percent of the

communication process is available to us.

A good active listener attempts to hear see all of the message another person is communicating. During lag time we can be checking our body language and what we hear in the tone of voice of the other person. We can use this data to understand what is included in the message but is not in the words. This a perception check. For example: Jim has done a fine job. (Michael's teeth are clenched and the word fine is accented.) Susan: I hear anger in your voice and see anger in your face. Is that right, Michael?

The perception check is a more sophisticated active -listening skill. Several rules apply to doing an effective perception check:

1. We must give back only what we see and hear and not make judgements on the appropriateness of the feelings we are hearing. We are seeking understanding, not judgement.

2. We need to use "I" statements when we do a person check. "I hear...I see...I sense...," etc. When we use I statements we give the other person a chance to response. "I" statements are the language of observance and not judgment.

3. We need to ask a question in every perception check, to show a sincere desire to understand. Michael might reply that he is not angry, but is frustrated with Jim. But asking a checking question we allow space for and give permission for feedback.

Perception checking may not feel natural at first. One of the best ways to practice it is to sit down with one another person and have him or her intentionally mix up body language and verbal language.

CREATIVE QUESTIONING

This active-listening skill is for a different purpose than paraphrasing or perception checking. Those skills are used to increase basic understanding. Creative questioning is designed to give the other person permission to share at a deeper level. Creative questioning is a way to "draw people out." It shows an interest in significant relationship.

The objective of this skill is to take what has been said and ask a question from that statement. This gives the person a chance to tell his or her story at a deeper level than the mere facts. It allows people to say what the facts mean to them and how they feel about those facts. For example:

Bill: Boy, did I have trouble getting to church Sunday. Michael: Oh, what

kind of trouble did you have, Bill?

Again, we need to follow several rules if we are going to help Bill get out his story.

1. We must be non judgmental. Our purpose is to listen and help Bill get his story out. Any sign of a judgmental attitude will cause Bill to retreat emotionally and withhold his story.

2. The question needs to come out of Bill's statement and not from our curiosity.

3. The question needs to ask for more of the story or give permission for the person to share more of this or her story. This kind of positive feedback gives the other person a sense that you are interested in him or her.

4. If it is possible for the other person to give just a "yes" or "no" answer to your question, it is not a creative question and it will not help the other person share his or her story.

A way to practice creative questioning is to have three persons sit down together. Have one share an experience of the past week, the other be the creative questioner, and the third person be the observer. After three or four minutes, the observer can give observations about the creative questioner. Then you can switch roles and use the same process again.

Why should we even want to be active listeners?

Active listening is a form of hospitality. If we examine the Bible closely, we see that hospitality is an important biblical virtue.

Active listening offers space for other persons to be themselves. Remember Jesus' treatment of the woman who washed his feet with tears in Luke 7:36-50. He gave her the space to be who she was. People need the opportunity for just such space.

Giving feedback to people is also a way to show significant care. Jesus wanted to give feedback to the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5. Healing was not enough. She also needed attention. The attention we give in active listening is a sign of significant care.

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AXIOM 181

Communication Clarity

Ronald Ratliff

A cartoon by Mark Pie appeared several years ago in the New Wine magazine. It showed a professor beginning a lecture to his class on "Communication" with these words: "Communication is any *modus operandi* by or through which eventuates the reciprocal transposition of information between or among entities or groups via commonly understood systems of symbols, signs or behavioral patterns of activity."

How important is it that a lay pastor develop excellent communication skills? At work, clear communication may mean the difference between getting an important message across or alienating a co-worker. At home, our communication can either tighten the family bonds or stretch them to the snapping point. At church, clear communication is critical if we are to build healthy, spiritual relationships. Lay pastoring is about making disciples through channels of clear communication (Matthew 28:18-20).

We've all experienced the benefits of clear communication and suffered consequences of broken or missed communication. After a worship service an elderly lady stopped and spoke to the pastor who had only been with them a few months. She said, " I'm deaf, and I can't hear a word you say, but still come to get my plate full." Hoping to console her, the pastor said, "Well, maybe you haven't missed much." She replied, "Yes, that's they all tell me." Communication holds high stakes. Miscommunication results in everything from hurt feelings to the threat of internal crisis. And when it comes to caring for others in the Christian faith - the stakes are eternal.

As lay pastors we choose many different means of communication with our flock. Through our actions, gestures, expressions, words, and silence we're constantly saying something to them. An that's why clear communication is important. Those under our care are looking to us for direction and encouragement. At the simplest level, we must be able to relate with each flock member with honesty and forthrightness. By speaking clearly and listening carefully, we learn to respect each one in our charge.

On the eternal level, we must understand our faith and be able to pass our knowledge of Christ on to our flock in an understandable and caring way. In the church's early history, Christians were often accused of being cannibals because the accusers did not understand the meaning and significance of the Lord's Table.

While most people probably won't accuse today's Christians of cannibalism, the lay pastor's task of clear communication is just as critical as it was in the days of the early church. Tossing around "church" words such as salvation, grace, baptism, etc. confuses new Christians and divides congregations. But with careful and clear communication, the meaning behind the words becomes clear - and relationships are strengthened rather than soured.

One the oh the first atomic bomb test near Wite Sands, New Mexico, two Indian brothers sat looking across the Mesa. Observing the great blast and the resultant mushroom shaped cloud, the one said to the other: "Man, I wish I'd said that!"

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How do you assign Households to Lay Pastors?

The above question and other questions about assignments are asked at nearly every seminar I conduct. I am not surprised because people are looking for "handles" to the ministry. This is one of great importance. The following is what our Ministry Leadership Group at Hope church worked out a few years ago and continue to follow. It will be help to you if you are looking for guidelines.

Lay Pastors Ministry-Hope Presbyterian church

Assignment Process and Guidelines

Introduction:

This describes the process of assign Hope Presbyterian member households for pastoring by Lay Pastors whose applications to be a Lay Pastor have been accepted and approved, and who are commissioned by Hope to serve as such. The Lay Pastors Ministry Leadership Group is responsible for this process and its use.

Process:

1. A designated task force of the Ministry Leadership Group will meet to make the assignments; such meeting to be within one week after the Equipping Seminar. Information required for this meeting includes:

- * List of Lay Pastors to receive assignments, and their Zip Codes.
- * Non assigned households whose zip codes match zip codes of Lay Pastors to be assigned. (computer printouts, including appropriate demographics)
- * Priority #1 and #2 households in Lay Pastor zip code areas. (computer printout)
- * Any staff recommendations and/or special requests (Lay Pastors, households, etc.) for assignments.

2. Pray is the first order of business, asking the Holy Spirit to guide decision-making process.

3. The task force makes assignments of households to Lay Pastors according to the guideline listed below:

3.1 Lay Pastor requests, staff recommendations and other requests are honored, if possible. Otherwise, Priority #1 households first, and then Priority #2, if needed.

3.2 Assign between 5 and 10 households to each Lay Pastor (usually 7 to 9).

3.3 A goal is to give each Lay Pastor a "mix" of people.

3.4 Assignments should take into account gender, age, family, temperament, occupation, marital status, church activity, community involvement, social status and spiritual maturity. Strive for compatibility.

3.5 Some assignments should be obviously avoided such as assigning a 23- year old single girl to a 25-year old single male, a single person to married couple of a similar age, etc. While providing a "mix", avoid unnecessarily tempting "matches."

4. Record the assigned households (use special assignment form) and related information: name, address, phone number, children, age, marital status, etc., for processing.

5. Mail the assignment forms to the appropriate Lay Pastors for their review and acceptance. A cover letter includes:

5.1 Confirmation of their call as a Lay pastor at Hope.

5.2 Affirmation of their decision to be a Lay Pastor.

5.3 Process and schedule for returning the signed forms.

5.4 Information on follow-up activity, including return of forms of Lay Pastors, notification of households and scheduling of initial contacts.

5.5 Forms returned by Lay Pastors are reviewed, revised as necessary, and processed to make final assignment lists.

6. Using the finalized lists, send letters to assigned households informing them that they now have a Lay Pastor, who it is, and to expect to be contacted by the Lay Pastor in the near future. The Lay Pastor is also sent copy.

7. Upon receipt of the copy, the Lay Pastors then initiates their contacts with their assigned households. Lay Pastors should have a supply of Availability Cards, Brochures, First Visit and Monthly Report forms.

* NOTE:

Priority #1 households include people only peripherally involved in Hope programs activities and those who only attend Sunday morning.

Priority #2 households include people who are involved in Hope programs and activities but not in a way that involves pastoral care.

AXIOM 183

Conclusions from the Volunteer

Director's Forum

Hosted by "Leadership Network" December 2-4, 1993 Glen Eyrie Conference Center. 70 Participants: Lay leaders, Senior pastors, church staff responsible for volunteer management consultants.

1. One of the foremost purposes of the church is to equip its member for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-16)
2. Good preaching does not necessary cause people to serve well. It must be accompanied by the process of gift discovery, support in finding a place of serve, and ongoing support in order to see lay people mobilized throughout the church and community.
3. After many decades of discussion about equipping the laity and mobilizing volunteers, there seems to be a recent increase in the intensity of efforts to implement new approaches. This "movement" seems to cross denominational lines and is increasing in its intensity.
4. Gift assessment and placement programs for lay volunteers have produced mixed results because too often they have been attempted in a piecemeal fashion without the commitment of time and resources by church leaders and without a point person with a major portion of their job description committed to the task.
5. Any program, system or organization developed to provide gift assessment and volunteer placement must be surrounded by prayer and motivated first by love for the individual rather than the need to fill volunteer programs in the church.

Book Review: Pastoral Care in Context

*An Introduction to Pastoral Care; John Patton,
Westminster/John Knox Press; 1993, 250 pages.*

Patton demonstrates pastoral care as a ministry of the church. He focus on the membership as a sources of care. He, therefore, is a strong proponent of pastoral care of the congregation by lay people, the theme of our international conference again this year.

He sets the stage of pastoral care in these opening words of Chapter 1: "God created human beings for relationship and continues in relationship with creating by hearing us, remembering us, and meeting us in our relationships with one another. The 'communal contextual' paradigm views pastoral care as a ministry of the Christian community that takes place through remembering God's action for us, remembering who we are as God;'s own people, and hearing and remembering those to whom we minister."

Lay pastoral care ministries are affirmed by these words: "...being pastoral care is not limited to the clergy." A new concept to me was his reference to clergy as "generalists" in ministry, and to laity as "specialists" in ministry. That rang a bell for me. It put into a simple sentence what I have been trying to articulate for years.

He defines pastoral care as **hearing** and **remembering**. As I reflected on that I came to the conclusion that those two actions constitute pastoral care. People want to be heard, i.e. they want somebody to understand them, their struggles, pain and joy. People also want to be remembered. We often tell people, "Don't forget me." I ran all the pastoring care activities I could think of through my mind; they all lined up with either **hear** or **remember**.

"Context" in the title is fleshed out by seeing pastoral care against the care receiver's whole back ground or environment, whatever totally makes up the person's life. The context determines what we do, when and in what way.

Each chapter concludes with "Questions for Consideration." This helps the reader or group understand and apply the challenging concepts to their particular ministry.

AXIOM 185

A message from our Pastor...

"Thanks for Praying!"

The following article was taken from "The Pacer", the newsletter for the Lay Pastors of Bethany Community Church in St. Catherines, Ontario. Gennie Willims is the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

Have you ever wondered how long the Apostle Paul's prayer list was? In reading through his letters, I am always challenged by how often he says "We are praying for you." For him, prayer was an expression of his life. This is why he could say, "Pray without ceasing." He also continually admonished people to pray for him. In Colossians 4:2 he says, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should."

I am so thankful for the prayers of God's people. Just the other Sunday after morning service was over, someone came to door and said, "Pastor, I want you to know that my wife and I pray for your every morning, in our devotions." I don't know about you, but that does something for me when I know that people are praying for me and my family. Many times that will happen at prayer meeting when people verbalize prayers on my beliefs. That's the challenge for me to go forward and to proclaim God's truth with clarity and boldness. Even as I was leaving to go on holidays last summer, someone sent a note saying, "Have a good time - we're praying for your family as you are on vocation."

As you know by now, prayer is a vital part of pastoral care. I believe that one of the most important things that we can do for people is to pray for them, and to let them know that we are praying for them. When I do that with my kids, what a difference it makes! Often they will come to me with a concern, a problem, a request, and one of the things that we will do at night before they go to bed, is ask the Lord to meet that need. As we do that there is a bond that built between us. As the Lord comes and meets the need, faith and relationships are built.

May I remind you again, praying is not simple another thing that we do as a deacons and lay pastors; it is the essence of our ministry. I encourage you to be people of prayer and I encourage to connect with the people to whom you are giving pastoral care, through prayer. Let them know that you are praying for them. Ask them if there are areas in their lives about which you can pray for them. Then, rejoice with them when God breaks through.

Thanks for your continued ministry in this very important area. I covet your prayers.

-Your fellow servant in Christ, Pastor Larry Shantz

AXIOM 186

Born (Again) to Minister

In *Run with the Horse*, Eugene Peterson tells how he saw a family of birds teaching their young to fly. Three young swallows were perched on a dead branch which stretched out over a lake.

"One adult swallow got alongside the chicks and started shoving them out toward the end of branch - pushing, pushing, pushing. The end one fell off. Somewhere between the branch and the water four feet below, the wings started working, and the fledgling was off on his own. The the second one.

"The third was not to be bullied. At the last possible moment his grip on the branch loosened just enough so that he swung downward, then tightened again, bulldog tenacious. The parent was without sentiment. He packed at the desperately clinging talons until it was more painful for the poor chicks to hang on than risk the insecurities of flying. The grip was released, and the inexperienced wings began pumping. The mature swallow knew what the chick did not - that it would fly - that there was no danger in making it do what it was perfectly designed to do.

"Birds have feet and can walk. Birds have talons and can grasp a branch securely. They can walk; they can cling. But flying is their characteristic action, and not until they fly are they living at their best, gracefully and beautifully."

As flying is what birds are born to do, ministry is what Christians are born (again) to do. We come by it naturally. All we have to do is let the Holy Spirit push and peck us off the dead branch of self absorption, self doubt, too-busy-ness, feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, unworthiness and fear of failure. Letting go release us to do that for which we were born (again). We will discover that we can minister.

This assumes that the air into which we have plummeted is a mix of spiritual giftedness and call. Assuming this, all we need to understand why it is that we can minister is Romans 12: 6-8. Of the seven gifts lists, two are lay pastoral gifts, encouragement and mercy. These gifts, given by God, and the "push" (divine call) are the wings which carry us into the lives of other church members, bringing love and care. Many are discovering that, even to their surprise, just by doing it they are pastoral care givers.

AXIOM 187

Enhancing Effective Communication Skills

A. Roadblocks to Effective Communication

1. Don't tell someone what to do: "Stop complaining," "Get a hold of yourself." (Ordering, Directing, Commanding)
2. Don't tell someone what will happen to them: "If you do that, you'll be sorry," "If you calm down, I'll listen to you." (Warning, Threatening, Promising)
3. Don't give cheap advice, or try to solve problems: "Go out get involved with other widowers or widows," "If I were you, I'd...," "You shouldn't do that," "You ought to do this." (Advising, Giving Solutions, Moralizing, Preaching)
4. Don't try to influence someone with facts, logic or your own opinions: "I read an article in Reader's Digest which said," "My Aunt Mary had the same surgery and she was able to..." (Teaching, Lecturing, Giving Logical Argument, Counter Arguments)
5. Don't judge someone: "You're wrong to feel that way," "You're not thinking clearly right now." (Judging, Criticizing, Disagreeing, Blaming)
6. Don't praise someone in a position they have taken: "I think you are right in blaming your children for their thoughtless ways," "I agree with your assessment." (Praising, Agreeing)
7. Don't make someone feel foolish: "You're a stubborn old mule," "You're behaving like a baby." (Labeling, Name calling, Stereotyping)
8. Don't tell someone what his or her motives are: "You feel that way because you're home alone all day," "You're angry at the doctors because he gave you news you didn't want to hear." (Interpreting, Analyzing, Diagnosing)
9. Don't probe too intrusively into their situation: "Who put that idea into your head?," "What really happened?" (Probing, Questioning, Interrogating)
10. Don't withdraw from someone when it gets unpleasant: "Just forget about it," "Come on, let's talk about something more pleasant," "We've been through all this before; enough already!" (Withdrawing, Distracting, Sarcasm, Humoring, Diverting, Indirection)

B. Bridges to effective communication

1. Do respond with brief expression, such as "Oh," "I see...," "Mm-hmm" (Noncommitted Acknowledgement, Passive Listening, Silence)
2. Do invite someone to say more, such as: "Tell me more about it," "Would you like to talk about it,?" "Sounds like you have some strong feelings about this." (Door-Openers)
3. Do restate, mirror back the person's message: "In other words, you are feeling left out of her life right now." (Feedback, Reflecting, Mirroring)
4. Do try to identify underlying feelings behind the words (Listen for the basic feelings states - mad, sad, glad, afraid, guilty, shy, etc.) "You sound excited about ..." (Active Listening Skills)
5. Do bring your whole self to the situation: "Susan, I'm here for you now...," "Jack, I care about you and what's happening," "Amy, I'm interested in what you are saying." (Non-Possessive Warmth)
6. Do relax, be yourself, and open yourself up to this moment, this person, this time and this place. (Genuineness)
7. Do share what's happening in your life right now (Mutuality)
8. Be aware that anger, frustration being expressed are not being directed at you. Do not be offended, or get angry yourself! "Jack, I can tell you are really feeling angry and frustrated about...."
9. Be positive, courteous, respectful, caring (Love covers many sins)
10. Look for practical ways you can help the person: A referral, a book or brochure, fruit or flowers a worship tape, and errand, task. (Do not impose materials if they are not ready or able to receive them)

AXIOM 188

Twelve Questions with Answers

All questions do not have answers. These 12 too. They were written on cards during a recent conference and fielded by Melvin Steinbron during the question/answer period.

1. What steps can we take to start the Lay Pastors Ministry?

ANS: a) Read and "digest" my book, *Can the Pastor do it alone?* b) Pray about it. Then find a few others with whom you can share your vision and the book. c) Talk with the pastor about it. If you are pastor talk with a few of your leaders. d) Call together a ministry exploration and development group. This group will later implement and manage the ministry. e) Put the ministry together, following the steps on pages 62 and 162 in the book

2. What would a realistic timetable be for starting the ministry?

ANS: Six to twelve months. "It takes time to go an oak."

3. It is a radical change for many churches to entrust pastoral care to lay people. How do we go about implement this change?

ANS: The Biblical principles of lay ministry need to be preached and taught to the congregation. The key principles are (1) spiritual gifts are given to all, (2) all Christians are ministers. The Scriptures out of which these principles flow are Romans 12, I Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4 and I Peter 4 & 5.

NOTE: When the principles take the shape of organized ministry people begin to believe it and want to take part.

4. What losses/risks will this paradigm shift have for a congregation?

ANS: Unrest, insecurity and frustration often accompanies and major change. It is wise to lay the groundwork suggested above and move slowly into implementation. Confidence in, trust of, and love for the pastor and lay leaders will ameliorate most of the negatives.

5. What are some effective ways of educating the whole congregation?

ANS: Preaching a series on "Every Member A Minister." When I first did this, I preached from Easter to Pentecost on this subject. Along with the preaching, I taught a class on spiritual gifts and had nine books on this subject available to borrow to buy. This impacted the whole congregation and laid a solid foundation for lay ministry.

6. How does "Ministry of the Laity" affect ministries other than pastoral care in the congregation?

ANS: The general truth is that every member is divinely gifted for ministry

and called. When this is believed by individuals and structures for lay ministry are provided, any number of lay ministries will be formed, of which pastoral care should be done.

7. How do we people discern their gifts?

ANS: There are many "packaged" programs available. Most clergy and lay leaders are aware of these. We have a five-week course going on in Hope Church right now titled, "Discover Your Ministry," which is basic study of the spiritual gifts and where they can be used in various ministries of the church. Page 85 of my book *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* gives six steps to help Christians discover their gifts.

8. How does this ministry improve evangelism? (This question may have come from a person gifted with gifts for evangelism, not for pastoral care. Very often a person's interest or inquiry indicates what his or her gifts may be.)

ANS: The lay pastors ministry is "inreach," rather than "outreach." Two major streams run through the New Testament: one is The Great Commission, following from Matthew 28:18-20; the other is what I call The Great Charter, following from John 21:16 ("Tend my sheep."). I call it a charter because it guarantees pastoral care (shepherding) to every one of God's people. The stream breaks into full width in I Peter 5:1-4. Well-pastored people will swell the numbers of people ready to do evangelism.

9. In using this model, how do you decide who ministers to whom? Do we have a choice?

ANS: Different churches do this different ways. We give a lot of attention to this process because it is important to get a good "match" right at the beginning. We have drafted a list of guidelines which include ages, gender, temperament, maturity, marriage and family or singleness. We try to give "mix" of age, etc. Lay pastors can request up to half of their people. Also, we assign people who live in the same zip code. Above all, the committee which does this prays a lot, expecting the Holy Spirit to work through the process.

10. How do we break through the peoples' perception that the visit of a "lay" pastor is not a "real visit" and that this is not "the church" caring for them?

ANS: Part of the reason for preaching and teaching on lay ministry is to prepare people to receive pastoral care as well as give it. In spite of this some people will not make the paradigm shift and will not feel pastored unless the "real pastor" is there. This is one of the problems. Pastors need to relinquish this part of their total ministry to a great degree to give it A

chance to work. I have seen people (mostly older) weaned away from the pastor by good lay pastoral care.

11. If the paid minister lacks gifts, training and desire to do pastoral work, how can they on their new role of providing equipping for others? (This was worded more lovingly than another question, "How do you get rid of - fire - an uncooperative - obstinate, non-changing - minister"?)

ANS: First, we need to realize that pastors have neither all the gifts nor all the passion for all the ministry. It is good for pastors to assess their gifts and interests in order to make the best use of their lives. They can help the people who are called to this ministry identify people who can lead it and do the equipping. Then, while majoring in their strengths, give support to those whose strength is pastoral care.

12. How do you see this model applying to a congregation of 25 to 50 families?

ANS: Just as well as in large churches, I see it effectively working in churches of 25 families and less to over 4000 families. Actually, it would work in a church of only six families, with one caring for the other five.

AXIOM 189

Pastoral care for Resisters

Introduction: Acknowledge that some people are not open to having a lay pastor. They let you know this either by telling you so, or, passively, by just never finding it convenient for you to contact them. You may want to hear from one or two or your lay pastors who have experienced rejection by one or more of their flock. If so, arrangements must be made prior to the meeting and confidentiality must be respect.

Drama: The following skit can be done by two lay pastors.

Scene: After six months of trying to arrange for a home visit, another attempt is made.

Lay Pastor: (Self talk) "I'm going to try Mike and Merge Jones again. If I fail this time I don't know what I'll do." (Dials phone)

Marge Jones: (Cheerfully) "Hello"

LP: "Hello Mrs. Jones. This is Sally Brown again, your lay pastor. I'm glad to be talking with you again. How have you been doing?"

MJ: (Voice dropped) "Oh, hello. I am really quick busy right now. Could I call you back in a week or two?"

Two months later:

LP: (Self talk) "I just hate to calling the Joneses again. But here it goes." (Slowly dials phone)

MJ: (Cheerfully) "Hello. This is Marge Jones."

LP: "Hello Merge. This is your lay pastor, Sally Brown again. I am hoping to have a chance to meet with you so we can get acquainted. Would it work our for some evening next week, Wednesday or Thursday?"

MJ: "I'm sorry. That doesn't work for me. Let me call you in a week or two. Have a nice day." (Hang up)

BRAINSTORMING:

All comments, suggestions and answers are accept without comment or criticism in a brainstorming session. Ask: Why do people resist? Write their responses on a chalk board, overhead or flip chart. Let the group discuss the responses, reducing the lists to those they can reach agreement on. Then ask: How can we deal with this problem (respond to this resistance)? Write their responses and follow the same process.

TEACHING:

Have someone read pages 128-130 from *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*

(Difficulties Number One and Two) Since all of the preceding creates a "teachable moment," you can equip them with the following teaching.

Caring for those who resist

I. Identify them You are not able to be accepted either into their homes or their hearts. They are:

- 1) Always "busy"
- 2) Aloof
- 3) Their lives seem to be full
- 4) They don't have time for you
- 5) They don't seem to need your care

After several attempts, perhaps stretching over several months or a few years, it becomes clear to you that they are not open to your caring initiatives.

II. Who do you blame?

A. Them? It *may be* them: (1) they do not need a lay pastor; (2) they are unfriendly, closed, uncooperative personalities; (3) they are sinning and therefore avoid anyone from the church.

B. You? It may be you: (1) inexperienced; (2) poor personality mix; (3) don't pray enough; (4) not sufficiently gifted.

C. The ministry? It may be the ministry: (1) the lay pastors ministry is not for everyone; (2) lay people just cannot pastor some people.

D. None of above!

Here are two alternatives:

1. The nature of pastoral care is that some people are not receptive now, and may not be for now and may not be for some time or ever. However, someone from the church needs to be concerned about them, love them, reach out to them, pray for them and in general be responsible for their pastoral care. God calls people through whom he can love and care for the regardless of their response.

NOTE: Lay pastors must look resisters like loving parents look at resisting children. They are in the family and are therefore obliged to be patient, persistent and loving parents.

2. A lay pastor can do a lot of pastoring without ever seeing a person. PACE is the way:

P - There is nothing they can do to prohibit your praying for them. The limitations is you, not them.

A - Your availability is made known by the letter sent to them from the church at the beginning and your attempts to contact them. They know that you care and that you are available.

C - Cards at holidays, birthdays and just friendship cards or letters, along with occasional sensitive phone calls are significant contacts.

E - By PACE-ing them, you are an example of one who loves the church, God and people; one who is committed to Jesus Christ and to ministry.

III. Classic Examples

A. One occurrence in a prominent church is a classical example of a positive relationship growing during an extended time of negative resistance. The end result was that the resisting person met a crisis and immediately opened her life up to the lay pastor. The resisting person's words about her lay pastor, in reflection, were: "I guess she decided to back off." It is important to see the difference between backing off and backing out. Respect, sensitivity and love called her back off, not out! It was during an infrequent phone call that the resisting person said, "I need you." The lay pastor, who had been praying and available and making infrequent contacts were able to walk through a very difficult time with the former resister and be of great help and encouragement.

B. There are many stories of lay pastors who, by being faithful in praying and contacting, broke through the resistance into a serendipitous relationship.

NOTE: Occasionally it may be a wise choice to disconnect a lay pastor from one household. this should be done only with great caution, much prayer and in consultation with the Pastoring Leader (Shepherd).

IV. A positive Mind-Set needed

A The old mind-set:

1. "They don't want me."
2. "I'm no goo at this."
3. "They don't need a lay pastor."
4. "This will never work."
5. "They need someone who can get through to them."
6. "The Lay Pastors Ministry should take only those people who want a lay pastor."
7. "I'm ready to give up on them."

B. The new mind-set:

1. "They haven't accepted me yet."
2. "God wants someone to love them, pray for them, care about them, and try to reach out to them. I'll be that person, tough as it is. with his help I'll be faithful in pastoring them."

C. Perseverance is the mainspring (key, principle, level, hub), with the addition of a little faithfulness:

- "So do now throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised." (Hebrews 10:35)
- "By faith he (Moses) left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger, he persevered because he saw him who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27) "...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus..." (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2)
- "well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things." (Matthew 25:23)

PRAYER: Either form small prayer groups where they can share their experience with people who resist (respecting confidentiality), or remain together as a large group to pray (1) for people who are resisting, and (2) wisdom, guidance and love in meeting the challenge to pastor them.

AXIOM 190

Lay Pastors Happenings..

The Lay Pastors Ministry was launched at Cochranon Community Church just last February. Bill Ohl, associate pastor, relates the experiences of three of their lay pastors and says there is much more to tell. His report starts with an article in their newsletter by one lay pastor.

When I was first asked if I was interested in becoming a lay pastor, I felt quite certain that I could never fit into this category. But then I learned that this ministry was mainly about *CARING AND SHARING*. So after attending the lay pastor seminar and a lot of prayer, I said yes, I would do my best.

And what a blessing this has been for me! I have gotten to know some people I have not known before. They have shared with me their joys, sorrows, anxieties, hardships, life experiences and prayer concerns. In return I have been able to share with them my experiences and how God has worked in my life. I want people to know that by truly believing and trusting in him absolutely nothing is unbearable. God teaches us so much by our experiences and hardship.

I also want people to know that we as lay pastors sincerely want you to call on us for *ANY* reason, whether it's just to talk, say a prayer or to be available for any other reason. If possible we'll run errands, take you shopping or just go for a walk with you. Please call us.

Pastor Bob just gave a sermon on September 10, 1995 entitled, "Are you a Disciple?" He said we as Christians are ALL Disciples. When God calls on you for any reason, say yes, you will be truly blessed.

Love in Christ, Cathy Hoffman

Bill's observation: "Cathy energizes our lay pastors meetings with new exploits. In order to meet with her people she joined one in her walking. Another had no time because she needed to weed her garden, so Cathy weeded with her. She also added another family to her list because they were visiting one of her families when she came.

Another lay pastor, Lee, was visiting a woman from our church. The woman gave him the church newsletter, saying, "Read this to me." He did and found out she could not read. Lee called the Country Literacy Association and got help for her.

Doug had visited his people regularly, when one of them was in auto accident. He visited this one faithfully. The Lord opened his heart through the accident and he used Doug to lead him to the Lord.

AXIOM 191

Many Frazer Members express

thanks to their Lay Ministers

I have just completed one of the most enjoyable exercises that I can recall! Sometimes back, Marie Parma invited all those who are under the care of lay ministers to express their thanks to their lay ministers and to let them know how much they are cared for. The response was overwhelming. It has taken a better part of an hour to read and absorb them all.

If anyone as ever wondered if the lay minister program touches the lives of people in an depth way, they should read these testimonials. I thank God that this ministry is doing precisely what it was intended to do when it was formed seven years ago.

My hear was gladdened to reach such joyful words about their respective lay ministers. Let me share several excerpts from the many responses. This will give you some feel of lay ministry's impact:

"...I am a shut-in. It means so much to have some one call, visit, and pray for me."

"...The love they have shown for our family has been overwhelming."

"...For always being there with Christian love and understanding."

"...we feel we are the luckiest family because we have truly committed lay ministers."

"...Our lay minister share joy, love, patience, and she loves Jesus."

"...Over the years, our friendship has grown. He telephone calls, cards, and outings for lunch have meant more than I can say."

"...She has made me feel a part of the Frazer family with her visits, cards, and little tokens of love for me."

"...Most importantly, she has led me to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior."

"...He was, literally, a God-send."

All of this reminds me of the great missionary, Dr. Albert Schweitzer's comment: "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know, the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."

We are so grateful for Marie Parma and the wonderful leadership she has given and continues to give to this important ministry. She is also a "God-send."

"Thank you Marie - we love you!" *From Earl Andrews, in the Pacer,
The Newsletter of the Lay Ministry, Frazer UMC, AL*

AXIOM 192

Responses to Caring Initiatives

I had the rare privilege of meeting with the new lay pastors of Edenton Street United Methodist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina on Sunday morning, October 22 for an hour and an half. They had been commissioned Sunday, September 17, having been equipped prior to this date. They were now together for the first time since making their "First Visits." (They followed the model in my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*, asking that the first contact, called the "First Visit", be a home visit.)

As I stood before them, along with Babara Curtis who co-led the formation of their ministry, I heard their excitement and blessing. The vast majority of experiences were delightfully pleasant. However, a few encountered acceptance problems. This was not a surprise to me because this is the nature of all pastoral care ministry.

This experience caused me to reflect on the variety of responses lay pastoral carers experience. There are at least six varieties of acceptance, first observed in our prototype, Jesus:

1. LOVE. The disciple John's response of love, as a higher kind of response than either respect or admiration, is clearly seen in his writings (e.g. John 13:23 || John 6). Mary, Martha and Lazarus loved him, as did Mary Magdalene.
2. ACCEPTANCE. The disciples accepted him, but with different degrees of devotion. The crowds of common people, unlike their leaders, accepted him. Nicodemus, though never close to Jesus, received his teaching and person. He was with him at the end, joining Joseph of Arimathea in burying his body.
3. INDIFFERENCE. The crowd of people beyond the crowds who heard him and took him seriously was not stirred by who he was or what he was doing. They were not aware of his caring initiatives. They passed him by, not having the faintest idea of what they were missing.
4. MISUNDERSTOOD. Many perceived neither his motives nor his true person. The Scribes and Pharisees criticized him for eating with sinners. At one time his family was sure how was out of his mind. The teachers of the law attributed his powers to the devil. Jairus' friends laughed at him, thinking that he was naive. (See Mark 2:16; 3:21; 3:22; 5:40).

5. REJECTION. The young ruler walked away from him. The owners of the pigs begged him to leave. Judas betrayed him. The disciples fled. Peter denied him. The ultimate disregard for him is the leaders' desire to kill him.

6. CHANGEABLE. The people who accepted him and were amazed at "the gracious words that came from his lips" were the same people who a short time later "drove him out of the town" (Luke 4: 16-29). Judas changed dramatically from acceptance to rejection. Conversely, there were those who rejected him but later accepted him (e.g. most of the 3000 "added to their number" on the Day of Pentecost were those who shouted "Crucify him" earlier).

Conventional wisdom asks to pastor only those who are receptive, or at least to like best those who love and accept us, and perhaps even give an unintentional (intentional?) cold shoulder to those who are not warm toward us. But God's wisdom calls us to tend the *whole* flock, black sheep and all. This means that our responses to us but by the kind of love Jesus, who even asked his Father to forgive those crucified him, had for each and every person. His acceptance of them was all-inclusive, ranging from people who loved him to people who rejected him. His example and his Spirit compels us to do the same.

Our model for this is the Apostle Paul, who experienced aloofness and rejection from the people to whom he gave himself: "We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us." (II Cor. 6:12)

AXIOM 193

Pastoral Care of Reluctant People

INTRODUCTION: You have made your contacts but the relationship has never gotten beyond a polite, cordial or cool reception. You began to wonder if you are the fault, if you are doing something wrong or if you are the right person to be caring for this household. You may want to hear from one or two of your lay pastors with whom you have arranged some days before the meeting to share their experience with cool and aloof of people. Be sure they respect confidentiality.

DRAMA: The following skit can be done by two lay pastors

Scene: The Lay Pastor has made contacts. It's not that she or he has been rejected; just held an arm's length. The relationship has never gone anywhere. The initial First Visit was made two years ago, another home visit since, and regular contacts by phone or mail have been made.

LAY PASTOR: (self talk) It's time to get in touch with Millie Robertson again. I really wonder this is doing any good. I wish I knew what she thinks of me. She's nice to me, but she has never gotten beyond just being nice. I would like to know what is going on in her spiritual life. Well, I'll give it another try. (dials phone)

MILLIE ROBERTSON: Hello

LP: Hello, How glad I am to be talking with you again. It's been some time since we last talked.

MR: O, Jenny Jarvis. Yes....now I remember you. You're the one from the church. It's so good of you to call.

LP: I'm calling just to find out how life is treating you and to tell you, that as your lay pastor, I pray for you nearly every day. Could I ask how things are going for you?

MR: Quite well, thank you. It is so good to know that you are praying for me.

LP: Praying for you and the other people in my pastoring group is a joy for me. I love praying for other people; it lifts me above my own selfish interest and helps ease some of my problems. Are there any specific requests you have for me to pray about?

MR: None that I think of at the moment. Isn't it a beautiful day. I just love whether like this. It makes me feel so good. George and I are going to the lake this week-end.

FULL GROUP PARTICIPATION: Brainstorm (1) observations, (2) opinion about reasons for the polite reluctance and (3) solutions. Write the comments on a chalk board or overhead transparency.

TEACHING: From *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* pages 135-136 and/or *Monograph by Mel - People Who Resist*. Some major points may be:

1) Know that this is the nature of caring for people. A certain number will not be open to more close relationships. They have all the people they can take at the center of their lives. A certain number are not close to anyone, and unless their personality dramatically changes they never will be. Know that in all probability the aloofness is not because of you!

2) Take a look at yourself to see if there are some changes you can make to help warm the relationship. Examine your feelings about them. Are you accepting them unconditionally? Love(agape) is not conditional. It flows regardless of the other person's response. Pastoral love is something far beyond "warm fuzzies." It is the kind of love God has for all people long before they open themselves to a warm relationship with him.

3) Are you praying faithfully for them and the relationships? If you find it hard to pray for them because of their coolness, you may need to confess this as a sin to the Lord and move on to passionately and faithfully pray for them. Your commitment to the "P" of PACE was not to pray for them "if." It was to pray for them, period.

4) In your spirit, accept them where they are. God has. Thank him for their degree of acceptance. It is better than rejection.

5) Study the following *Relationship Spectrum* paper for insights and resolutions.

The Pastoring Relationship Spectrum and What To do About It

The satisfaction, intensity, and mutuality of a pastoral relationship will vary with individuals in a flock. Love(agape) will be a steady constant from the Lay Pastor regardless of the response. The minimal guarantee we must make to people is that they will be loved and respected always, under every circumstance.

ICY BLUE **1. Resistant/2. Distant/3. Guarded/4. Formal/5. Congenial/6. Friendly**
7. Warm/8. Fondly/9. Loving FIERY RED

Negative impact of the left half(1-4) of the spectrum.

1. They don't want *me*.
2. They don't need a lay pastor.
3. I don't know how to relate to them.

4. If I only knew what to do, I could win them over to me.
5. I am a failure.

Realities of the left half of the spectrum.

1. Some people do not want a lay pastor.
2. Some people do not know they need a lay pastor.
3. Some have a quite adequate support system.
4. Some people are slow to accept a new relationship.
5. Some people will never to be open to a new relationship.

Resolution of the negative impact and realities.

1. Know that everyone needs pastoring.
2. Know that God has called you to pastor.
3. Know the degree of acceptance and adapt to it.
4. Know that in most cases relationships progressively deepen or decline. Be prepared to adapt to the change.
5. In the plan of God and the plan of the Lay Pastors Ministry, *you* are the one to initiate love, prayer, availability, and example. You are *not* to be a "dust shaker" (Matthew 10:14). You are to demonstrate agape - loving people and desiring the best for them no matter what the response.

PRIVATE TIME: Ask each participant to write what she or he was commit themselves to God to do in order to accept the reluctance of certain people and lovingly care about them.

SMALL GROUPS: Share their experiences, concerns and commitments, being sure to respect confidentiality. After the allotted time of sharing, pray for one another, each praying for only one other of the group. This makes it possible for each person to be meaningfully prayer for.

CLOSING REMARKS: Perseverance is the mainspring of pastorally caring for people.

Hebrew 10:35 - "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised."

Hebrew 11:17 - "Moses...persevered because he saw him who is invisible."

1 Corinthians 4:2 - "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

Matthew 25:23 - "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things."

NOTE: It is not people's response that determines how much you care for them, it is how you response to their response.

AXIOM 194

How to Help Sick and Grieving People

"Very sick people are not afraid of dying but do fear pain and abandonment. We must be present for them and remember that dying people want consolation more than explanation." There are the words of Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.

But what do we try to do?

Typically three things:

1. We try to avoid them. We put off going to see them. We add to one of their two greatest fears, abandonment. We don't know to say and we don't know what to say and we don't know what to do, so we stay away.
2. We try to soften their fear of dying by trite sayings, forced humor or expressions of denial such as, "You're going to be O.K." We are overlooking their pain and discomfort. We coat our frustration with words, not realizing that just being there in silence is better.
3. We believe they are looking for answers to their questions and a solution to their crisis so we offer logic rather than consolation or explanations instead of empathic presence.

Kushner illustrates what we should do with a story.

A little boy came home late. He explained to his mother that he was late because his friend down the street was crying. He had broken his bicycle. "So," the little boy said, "I stopped to help him." "But you don't know how to fix a bicycle," his mother countered. "Oh no," he replied, "I helped him cry."

We feel useless unless we try "fixing" the person. When a person cries, "Why me?" we try to explain the tragedy, not realizing it is a cry of pain rather than a cry for explanation. Our role is to be there, to realize that we are God's love with skin on, his visible presence of love, acceptance and caring.

To remember these four things in caring for people in pain or grief will help us to serve them better than anything else we can do:

1. People want consolation more than explanation;
2. The cry, "Why me?" is a cry of pain, not a question looking for an answer.
3. We can't help people understand tragedy but we can help them survive.
4. People in pain or sorrow do not need words, they need you and your love.

AXIOM 195

It's All In The Relationship

INTRODUCTORY TEACHING: Do not just contact people, build relationships. *Pastoring takes place in a relationships!* Too many of us think lay people cannot be authentic pastors because they do not have the training, knowledge, experience or designated role. Pastoral care does not hinge on these. It hinges on the capacity of the person to create a genuine relationship. The fact is that many credentialed pastors have the capacity for preaching, teaching, counseling, mobilizing and administration but do not seem to have the capacity (or time, energy or inclination) to build the kind of relationships lay people can build. Alastair Campbell wrote:

Pastoral care is a relationship founded upon the integrity of the individual. Such a relationship does not depend primarily upon the acquisition of knowledge or the development of skill. Rather, it depends upon a caring attitude toward others which comes from our own experience of pain, fear, and loss, and our own release from their deadening grip. (quoted from page 33 in *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*)

Your relationship tells your people that you really care in a serious and deep way; and it assures them of your availability and reliability. It cannot be expected that every relationship will be equally warm or fast in forming. Even though some people resist your pastoring initiatives, accept you slowly or with some reluctance, your side of the relationship can always be accepting, warm, loving, helpful, dependable and respectful. (See the "Pastoring Relationship Spectrum," No. 42, above)

SMALL GROUPS OR TOTAL GROUP: Ask them to tell their story about someone extending care to them, and tell something about the person who cared. If this is done in the large total group, you may wish to pre-plan the telling by asking three or four people to do this a few days before the meeting. In debriefing the story-telling, help the group to discover that in most cases the care came from people with whom they already had a relationship. This demonstrates from their real-life experiences that care takes place in a relationship. The lesson from this discovery is the Lay Pastors need to get beyond "making contacts." They must build relationships.

TEACHING: "Your Pastoral Care Bridge"

The bridge connecting you to your people is supported by two piers - *hearing* and *remembering*. Just as the two piers in the diagram on next page are the structures which support the weight of the bridge, *hearing* and

remembering support the weight of the pastoral-care bridge connecting you to your people.

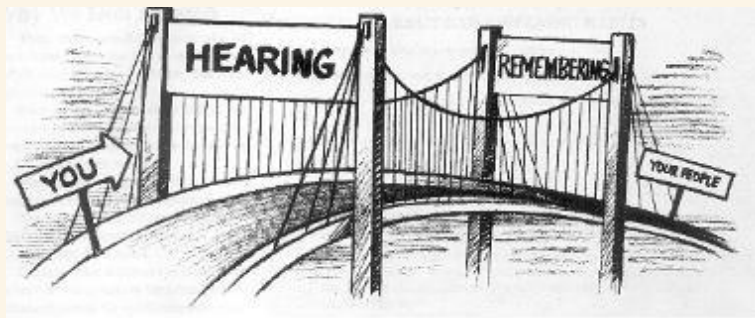
Your people, like yourself, need someone who *hears* them -- someone who really understand them and knows where they hurt and what thrills them. They also, again like you and me, need someone who *remembers* them --someone who knows their life passages (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.), their struggles, their major events (job change, loss or promotion, graduation, the birth of a baby, etc.), or who phones or visits them for no special occasion but just because they mean something to you.

Regarding *hearing*, Carl F. George wrote: "The key to th architecture of care is the activity called listening. People don't feel card for until someone has heard them. Person A develops loyalty to Person B in direct proportion of how well Person B gives attention to what Person A is communicating or trying to say."

Regarding one special way of *remembering* - visiting - Kenon Callahan wrote: "A visit is a sign of hope and promise. As you visit, you share the good news. People take hope. They discover life has promise. They know someone cares - deeply - for them."

Let's each of us ask, "How well am I *hearing* my people and, how well am I *remembering* them?" Let's listen carefully to how we answer to ourselves for we are also answering to God who has called us to this great privilege of caring for a segment of his people.

Hearing and *remembering* go a long way in building the relationship.



SMALL GROUP OR TOTAL GROUP: Use the same grouping as before. Read the following quotations one by one, taking time in between to share their

(1)comments and (2) applications. Both sharings are essential to a good learning experience. The quotations are from an article in Psychology Today, March/April, 1994, by Susan Johnson, Ed.D.

"As the child is connected to the parent, to be connected with another person is the only security we ever have in life. In that sense we never grow up."

"Attachment theory states that our primary motivation in life is to be connected with other people- because it is the only security we ever have. Maintaining closeness is a bona fide survival need."

"The bond between two people hinges on two things - their accessibility and responsiveness to each other. The notion that the tie between two people is created through accessibility and responsiveness is an outgrowth of attachment theory."

"As a marital therapist, my job is to help people experience love, to move from distance and alienation to contact and caring."

"Western psychology and psychiatry have often labeled feelings of dependency as pathologic. But, we are social beings not constituted for physiological and emotional isolation. The cost of social isolation is physical and psychological breakdown. Under such conditions, we simply deteriorate."

"Attachment theory tells us that the basic security in life is contact with other people. We need to be held, to be emotionally connected."

TEACHING: Effective pastoring can only happen in an authentic relationship. There are five requirements for building a relationship:

1. PRAY
 - Personality, by name
 - Regularly, like daily
 - Specifically, with details
2. SENSITIVITY
 - Empathic
 - Respectful
 - Self Awareness
3. FOCUS
 - On them
 - On their agenda

-Listen

4. SERVE

-Give yourself

-Be alert to conditions and needs

-Help

5. PRAY(First and last because of the importance of prayer)

-If done personally, regularly and specifically, there is no relational building effort more important.

SMALL GROUP OR TOTAL GROUP: (Preferably small group.) Tell among themselves (1) what impressed them in the teaching and sharing, (2) what they heard that is new to them, and (3) what they intended to do with what they learned. Ask them to pray for one another about relationships.

CONCLUSION: Form into a circle for singing and closing prayer. Then, ask them to hug at least three people before they go for the refreshments.

AXIOM 196

Why We Don't Listen

There are a number of reasons why we don't listen well. One has to do with our body's communication hardware. The brain is just too fast for the tongue.

Most people speak at about 125-140 words per minute. Some announcers and professional speakers can speak comfortably in the 170-to-200 word range.

The ear is able to listen 400 words per minute or more with a little training.

The brain, that magnificent computer, is able to process information at a rate of 1,000 to 1,400 words per minutes.

Because of the difference in these rates, the brain is also to tune in for a fraction of a second and process the words the speaker said and then take a break and tune out before the next series of words arrives. And that is exactly what poor listeners do - they allow their minds to tune out and wander.

Another problem is that most people have very short attention spans. According to a North Carolina University study, most people only actively listen for about seventeen seconds at a time.

The reason for this may be that we have grown accustomed to the electronic media's pandering to our laziness by trying to make every fact and option short and simple. The consumer today wants instant everything and is not very patient with preachers, politicians, news commentators, or speakers who expect him to think long and hard.

A third reason for our difficulty as listeners has to do with our education. The amount of training that we received in communication skills is inversely related to how much we use them.

Most of us in our schooling have received the most training in writing; yet, on the average, we write only 9 percent of the time that we are communicating. The second greatest amount of training is in reading, and we use that only 16 percent of the time. [We receive even less training for speaking than for reading, yet use speaking] 30 percent of the time. Lastly, very few are trained to listen, and yet we use it 45 percent of the time we are communicating.

AXIOM 197

For your Monthly Meeting

Distribute the following article, Celebrate Your Ministry, to your people a week of 10 days prior to the meeting. Ask them to read it, reflect on it, and come to the meeting prepared to share what they felt was informative, important, helpful, inspiring, applicable to them, etc. If the full group is not more than 15 or 20 this can be done with them all together. If more, break into groups of five to fifteen to do their sharing. Ask them to appoint one to report to the full group when they reassemble. Allot sufficient time for all to share and discuss, 30 to 50 minutes. The leaders should give an instruction and then tie things together at the close.

Celebrate Your Ministry

You are a minister. You are doing ministry. If you are using your abilities (read "spiritual gifts") God gave you, have your heart in what you are doing (read "passion"), and are at least somewhat God wants you to be doing (read "divinely called"), you are a minister. You are doing ministry.

Paul saw himself as a minister. He knew that he was an apostle. There was no question in his mind that God had appointed him "a herald and an apostle and a teacher." He was so certain of this that he wrote it twice - in I Timothy 2:7 and also in II Timothy 1:11.

Here is how he saw himself:

CALLED
SINCERE
VALIDATED
COMPETENT
PERSEVERING
EFFECTIVE
SERVING
FOCUSED

You discover this in the first chapters of II Corinthians. You can find more as you read more, but this is enough for us to test ourselves on how we see ourselves, and how we are doing with what God has called us to do and be.

CALLLED 1:1 - "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." He neither chose to be an apostle nor initiated his apostleship. He became a apostle by responding to God's call. (See also 2:17 & 42)

VALIDATED 3:3 - The results of this ministry spoke for themselves, validating

his position and his call. "The proof is in the pudding." "By their fruits you will know them."

COMPETENT 3:4-5 - As trained as he was (at the feet of Gamaliel), as experienced and credential as he was (Phil. 3:4-6), his competence lay not in him but in God. This gave him confidence in his competency.

PERSEVERING 4:1 - "We do not lose heart." Though hard pressed, crushed, persecuted and struck down (see 4:8-9) he pressed on. He was powerfully motivated by his call and hopelessly obsessed by fulfillment determinism.

EFFECTIVE 4:7 - He had already written that the proof of his call was in the people. He said they were "letters" which were being read by everybody. His ministry bore fruit. In all he did he prospered. (Psalm 1:3)

SERVING 4:5 - He was truly a servant; he had a servant's spirit. His new nature in Christ made him a servant of people. His freedom from the law enabled him to serve. To him, serving was a privilege.

FOCUSED 4:18 - His eyes were "fixed" on Jesus. Jesus as both the center of his life and the center of his ministry. His focus on Jesus kept him on track, precluding the dissipation of his energies on lesser things.

Everyone doing ministry does not experience these eight qualities to the same degree. We are all in process, becoming more and more focused, competence, etc. This list is extremely useful in helping a person get a fix on the qualities that differ in each of us, they are universal among all God's ministers, both volunteer and vocational. Let us be grateful to God that each quality is in us; let us affirm ourselves, and proceed to celebrate our ministry.

AXIOM 198

A Superbly "Different Gift"

After Paul's observation that "We [each] have different gifts, according to the grace given us," he lists the gift of encouragement among the seven. Encouragement is different from the other six: prophesying, serving, teaching, contributing, leadership and mercy (Romans 12:6-8).

Encouragement is one of the crown jewels of lay pastoral care. In the original language of the New Testament, the word is *paracaleo* (*para-ca-leh'o*). Its literal meaning is to call another to one's side so as to address or speak to.

It combines three wonderful pastoral initiatives: exhorting, comforting and encouraging. In fact, in some translations, the word is translated exhorting instead of encouraging; in some others, comforting instead of encouraging. Since we don't have an English word which combines these three wonderful pastoral energies, we have to know they are parts of the gift so that we use all three in caring for our people.

If we are short on exhorting, let's talk with God about how we can do this (in love) with some of our people needing counsel. If we are short on comforting, let's talk with God about how we can do this with some of our people who may be experiencing losses or limitations caused by sickness, death, loss of job, failure in marriage or school. If we are short on encouragement let's talk with God about how we can do this.

The dictionary definition of encouragement is "to inspire with courage, confidence and hope." We don't need to be inspired with courage, confidence and hope often. Even Lay Pastors need these regularly. This gift, as Paul wrote, is different from the others and is the one which enables a lay pastor to effectively care. All we have to do is use it to see that the love and power of God is in it.

AXIOM 199

I knew, I grew, I went

I knew that Lord would provide and have something to show me. I grew a lot by being there. I went and hope to go again!

I thoroughly enjoyed the Lay Pastor's Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. One of the best things about attending these International Conferences is sharing our experiences with other churches and meeting all the different people involved in Lay Ministries. I attended several good sessions, however the one that sticks the most was one on Lay Pastoring the Single Person. This session was presented by Sandy Session, Program Minister at the Navarre UMC in Navarre, Florida. She was an excellent speaker.

Sandy reminded us that the singles come in all "flavors" with many different characteristics, desires and wants. Show showed us that we muster minister too: the always single, the newly single, the single again-and-again-and-again, the widow/widow/widow/
widowed, the divorced, the separated, the preparing to be single, the deserted, and one of the most important groups-the single parent.

We received the assumptions or mis-assumptions that people make when working with the singles. Mis-assumptions like: singles have lots of free time, singles are always are busy, the families of singles take care of the single person, and singles have lots of friends. This is simply note the case. We were taught to listen for the "non-said."

Our group shared some creative ideas to remember in our pastoring of the single person. Some of the ideas that were shared included: inviting singles to ride to church events with your family so that they don't have to arrive alone, sending them lots of cards so that when they go home at night to an empty house that they have a reminder that you are thinking about them, remembering the difficult "anniversaries"- divorce/death; being observant of their home; offering *assistance* to get the car to the shop, to get the lawn mower fixed, or to help replace dead shrubs. (Our speaker stressed the difference between assistance and monetary help); and invite a single to share your family dinners - many are miles away from their families.

Sandy closed by sharing a broken shell found along the beach. She shared that many singles are like broken shells. The shell is pretty except the hole. She reminded the group that Jesus is the only one that can fill the brokenness and make the people whole again. Singles needs lay pastors who will witness forgiveness and help the single make peace with their past. We

must become "bleacher people." Remember the days when you sat in the bleachers and cheered for your children. You creamed and yelled when junior got a ..hit but you YELLED even louder when they *struck out!* Lay Pastors need to be bleacher people! Cheerleaders in good times and the bad times.

This year's keynote address was great, not only because it was delivered by our own Earl Andrews but because his message was one we need to hear. Getting back to the basics - To Know, To Grow, and To Go. If I didn't hear anything else during the weekend, these six simple words were worth the trip. To know the Lord, to grow in the Lord, and to go out and serve the Lord is the essence of Christian's life. Earl's invigorating message rejuvenated the entire group. I was further inspired when the speakers at each of the session that followed, including the Sunday worship service at Calvary, included these six words - *To Know, To Grow and To Go.*

I have attended four of these conferences and would like to encourage all lay ministers to go next year's conference.

Clara Jehle, Lay Minister
Frazer United Methodist Church, Montgomery, Alabama

AXIOM 200

Twenty-five Fantastic Questions

that get beyond "how are you?"

1. Tell me a favorite Bible character and how you relate to him or her.
2. Name someone who had a positive influence on your life as you were growing up, and how did he or she affect your life?
3. What's a day you would love to relieve if you could?
4. What hobbies did you have both as a little kid and as a big kid?
5. What would you change about yourself if you could?
6. What's one of the good things about the church you grew up in?
7. What was an embarrassing moment you had when you were in grade school?
8. Looking back over the past five years, what are some of the ways you've changed?
9. Who is the role model for your life? and why?
10. What's a spiritual victory you've known in your life recently?
11. What are some of your interest areas and how did you first get started in them?
12. What is one of the most daring things you've ever done?
13. How did you become a Christian?
14. Who is someone you'd really like to meet, and why?
15. What is one accomplishment that you feel proud of?
16. How did you meet your wife or husband? or....
What are some of qualities you're looking for in your future spouse?
17. If you chose another profession besides your own, what would you do and why?

18. What was one family vacation you enjoyed as a child what did you like about it?
19. What personal dream do you hope will come true someday?
20. When you were in sixth grade, what girl or boy did you like and why?
21. How are you like your mom and how are you like your dad?
22. What is one aspect you like most and least about our job?
23. If you didn't have to worry about money and you could take a vacation anywhere in the world, where would you go, and why?
24. Who was one of your childhood heroes and what did you admire about him or her?
25. Tell me what you're like by using an animal. For example, "I would be like a dog because I'm loyal, etc."

-From Chapel of Air Ministries

AXIOM 201

"What To Do When Enthusiasm Takes A Dive"

(How to keep ardor high and persevere happily.)

1. A very brief mini-drama depicting what happens to enthusiasm:

SCENE ONE

Narrator: "A lay pastor is newly commissioned, ready to make the first contacts. With a smile on his or her face and excitement in his or her voice she says to herself."

Lay Pastor: "I can hardly wait to get started! I'll call of my people right now to see when we arrange a visit." The Lay Pastor goes to the phone, sits down to make the call and gives a short prayer before dialing. After the prayer the Lay Pastor dials, "Hello Helen, I'm so glad to get you. I've just because your Lay Pastor, etc.

SCENE TWO

Narrator: A year has passed. It's already past the time the Lay Pastor should have contacted his or her people.

Lay Pastor: "Oh, darn, another week has gone by and I still haven't even thought about getting in touch with my people. Oh well, another day won't hurt."

Narrator: "Another week has passed. The Lay Pastor has gotten a notice that his or her report for last month is overdue."

Lay Pastor: (Self talk with a downcast countenance and a very slow pace, complete lacking enthusiasm) "Now what will I do? I don't know what has happened; I just don't seem to have the zip for doing this ministry I used to have. I know I shouldn't feel this way...but I do. It's been so long since I've even prayed for my people, let alone contacting them. I wonder what they think of me by now. Maybe I'd better quit."

Narrator: "What happened? What should this Lay Pastor do? What should the Ministry Coordinator do? It's obvious that the initial excitement and enthusiasm has declined. The poor soul. The guilt, frustration and feelings of failure must be depressing."

2. Teaching

Many ventures in our lives start out with a bang but begin to wane over

time. Some familiar examples are: starting school, marriage, opening the business, a new automobile, beginning a new job.

The need for motivation is a legitimate human need. Think back to the time you became a lay pastor. What were your feelings, thoughts and commitment at that time? Try to recall what they have been between now and then. Focus on what you are doing, how you are doing it, and how you are feeling about it right now. Let's close our eyes for one minute to get in touch with how we are at the moment.

(pause)

The Scriptures assume our need for motivation and speaks to it: Romans 12:11; Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 10:25; II Theologians 3:13 and Luke 9:62. (You can have five people each prepare to read and share their understandings relative to motivation at this point.)

How was Moses able to persevere? Hebrews 11:17 tells us: "He saw him who was invisible." What is the key to our persevering? Hebrews 12:2 tells us: "Fix your eyes on Jesus."

A Lay Pastor's enthusiasm, commitment and ministry energy will fluctuate. When one's ardor wanes, he or she should not be surprised. This is a part of what it means to be a human being doing God's work. Both Lay Pastors and those who lead the ministry need to do what they can to keep enthusiasm high, vision bright, and commitment current. God calls us to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18); to "never tire of doing what is right" (II Thes. 3:13); to "persevere so that whe you have done the will of God, you will receive what has promised" (Heb. 10:25).

(Other teaching on motivation is found in the *Monograph By Mel* titled "Motivating Lay Pastors, " available from Lay Pastors Ministry, Inc., such as (1) the difference between and use of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; (2) the fact that it takes one kind of motivation to bring a person into the ministry and another to stay with it; and (3) the nature of motivation is that it must be fueled regularly and renewed frequently, just like body energy.)

3. Survey results

At an equipping seminar people where asked, "What do I need to keep me in the ministry?" The responses fell into eight categories. A few of them are given here:

a. Response

"Some positive feedback that my contacts are important in some way."

"I need to experience a bonding of my life with theirs."

"I need to get response from people; not necessarily positive."

b. Support

"I will need support & encouragement from other Lay Pastors."

"I would like a superior to make an assessment of the work I do."

c. Call

"I need to know that I am in God's will, doing his work."

"A feeling that I am where God wants me to be."

d. Significance

"I need to feel that I am doing something worthwhile, that I am making a difference."

"A feeling of contributing."

e. Health and time

"Good health so that I have the time to give to it."

"Finding time to effectively lay pastor."

f. Further Equipping

"Continued training as needed."

"Continuing to grow."

g. Commitment

"A willing spirit."

"A commitment to the Lord and dependence on the Holy Spirit."

h. Administration

"No busy-work or unnecessary administrivia."

These quotes can be copied and distributed to be read by individuals, taking time for people to comment.

4. Group Sharing

Ask people to write their thoughts about the following:

a. Two things I have learned in my lay pastoring experience.

b. Two reasons why I am still a Lay Pastor.

c. What makes it difficult to be a Lay Pastor, and how I am dealing with them.

d. What will keep me at it.

Move into small groups to share and discuss topic by topic. Conclude the time together by each one praying for one other of the group with specifics heard as they shared and discussed.

Debrief in total group.

Conclusion

Form a circle, join hands for a closing song and prayer. After the prayer ask them not to leave before hugging at least three people.

You are "doing something of value"

"I know Mickey Mantle very well," Spenser Christian told his two colleagues, Charles Gibson and Joan Lundun, on ABC-TV's Good Morning America Tuesday morning, August first. They were discussing the cancer which was discovered in his lungs a few weeks after his liver transplant.*

Spencer continued, "He(Mickey Mantle) never felt that his achievements in baseball warranted all the attention and respect given him. He has faced his morality and because of this he has turned his life around." Then the punch line: "He feels he is finally doing something of value whit his life. He is crusading for organ donations and urging young people not to live like he (drinking, etc.)."

Most people want to do more than work, play, earn money, eat, sleep and stay alive. To us, playing baseball occupied his time productively, provided entertainment for hundreds of thousands of fans and made him a lot of money. To him that is not "of value." Making a difference in people's lives is!

He learned this the hard way, but he really learned it. Helping others has given his life meaning - "He feels he is family doing something of value."

Lay Pastors have learned to do "something of value" with their lives without having to go through major surgery. They are not playing professional baseball, but they are holding down other jobs, homemaking, or retired. Knowing that God has given them gifts for ministry and has called them to use their gifts to pastorally care for people gives them a feeling of "doing something of value," making a difference in people's lives. They are making the kind of difference God wants made.

*Mickey Mantle is now deceased

AXIOM 203

Seven Ways to assurance ministry

activity, commitment and excellence

For Ministry Leaders:

1. Affirm, recognize and show approval and respect often. The closer the complimentary words to the time of the action, the more effective it is.
2. Frequent personal contact - phone and face-to-face visits are appreciated, affirming and bonding.
3. Doing little things for a person make a big difference to them, such as offering a ride, help carry a heavy item, run an errand, congratulatory card or phone call on one's birthday or anniversary, inviting for a bar-b-que, etc.
4. Comment on monthly report frequently. Select those items which are commendatory and refer specially to those.
5. Always be a good listener. They will know they are important to you when they know you are listening.
6. Follow up on prayer requests by asking to be updated on their requests (health, job, children, finances, etc.)
7. Holding people accountable will deepen their respect for you, assure them of the importance of their ministry and renew their commitment to faithfulness and quality.(Example: monthly reports, lay pastors meeting attendance, doing PACE and meeting for "pastoral supervision.")

AXIOM 204

Dealing with Difficult People

In trying to deal with difficult people, it is essential to begin with some fundamental understandings. Ask these questions of yourself:

What do I mean by a "difficult person"? What kind of person do I find difficult? Why do I find this person difficult?

And perhaps the most difficult question of all:

Am I difficult person in this relationship?

As Lay Pastors we encounter many different kind of people. Remember that whether they are difficult or not, different require different responses from us. Just as you think differently about a senior citizen than you do about a young mother or teenager, so also the first step in knowing how to deal with a difficult person is to determine within yourself *why* you find this person difficult to deal with. You will discover that the difficult people you encounter will fall into for categories:

1. Those who resist care - they don't want to see you as a Lay Pastor.
2. Those who don't like you - it's o.k., it happens to all of us!
3. Those who you don't like- some personalities simply don't jive!
4. Those nobody seems to like - some people enjoy being difficult!

Once your have determined which of these "types" suits the difficult person you are dealing with, your approach to them can begin to take shape in your mind.

Before you go any further you must remind yourself of some basic principles about showing care and compassion to others. These basic principles are not necessarily brilliant or profound, but must be remembered in all our relationships.

Principle #1:

Know that God is concerned about your relationship with others.

Pray about your relationship. Let God know of your worries and concerns. Make certain that you have an open mind and open heart toward those whom God has entrusted to your care. Be sincere and honest with God about your fears and apprehensions so that He is able to give you the strength, the wisdom and the love your require.

Principle #2:

Know that God loves you as you reach out to those in need of love.

God has called you to this ministry and gifted you give to do this work. He has chosen you because He loves you. You have this ministry to reflect the

love God has Given you. Remembering these basic facts of faith will help you realize afresh that God will bless you as you follow the command to "take care of my sheep."

Principle #3:

Know that God loves those to whom you are reaching out

While at any particular moment you may question if *you* love them, you cannot forget that God does! Those who are entrusted to your care are very special in God's eyes. He loves them so much that He sent His Son for them. But you are the one who is physically present to show God's love.

Principle #4:

There is a big difference between "backing off" and "backing out" of a relationship.

Sometimes it is necessary to "leave a little space" in a relationship, to "back off" a little, but this is not the same as giving up on the individual. When dealing with difficult people, we must constantly remain cognizant of the need we all have to be valued for who we are. If you back out of a relationship, there is a strong possibility that they will feel rejected and unloved, not only by you, but also by the church and by God. Give some space (for your sake and theirs) but do not abandon them!

REJECTION

If people reject you as a Lay Pastor, understand that many people also were hesitant to receive Jesus. If we look at the biblical accounts of His life, we see:

Some were indifferent

Some misunderstood Him

Some rejected Him

Most of those who are given the opportunity, however, are also Changeable

→when they truly hear and experience the truth

→when it is explained to them

→when they receive truth love and acceptance from Jesus (and His people).

As Lay Pastors it is not our job to change people, but it is our calling to show them the love of God, to model His acceptance of them, to demonstrate the truth of His compassion for a hurting world.

Our "natural wisdom" is that we like best those who like us best. Godly wisdom is to love those whom God loves!

AXIOM 205

Biblical and possible

"I want the people to know that the Lay Pastors Ministry is biblical and possible."

That's what Associate Pastors Greg Gallaher, faxed back when I asked him what he wanted to have happened by the end of the seminar on Saturday afternoon.

I gave a Lay Pastors Equipping Seminar for Century United in Lexington, Kentucky, the last weekend of September. Membership - 2400; four year old sanctuary 1,200; multiple staff; largest UMC in the conference; 90 participants (a few from other churches and Asbury Theological Seminary).

Greg was perceptive (Spirit-led maybe says it better). The Lay Pastors Ministry is biblical and possible.

First the ministry is biblical. There is a great biblical model - Moses decentralized the care of God's people. (Ex. 18); then it is ordered - "Care for the flock of God" (I Pet. 5:2). You can't get more biblical!

The ministry is also possible. I know it is possible because I see it happening all over. "The proof is in the pudding." Thousands of God's people are being PACEed in hundreds of churches (Prayed for; have someone Available; Contacted; and have an Example).

It is being done with success. A significant number of lay people in every congregation are Spirit-gifted and divinely called to give grass-roots, one-on-one pastoral care to the households of that church. You just have to find them, call them forth, equip and commission them.

Centenary's Birthing of the Lay Pastors Ministry

How can a large, growing church like Centenary in Lexington, Kentucky, provide adequate pastoral care for its 2400 members? This was the dilemma facing this United Methodist congregation and its Senior Pastor, Dr. Al Gwinn. Two years ago, four persons from the work area on nurture including Chairperson Sandra Cowen, attended a workshop that presented several ministries as ways of addressing this common need. Crucial to Centenary's mission for the 90's, according to Mrs. Cowen, "is the equipping of a lay pastorate which can nurture, maintain and sustain the body of Christ." Although each of the ministries considered was deemed credible and worthwhile, after a year of study and prayer, the Lay Pastors Ministry was selected as the BEST given its scope, cost, effectiveness and training time. With the full endorsement of the staff, the church began the process of implementing a comprehensive lay pastoral care ministry.

The church's Staff-Parish Relations Committee, as well as, its Administrative council, also took steps toward this ministry by adding an Associate Pastor of Nurture, the Rev. Greg Gallaher, to the church's staff in June. This past spring, Rev. Gallaher, his wife Connie, and Mrs. Peggy Whyte attended the International Lay Pastors Conference in Charlotte, NC. There they met Dr. Mel Steinborn as their enthusiasm grew for the potential of this ministry for Centenary.

In September, Dr. Steinborn visited Lexington and led an Equipping seminar to spread the vision by showing the congregation that Lay Pastors Ministry in both biblically-based and possible! Almost ninety persons attended including pastors and lay leaders from other Lexington-area churches. The seminar generated a lot of enthusiasm for the Lay Pastors Ministry. According to Rev. Gallaher, "We are now forming the Ministry Development Team with hopes of starting a pilot program with a dozen or more lay pastors on November 15. We are so thankful for the vision God gave Mel Steinborn twenty years ago to equip lay persons to love and care for one another. With God's help, Centenary will join the hundreds and thousands of churches worldwide that are doing pastoral care God's way."

Learn the secret of winning

Learn the Secret of Winning the Privilege of Pastoring Reluctant and Resistant People.

"My Friend Louise:"

My husband and I moved to Charleston, South Carolina, after having lived in Honolulu, Hawaii, for twenty-three years. We did not know anyone, but quickly found a church home at St. Banabas Lutheran Church.

Our pastor, Rocky Hendrix, wanted to encourage me to consider serving on the visitation committee which included shut-ins. Most of my church life experience had been spent with youth so I was a bit hesitant. However, after praying about it and seeing the need, I said yes.

I attended my first visitation meeting and was given a list of five names, four women and one man. One of the women was an 84 year old widow who lived alone, and for lack of a better word, was cantankerous to say the least.

On my first visit to her home, I was nervous and she obviously did not want me there. Needless to say, our visit was short and not too sweet.

And the next committee meeting, I shared my experience and concern and was assured that I had done my best and to hang in there. Later in the year I found out that all of them had already had their "Louise turn."

"...all of them had already had their 'Louise turn.' "

For the first year, we had our good visits and our okay visits and I considered this to be my visitation duty. I was a faithful visitor.

My pastor gave me the book entitled *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* by Mel Steinbron and then I was fortunate enough to attend a workshop led by Pastor Tom Corbell from Statesville, NC, on Lay Pastoring. It was as if a light turned on and I began to feel in my heart that I was no longer doing visitation but ministry. How powerful that has been for me. What a privilege it is to sit with someone even if for only a few moments and share a part of who God created us to be.

Louis and I began to share our lives on a very personal basis and I either called or went to see her once a week. Since I am a hugger, I decided to go for it one afternoon, and she loved it and she said, "You really do love

me, don't you?" The tears began to flow and I know that this is where God wants me to be.

The sweetest part about our relationship was that I had learned so much from her and felt humbled by it.

My friend died at age of 87 in June. I had the honor of sharing our relationship at her graveside services. My parting words were: "Louise, I love you and God hold you close until we meet again." There were no tears from me, just a heart full of love for the privilege of being a lay minister.

Blessing,

Alicia Luhrs

Three Reasons Some Ministries Fail

ONE: TIMING

The people launching this ministry in a church may be (1) impatient or (2) pokey; and the church may be (3) too busy or (4) the culture may not be favorable.

Impatient: You may start too early, before you are adequately prepared. Take time to have most of your ducks in a row before starting the ministry.

Pokey: You may start too late. A church peaks like a baseball team peaks, rising to the highest level of fervor. It is ideal for a baseball team peak toward the end of the summer, a few weeks before the playoffs. Some churches dawdle after enlisting the leader, prepping the congregation and filling their potential lay pastors with enthusiasm wanes while forward movement is delayed.

Busy: The church may be launching other programs and ministries, or the focus may be on some scheduled event. To try to introduce the Lay Pastors Ministry into an already crowded calendar is impossible. People are too busy to give sufficient attention to it.

Culture: Getting a whole congregation ready (acculturated) for this ministry is imperative. One pastor preached a series of sermons on lay ministry, met with focus groups, and had books for people to read for months he finely tuned his sermons to the one ministry of lay pastoring. The readied some people to offer themselves to be lay pastors and the others to receive their pastoral care.

Timing is equally important for repairing a broken ministry or pumping new life into a faltering one.

TWO: LEADERSHIP

(1) Limited commitment; (2) doubtful gifts and call; (3) individualism; (4) excessive busy-ness; and (5) arrested growth all result in a weakened ministry. The good news is that they can all be changed to strengths.

Limited Commitment: Intentional and uncompromising commitment, first to Jesus Christ as one's Lord and then to the Lay Pastors Ministry are imperatives for all who lead. Jesus put it this way, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

Double Gifts and Call: This is gifted-oriented ministry, not for just anyone who is willing. It is call-based, not for just anyone who may volunteer. Leaders are persuaded inwardly that, "God wants this ministry in our church and she wants me to be leading it."

Individualism: For a healthy ministry, the leader must have the team concept; he or she must be committed to collegiality rather than the long-ranger style. "We" is used much more than "I." The principle is written in Proverbs 11:14, "In an abundance of counselors there is safety." It is not only true that the pastor can't do it alone; lay pastors cannot do it alone.

Excessive busy-ness: Rearranging priorities is painful for an energetic, committed, gifted person because it means that he or she will be left out of some ministries. If a ministry is to be healthy, the leader has to narrow the field of activities so as to pour his or her time, energy and creativeness into one ministry.

Arrested Growth: A leader needs to be ever growing. There is so much to learn, both about ministry and leadership skills. He or she needs to be Peter who, after writing "Care for the flock of God," concluded a list of leadership qualities with. "For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive ..." (I Pet. 5:2; II Pet. 1:5-8)

Where you find a healthy Lay Pastors Ministry, you find a leader who has incorporated this cluster of five principles: (1) commitment to Jesus Christ and commitment to ministry; (2) certainty of spiritual gifts and God's call; (3) collegiality; (4) prioritization; (5) continuous growth.

THREE: CULTURE

Every church has its own distinctive culture. Each member of each church is an integral part of its culture, participating in its creation and perpetuation and adapting to its distinctives. According to Edgar H. Scheim (quoted by Stevens and Collins in *The Equipping Pastor*) culture includes:

- a. The observed behavioral regularities. (Example: people do not pray out loud in groups in our church and they will be embarrassed if you ask them to.)
- b. The dominant values. (Example: church attendance is the ultimate expression of spirituality.)
- c. The rules or "ropes". (Example: the usual way to become a member

of the church board is to serve several years on the finance committee.)

d. The feeling or climate that is conveyed. (Example: it is not acceptable to raise one's hands in worship.)

The culture is either a barrier to the Lay Pastors Ministry or a carrier. If the members of a congregation have the idea that only the ordained clergy can give pastoral care, a lay pastoral care ministry is doomed from the start. Conversely, if the members believe God calls lay pastor as well as clergy to do significant ministry, a lay pastoral care ministry will likely succeed.

There you have it: timing, leadership, culture - the three essentials for a healthy ministry, which, if not intentionally respected, may cause a ministry to fail. This gives us all a lot to work on.

Out-Takes from Let Lay People Do It!

I participated in a video production at Hope Church a couple of years ago which was seen by each other of our 1100 households. The theme was western, boots, guns, ect. Some of the "out-takes"- the footage not used in the final editing - were as humorous or significant as that which survived the cut.

In a similar way, the final writing of *Let Lay People Do It!* left out as many sheets of paper as we sent to the publisher. The following is one of these "out-takes." There will be more in future issues of NETWORK NEWS.

The Need for Lay Pastoral Care

Jesus came to the conclusions that if he were to give attention to the number of people needing it he had to decentralize by giving his ministry to the disciples. Is this too far-fetched an interpretation of Mark 6:6-13?

The record tells how he "went around teaching from village to village." He saw the need and the opportunity to multiply himself - "Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority..."

He did as much as one person could get done, but even he, the Son of God, in a human body, could not do more than that. By (1) calling, (2) sending, (3) giving authority, and (4) instructing, He was getting twelve times as much done.

Translate this to the Lay Pastors Ministry. A vocational minister pastorally cares for all the members one person can care for, visiting, phoning, listening, encouraging, remembering, praying for and with, all they can get to in a day, a month or a year. This strategy leaves many, many people un-pastored.

By designing a ministry whereby those members of a congregation whom God has gifted and called are (1) called forth, (2) equipped, (3) given ministry, and (4) commissioned - sent forth - all the members can get in on the kind of care the vocational minister is expected to give.

Here is a remarkable example: At Hope Church the pastoral and program staff meet every Tuesday morning, giving some of the time to pray for 10 church families by name. These people were selected the week before and contacted by phone prior to the meeting. They go through the church roster alphabetically. It takes three years to get to all the families. Each family gets

a phone call from a vocational minister (if they were home and if the staff member could reach them) and is prayed for once every three years to so.

If we are to adequately pastor everyone as God wants, each member will have someone in whom they can confide and who can pray for them meaningfully because they know them quite well. This is why Jesus called the seventy, instructed them, gave them authority and sent them to the homes of the people. This is the way the Lay Pastors Ministry is designed to function and in many, many, many churches it is working that way.

AXIOM 210

What Lay Pastoral Ministry Will Do For Your Church

(by Rev. Tom Corbell)

Without warning, she went into a seizure. Her body stiffened and her car careened off the road and hit a tree. She was almost dead when the medical team arrived. I raced to the hospital to be with her. Her husband was in Mexico, and after several phone calls, I was able to locate him.

Lay Ministers (Lay Pastors) met him at the airport to bring him to the hospital. That night, the Lay Ministers literally stayed in the hospital until the doctor came to tell us that a decision had to be made, for she had no brain activity. Pastor, Lay Ministers and family gathered around her bed. A prayer of release for Jesus to receive her into his Kingdom was prayed. The love of God, through people who were "love with skin on" brought comfort and hope to a bereaved husband.

The account you just read was true - I was the pastor. Beside me were servants of God called to minister in Jesus's name. What a humbling honor he gives to us when we serve to his glory and majesty!

Every church has multiple needs. In teaching Lay Pastors Equipping Seminars, I share this definition of Lay Pastoring: ***"Lay Pastoring is obedience to the biblical command 'to equip the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ' (Ephesians 4:12). It is Jesus Christ living and loving through people to people with the message of God's love and care for each person. As Melvin Steinbron says, Lay Pastoring is 'love with skin on'."***

Why is Lay Pastoring needed? The needs of any congregation are so multiple that no one human being can meet all those needs. It isn't biblical or practical. Lay Pastoring, as described in Mel's book ***Can The Pastor Do It Alone?***, is a Godly tool to empower God's people to effectively and genuinely bring pastoral care to those who are in need.

Lay people have gifts that must be trusted and allowed to be given expression through caring. How many people in your congregation have gift, but have never been able to truly give them because there was no "form" through which their love could take on flesh and blood? The model of Lay Pastoring provides this Spirit-filled form!

One of the beautiful results of Lay Pastoring is that your church may become a model for other churches, regardless of denomination, to want to emulate.

If people see your church providing good Christian care, then others may want to follow your example.

Finally, I want to mention the benefit that Lay Pastoring can bring to your church. People will know that their gifts have been recognized and deeply appreciated when they serve as Lay Minister/Pastors. This serving in ministry helps both them and the congregation live out the biblical model for serving Christ. It gives them a structure through their gifts can find expression while giving honor to their Lord.

I can't encourage you enough to begin, or to continue, a Lay Pastoral ministry in your church. The results can be life-changing...the results bring glory to God!

Out-Takes from the Lay Driven Church

The publish of this book, Regal Books, has scheduled its release for April 11, 1997 - next month. Because of its length, a lot of what I wrote could not be included. (Every preacher knows what it is to have to leave a lot of "good stuff" out of a sermon because it gets too long.) The cuts are called "out-takes." Beginning with the last issue of *Network News*, I am giving you some of "out-takes," and will continue doing so after the book comes out. Assuming that the publisher is on schedule, the book will be introduced at Conference '97.

How the Lay Pastors Ministry fits the total life of the church

The church is a present-day form of kingdom of God. The Greek word, ekklesia, which is translated church is from the root verb kaleo, meaning to call. The church has calling. What is it? The church's call (it's mission) is to advance the Kingdom of God by making disciples of all nations and then by caring for the disciples it has made.

This is the large picture into which we must position our Lay Pastors Ministry. The LPM is the caring initiative among the members of the church family, carried out by people to whom God has given pastoral gifts and whom the church has called forth, equipped and commissioned to this task. Pastoral care is the role of the LPM, alongside of worship, Christian nurture, fellowship, administration and other "inreach ministries"; and alongside of evangelism, missions, community involvement and other "outreach ministries,"

If the church is seen as a pie, the LPM is one of the pieces, and the indispensable one at that. If caring is to happen, it has to be done by many people. God knows all things and never intended that the pastor do it alone. No church can hire a staff large enough to the all the sheep.

When every member, even the wandering and "least of them," is loved and well cared for the church family becomes an irresistible invitation to Christ, an irrefutable evidence of the practicality of the Gospel and a model of the true community to the world.

Someone who is not very realistic asks, "Isn't caring every member's responsibility?" Yes and no. It is, but in the same sense that everyone is to witness, but not everyone has the gifts of evangelism - leading one to make his or her commitment to Christ. Everyone is to speak the truth, but not everyone is called to preach and teach. Everyone is to love and care for

others, but not everyone has the gift and called to care for people pastorally.

People who are neither gifted for nor called to be evangelists, preacher or lay pastors are gifted and called to other ministries. All of God's work, and there is a great variety, will get done when all Christians know their gifts and hear God's call. The Lay Pastors Ministry gather those members who have pastoring gifts, equips them, commissions them, assigns a manageable number of the church's membership to them, and then supports them in their ministry.

So this is how the Lay Pastors Ministry fits the total life of the church. It is positioned within the congregation of God's people as the organized, intentional caring "heart."

AXIOM 212

More On Listening

"If you wish to enter the world of those who are broken or closed in upon themselves, it is important to learn their language.

Learning a language is not just learning French or Spanish or German. It is learning to understand what people are really saying, the non-verbal as well as the verbal language. The verbal, exterior language is the beginning and is absolutely necessary, but you must go deeper and discern what it means to listen:

to listen deeply another, to the cry flowing from the heart, in order to understand people, both in their pain and in their gifts;

to understand what they are truly asking so that you can hold their wound, their pain and all that flows from it; violence, anger and depression, self-centeredness and limitless demands; the suffocating urge to possess, the refusal to let go; to accept these with compassion, without judging, without condemning...

If you come in this way, open, listening humbly, without judging, then gradually you will discover that you are trusted. Your heart will be touched. You will begin to discover the secret of communion."

Listening is the "bread and butter/meat and potatoes" basic for pastoral care whether by lay people or clergy. After reading the words above (copied from **Rivers in the Desert** by Rowland Croucher), comparing listening to learning "their language," the following three scenes can be dramatized by three people. One (with feeling) is the "person." Another (with feeling) read "wrong." The third reads "right." You may wish to use nine people rather than three. After each scene have a panel discuss why "wrong" is wrong and "right" is right.

SCENE #1:

Person: "There's this guy at work. He's always running off the mouth. Swearing, dirty stories, criticizing. It's really getting to me."

Wrong: "Let me tell you what to do. Some day when he gets going with his filthy mouths, tell him off. That'll clean him up. Screw up your courage and give it to him."

Right: "It sounds like you are really annoyed. Am I right?"

SCENE #2:

Person: "One of my best friends just moved out of town. Right now I feel very alone. I need her (him.) No one can ever take her (his) place."

Wrong: "Oh, you shouldn't feel like that. Especially since you know the Lord. You know he will take care of how you feel. Cheer up. Get busy with some things you like to do. It's not right for a Christian to feel that way."

Right: "She means a lot to you. Tell me more about her (him)."

SCENE #3:

Person: "We just got home from a wonderful trip to Japan."

Wrong: "You did. How was that wrong flight? I remember when I went to England five years ago. We left New York at 8 a.m. Was that ever a long flight! We saw the sun come up long before we reached London. Missed a whole night of sleep. We toured Westminster Abbey the next day, and I was so tired. But it's sure fun to travel. Would you recommend that we go to Japan?"

Right: "To Japan! That's exciting! Tell me all about it."

AXIOM 213

This is the way we did it!"

Charleston, SC, church reveals how they made their vision a reality

St. Mark Methodist Church in Charleston, SC, had a vision that started in late 1995. Pastor Phil Trrailkill saw the need for his church to have a higher level of caring. After much prayer, he and three other members of the church attended a Lay Minister's Equipping Seminar on March 8-9 at St. Barnabas Evangelical Lutheran Church in Charleston. The Rev. Thomas Corbell spent two days reviewing all that was necessary to start program and run it successfully.

Since March, 1996 our church, through the lay pastors's program, has accomplished *more than we ever imagined*. In less than a year's time, we have prayed, planned, and implemented a phenomenal lay pastor program. This is the way we did it.

- ◆ Prayed, prayed, prayed & prayed.
- ◆ In 1995 our Board of Stewards elected to start a lay pastor program in 1996.
- ◆ Pastor Phil selected a core group of 6 persons to determine our plan of action. The Assistant Lay Leader of Pastoral Care position was added as part of the group and to our Board of Stewards.
- ◆ Our master plan included Pastor Phil preaching six sermons on lay ministry, and how we were expected as Christians to use our gifts and talents for the Lord. This created interest and helped our congregation obtain knowledge about the strengths and benefits of lay pastoring.
- ◆ In June and July, the congregation was asked to nominate persons who in their eyes had the character and love to be effective lay pastors.
- ◆ Over 70 nominations came from our congregation of 220 active members.
- ◆ 25 people attended a two-day training session in September, and 20 persons were commissioned in October. Of those 20 persons, there were two husband and wife teams and three shepherds, totalling 14 family units that were available for a flock.
- ◆ Pastor Phil chose a long-time member of St. Mark (who was also a member of the core group), and the church secretary at St. Mark to review

the names of all constituents and members and to prayerfully make flocking assignments to these 14 lay pastors.

◆ Interviews were set with each commissioned lay pastor as they received the names, addresses, and phone numbers of their new flocks. It was an exciting time for the lay pastors who were finally starting to put their P.A.C.E training to work!

◆ In September, Pastor Phil was lucky enough to have Dr. Mel Steinbron (who just happened to be in South Carolina) address our group of lay pastors and to present his lay pastor program to other ministries in Charleston area. This was a great opportunity for our new lay pastors to see "the father of lay pastoring" in action.

◆ Each of the families that was assigned a lay pastor received a letter from Pastor Phil and me, telling them their lay pastor would be calling them within two weeks.

◆ In February, the first accountability report was presented to the congregation. We were very excited about the results. In the months of November and December 468 contacts were made with 87 families that received lay pastors. That's a lot of loving!

Our 1997 goal is for over 80% of our congregation to have lay pastors. We have two equipping seminars scheduled in May and September, have monthly training meetings scheduled with our current lay pastors, have two persons attending national lay pastor training and plan to commission 30 new lay pastors and 6 new shepherds, along with presenting quarterly accountability reports to the congregation so they too can see how much we love to care for God's people.

*Lora James
Assistant Lay Leader of Pastoral Care
St. Mark Methodist Church
Charleston, SC*

AXIOM 214

Prayer - It's power can astonish!

"What if there are some things God cannot or will not do until people pray?" This was the question the Rev. Greg Gallaher, Associate Pastor of Nurture at Century United Methodist Church in Lexington, Kentucky, asked the congregation in a sermon he preached in January. The provocative question moved several persons toward a deeper commitment to intercessory prayer. Within a week, a new early morning prayer group began meeting at the church every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 6:30-7:30 a.m. Of the six persons present, all were involved in Centenary's new Lay Pastors Ministry. Soon, another group began meeting on Tuesday and Thursday as well. Ten weeks later, about twenty different persons are now regularly involved in these times of intercession.

These groups receive personal requests for prayer from those who attend, but according to Gallaher, "Our primary purpose is to pray for Centenary Church. The chapel is our 'home base' of operation, but we frequently walk throughout the building praying in the offices and areas where ministry is taking place. It is changing my life and how I view the relationship between prayer and ministry, especially Lay Pastors Ministry."

From the very beginning, Centenary's Lay Pastors Ministry Development Team has given prayer a top priority on every meeting's agenda. "We sometimes pray for half an hour or so before we begin to discuss and deliberate the direction of the ministry. Consequently our team has become a family." Furthermore, the group does not vote on any decision. Rather, they are governed by the principle of consensus. They don't move forward until they're clear on the Lord's direction. Their unity and oneness of purpose has come from the Holy Spirit who works in and through their times of corporate prayer. Centenary's Lay Pastors Ministry is now in its pilot stage, but the response has been encouraging. Their twelve Lay Pastors are doing a marvelous job, which they attribute to Spirit-led leadership, good organization, strong accountability and corporate prayer.

"Prayer must become more than rhetoric," Galaher said. "We need to stop talking about prayer and how important it is to our ministries and start praying!" C. Peter Wagner's book, ***Church That Pray***, has been very helpful in enlarging Gallaher's vision at this point. Wagner writes,

"I have yet to find a church that did not believe in prayer and practice it at least to some extent. However, I agree with Terry Teykl (a United Methodist pastor in College Station, Texas).

*I believe that the growth these churches would be much more dynamic if it were accompanied by a **high level** of prayer. They now are like eight-cylinder cars running on four or five cylinder." (Church That Pray, p. 36)*

Wagner then encourages churches to move beyond rhetoric to action prayer where pastors and people really begin to intercede for their ministries.

Throughout the Book of Acts, the early church is constantly devoting itself to corporate prayer. Corporate prayer precede Pentecost. Corporate prayer enabled the church to preserve even when persecuted. Corporate prayer preceded Peter's release from prison. The church was also in prayer when "worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3 NRSV). Gallaher believes that the Spirit's power is released and the will of God is made known when believes began to pray. **together!**

AXIOM 215

The View From the Bottom Up

by Greg Ogden

As a pastor, my bones ache for God's people to enter into ministry that is theirs. The New Testament knows no split-level, upstairs/downstairs ministry of the clergy and laity. There is only one ministry - the ministry of the whole body of Christ.

Popular phrases like "every member ministry" or "permission giving church" are used today to convey the hope that laity should be the initiations of ministry. Thankful the church is undergoing a shift from top to down to what I like to call "the view from the bottom up." If I understand the New Testament design, the church is fundamentally a living organism connected to its life source, Jesus Christ. The implication of the church as the body of Christ is that every part has a direct relationship with the Head. This means that everyone of us must look to the Head to know what our part is to be.

Paul Stevens, author of *Liberating the Laity*, has eloquently stated the way the body is designed to work.

*There is a direct and living connection between the Head and every member of the body..... No church leader in the New Testament is ever called the head of local body. That title is reserved for Jesus. The head does not tell the hand to tell the foot what to do. The head is directly connected to the foot. Therefore, people find their ministries not being directed by the leaders but by being motivated and equipped by the Head. (**Liberating the Laity**, p. 36)*

But how does ministry get initiated from within the laity so that the church functions in actuality as a bottom up organism and not just a top down institutions?

Initiating Ministry

The burgeoning ministry of my friend, Carl Edwards, is a model for how ministry is initiated and fostered by the Holy Spirit. Using Carl as a case study, let me identify distinguishable steps for the initiation and nurture of ministry.

1. Sensing the need to which your heart is drawn.

Carl and I were winding down an intense year long discipling relationship. I could sense some restless stirring in Carl. He was anxious to

see how the Lord wanted to use him in ministry as a result of his formative effort. To discover what might be next, I asked him to pray about what needs were capturing his heart. It wasn't long before he articulated his concern for the welfare of disconnected college students in our congregation. Over a number of weeks he kept returning to his burden that once some graduated from high school there was no turing community in the church. He wondered, "Should I start a college ministry?"

2. Finding team members who share the call.

Once we discovered that the burning call on God's hear was nomadic college students, how were we to know whether this ministry was of the Spirit? Two biblical principles shaped the next step. First, I believe that ministry should be done in teams that provide mutual support and a variety of gifts. Secondly, if this was the right time for this ministry then the Holy Spirit would be growing the same desire in others. With these principles guiding us, we committed ourselves to ask the Lord daily to lead us to others in the body who shared this same heart call. The Lord graciously brought across our path the Smiths and the Eriksons who had also felt drawn to college students.

3. Shaping the mission and vision for the ministry.

These three couples committed themselves to meet on Friday evenings to pray and hammer out together the elements of this college ministry. As the mission was taking shape, they also had a chance to discern what gifts each brought to the team. This was also the time to test whether they were truly called to this mission and could spend the required time. As it turned out the Eriksons felt that the press of graduate studies and the demands of a new job were too much. But the Edwards and Smiths found themselves even more deeply committed and so were ready to take the next step.

4. Sounding the call

Finally, Sunday morning arrived when this fledgling ministry to college students was to be launched. Borrowing a phrase from Church of the Saviour in Washington, DC, the time had come to sound the call to the church community. I remember with spinal chills when the Smiths and Edwards stood in front of congregation to read the names of the college students that sat in worship with no place to call their own. Slowly, deliberately, name after name rang out through the sanctuary followed by "come on down." Their enthusiasm and excitement was electric. For me, though, the drama of the morning occurred in the side aisle after the Edwards and Smiths stepped down from the lectern. The Erkisons, who had withdrawn from the ministry because of time constraints, had listened while the call was being sounded. When the Edwards and Smiths reached the side aisle abut five few

deep the Eriksons popped up from the center of the pew and intercepted the two copies. Warm hugs were exchanged. I found out from Carl that the Eriksons rejoined the team on the spot, sensing the claim of the Spirit upon their lives.

5. Meeting regularly as a team

This ministry began with regular gatherings of college students on Tuesday nights and quickly moved to a Sunday morning class. But the key to the health of this ministry was that three couples, and eventually others, continued to meet for prayer, study, strategy, support, laughter, etc. on Friday nights. Their ministry was rooted and sustained in ministry.

This is my view from the bottom up. When the church is alive, ministries spontaneously arise from within the body. Carl Edwards will always serve for me as a model of the way God intends his living organism to function.

Greg Ogden is the Senior Pastor of the Saratoga Federated Church in Saratoga, CA. He is the author of The New Reformation: Returning the ministry to the People of God(1990).

AXIOM 216

How you can be a great Lay Pastor

"You've got to do all those things your adoring fans don't see," so said Jerry Rice, wide receiver for the San Francisco 49ers football team ("The best wide receiver to have ever played the game.").

He added, "It takes 'natural talent,' but it takes more than that. It's called **work**. You could call it suffering."

Jerry Rice didn't want to be just the best; he wanted to be th greatest: "I don't want to be just faster. When it's late in the fourth quarter, when everyone else is tired, I'm still going - I'm at my best! Seriously, there's not many out there with my endurance or my desire." (from Delta Airline's magazine, Sky, September, 196).

Some of Rice's principles which makes him a great football player are transferable to people who aspire to be "great" lay pastors:

1. "You've got to do those things your adoring fans don't see."

Lay Pastors have a secret life: thoughts about their people and desires for their spiritual growth, prayers they do not hear, actions they know nothing about such a prayer, reflections on how their relationships are developing, disappointments and victories which they keep in their hearts, and prayerful evaluations (pastoral, not judgmental) so as to pray and minister most effectively in the wisdom and power of the spirit.

2. "...it takes more than that. It's called work."

It takes more than spiritual gifts, it takes work! We have to actually pray, be available, make the contacts, and work at being the best example we can be. Have you read, "Having a dream takes imaginations, making a dream come true takes work?"

3. "...there's not many out there with my...desire."

It takes desire, passion and perseverance. Paul wrote, "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." (Rom. 12:11) Heb. 10:35 and 12: 1 put it this way: "You need tp persevere. Let us run with perseverance the race marked our for us."

4. "Seriously, there's not many out there..."

Jesus told us the laborers are few. This means that we who are laboring (Pastorally caring) need to endeavor to do as much as the Lord enables and to do it as effectively as possible. God looks for people like Timothy. Paul

wrote of him, "I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 2:20-21)

AXIOM 217

Prayers with our people

by Marty McNunn, Lay Minister, Hastings UMC, MN

As Lay ministers, we use the acronym PACE as a reminder in the care of our assigned families.

- P** - Pray regularly for our families
- A** - Available in times of need and celebration
- C** - Contact regularly, minimum of once a month
- E** - Example - strives to be an example

It seems to me that we do not have a problem with the A.C.E. part of P.A.C.E. It is the **P**. that we struggle with. It is not in praying **for** our families but in praying **with** our families that we lack confidence.

As part of his doctrinal thesis of the effectiveness of The Lay Pastors Ministry, Dr. Gary Titusdahl, of Cannon Falls, MN, sent a questionnaire to five churches. The question went to families being cared by a Lay Pastor. The three questions on prayer were: (1) Has you Lay Pastor mentioned that he or she is praying for you? (2) Is it important for you to know the Lay Pastor prays for you regularly? (3) Have you and your Lay Pastor prayed together?

The results: 100% said they like knowing their Lay Pastor prays for them. 94.4% of the Lay Pastors mentioned that they were praying for their people. 59% said their Lay Pastor *has never prayed with them*.

Why do we have such a difficult time praying with our people? Lay Pastors know the important of prayer. Prayer is a major part of our initial training. We know how important it is to hold our families up before the Lord regularly. We do not seem to have a problem praying for them in our private prayer times. The difficulty is praying WITH them on home or telephone visits.

Some of the difficulty may be that we do not feel we "pray" well enough. We maybe shy or inhibited, believing we might not say the right words. Praying is not so much what we say as it is believing God hears and knows and will answer. If God only answered the prayer we prayed with absolute perfection there wouldn't e many prayers answered.

Following a discussion on this subject at a monthly meeting, to help my Lay Pastors overcoming their inhibition towards praying with someone, I provided prayer examples. I had them printed on small cards making them easy to

manage. I suggested the Lay Pastors adapt them to their own use and not necessarily use the cards word-for-word. This seemed to help.

Below are a few written prayers you might find helpful. I like to use scripture in my prayers.

General prayer to close a time together:

Lord, I ask that you bless _____ today in a special way: May he/she recognize your presence and your handiwork in his/her life. May he/she prosper and enjoy good health. Be with the entire family wherever they may be. Thank you for the time we have had together today. Amen. (John 3:2)

Healing:

Lord, we agree together that you are the great healer and you know the true source of this illness and/or pain. In Jesus' name, we ask you to heal _____ and stop the pain. I pray believing. Your word says "The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well." Touch, heal and comfort _____. We thank you in advance and give all the praise and glory to you. In Jesus' name, Amen. (James 5:15)

Forgiveness:

(If may be necessary to have the person repeat this prayer after you.)

Lord Jesus, your word tells me, "If we confess our sin, you are faithful and just and forgive our sin and wrongdoing and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We agree together for forgiveness, and be cleansed and pardoned. Free me from guilt and shame. Restore the confidence of your love. Bring joy and peace into my life once again. Thank you. Amen. (1 John 1:9)

Forgiving Others:

(Have the person repeat this after you.)

Lord Jesus, your word tells me I need to forgive those who have hurt/wronged me. I want to do that. I extend forgiveness to _____. I forgive him/her. Lord, forgive me for my unforgiveness and my bitterness. Set me free for this bondage. Holy Spirit, fill me with the spirit of forgiveness, that I may walk in holiness and freedom. Fill me with your joy and assurance. Thank you, Lord. Amen (Matt. 6:14-15)

For children away from home

Lord, place your angels around these children, protect and guide them, accompany them everywhere they go. Remind them of your presence, your love and care. Return them home safe and keep them from the evil one. We thank you in advance. In Jesus' name. Amen

Loneliness

Lord, I know how lonely _____ feels. He/She can't seem to find a sense of your presence. We know that you are always with us. Right now _____ needs someone to be Jesus with skin on. I ask that you send a friend who can help _____ know your love, feel valuable, needed and not so alone. Give him/her creative things to do and places to go that will take up hours in the day in the company of others. Lord, I ask that you make your presence known to _____. Help him/her to realize you are always there and that in reality he/she is never alone. In Jesus' name, Amen (Matt. 28:30)

Need Assurance

Lord, _____ needs confidence today to know you are aware of his/her past, present and future. Your word tells us you will never leave us or forsake us. It also says that you have a plan for our lives, a plan to prosper and not to harm, a plan to give us a future and a hope. I pray that _____ will have the faith to believe. Amen. (Jeremiah 29:11)

AXIOM 218

From a Dream to Reality

by Kathy Stine, King Street United Church, Chambersburg, PA

As Minister of Pastoral Care, my husband, Rev. Les Stine, had a dream of how we could minister consistently to each of our 1,500 members. The task seemed overwhelming and the organization of his dream was elusive. He had some basics in mind but needed help with the implementation.

Last year we received a brochure about the Lay Pastors Conference in Charlotte, NC. This seems to be just what we were looking for. Les and I attended the conference along with another couple from the church. We attended many of the organizational/leadership workshops, and were very impressed with the Biblical soundness of this program as well as the organizational structure. We came away with a compelling sense of the Lord's leading and the practical tools needed to make Les'd dream reality.

After returning from the conference, our excitement was contagious and we began talking about the Lay Pastors Conference to other people. Our Core Ministry Team was formed and a year-long process of planning and implementing our Shepherd Ministry began. We received approval from our Senior Pastor, Rev. Pat Jones, and the Administrative Board and moved forward as the program was tailored to meet the needs of our church. The information from the conference in Charlotte was invaluable as the Core Team met, prayed and planned.

Our first Equipping Seminar was set for February 7 and 8 with Rev. Tom Corbell and Marianne Wiegman, of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Statesville, NC, as our resource speakers. It was a huge success! Tom and Marianne's enthusiasm and love reached out and touched all who attended. After our Equipping Seminar, we received a commitment from 11 individuals/couples to serve as Lay Pastors. Now the huge task of flocking lay ahead. After a lot of prayer, thought and discussion, we did our flocking with the assumption that EVERYONE needs care, form the overly involved to the person on the side lines. We did not want to target or eliminate anyone, so we would be totally random in our flock selection. With our flocking completed, we had our first Commissioning Service on April 6 of this year.

It has been a year since the Lay Pastors Conference in Charlotte. Our hearts are truly blessed as we see the first contacts being made and Les' dream begins to become a reality. We know it is a small beginning to a huge task, but with the continuing support of the Lay Pastors Conference, friends like Tom and Marianne, the hard work and encouragement of our Core Team, and the Holy Spirit's leading in people's lives, we anticipate our Shepherd Ministry will grow till our entire church family experiences "God's love with skin on."

AXIOM 219

Joy comes in the morning(Psalm 30:5)

by Vi Holler, Lay Minister, St. John's Evangelical Church

Have you ever felt the urge to be a minister? Many years ago I did, but in those days it was unheard of for a woman to do such thing. Conversations began in our church about a Lay Ministry program. I thought, "This is it!" I immediately signed up for Dr. Mel Steinbron's Lay Ministry Seminar.

So much information was given to us that my mind could not absorb it all. It was fun and exciting to learn how to minister to others. But, alas, during one of the sessions a great red flag stopped me. It seemed I was to pray with the members of my flock! Me?? I'd never prayed out loud much less in front of somebody in my whole life! I felt so inadequate - I could not sign the agreement to serve my Lord as a Lay Minister.

This feeling lasted less than 24 hours. The next day, Sunday, Dr. Steinbron preached at our morning worship. God spoke to me through this dedicated servant and I could no longer say "no." I was still afraid, but I shouldn't have been, for joy came in many ways that Sunday morning.

The joys and sorrows I share with my flock are numerous. Each little thing I do for them is returned to me big time! It is no longer a fearsome task to provide "love with skin on" but a labor of love. I truly receive much more than I give.

When an elderly lady wants to hug me when I leave her, I almost faint. I've been trying to get close to her for years! Joy! The smile of a dear lady returning from surgery tells me she knows I've been there all the time supporting her and her family with love.

Although there are many happy times, sad things are also shared - that's life. God has called home three members of my original flock, all of whom were precious to me. One dear man I will never forget. When I left him for the last time, I kissed him on his bald head, told him I loved him and that I would see him in heaven. I wasn't sure he would understand but he nodded his head! He knew! I cried.

Lay Ministers, I feel, provide for the members of their flocks in a way that is impossible for the pastor to do. He/She is only one person and the members of the congregation are many. The pastor cannot get as close as one Lay Minister can to a small flock.

When Jesus told Peter "Tend my sheep" (John 21:16), Peter didn't refuse by saying "I'm not a minister"; he obeyed his master. We can do no less, for Jesus means for us to listen and obey as well.

Should lay people minister to others? Oh, yes! What a blessing it is to experience peace, love and joy in serving our Lord in this way. "Joy comes in the morning - every morning!"

AXIOM 220

Welcoming new weep into the flock

by Ron Stallen, Director of Discipleship

"After being cared for so closely throughout DDC (our 18-week membership class), it can be some what intimidating when we're launched into this large congregation on New Member Sunday."

Such was the feedback we had sometimes received from our new members at Trinity Lutheran Church in Elkhart, Indiana, a congregation of about 1,000 members. In order to better meet the expressed needs of new members, we refocused our Shepherd Ministry [Note: This church calls their Lay Pastors "Shepherds" and the Lay Pastors Ministry, "Shepherd Ministry".] in order to help new members experience a more comfortable and meaningful transition into membership.

During their eighteen weeks of Discovering Discipleship Class (DDC) in which we prepare them for membership by sharing our Lutheran teachings and our congregation's philosophy of ministry, our prospective new members are cared for information, and shepherd them through our membership process.

During the time that prospective members are experiencing the DDC process, we also conduct a 6-week equipping class for members of our congregation who are gifted for and interested in becoming shepherds. By making use of these new Shepherds, and by involving "veterans" who are currently serving in our Shepherd Ministry, we assign a Shepherd to each new individual or family as they come into membership in our congregation. Typical flock size is anywhere from one to three individuals or families per Shepherd.

Our Shepherds are called and commissioned to care for the new members in their flock for a period of six months to one year, being charged with the task of helping them to make a comfortable and meaningful transition into membership. P.A.C.E. is followed by all our Shepherds as they *pray* for, make themselves *available* to, remain in *contact* with, and serve as *examples* for the members of their flocks.

During our 6-week equipping class for Shepherd, as well as in our monthly meets, we stress that "being precedes doing" (you can't give to someone else what you don't have yourself), we work a lot on listening skills (leaning how to best connect new members with other members in order to meet new members' needs). Shepherds monitor flock members' worship attendance as well as their involvement in study, service, and fellowship activities. When new members are well-connected and well-involved, they are "weaned" from

the Shepherd, and the Shepherd is assigned a new flock.

The goal of our Shepherd Ministry is to connect new members with other members of our body of believers here at Trinity so they are encouraged in their walk with the Lord, and through relationships with other members, are sustained, uplifted, and cared for on the journey.

AXIOM 221

Close Encounter of the Miraculous Kind

by Tomas V. Parrish, MN

Does the Lord Jesus endorse the Lay Pastors Ministry? Recently I had firsthand experience on the miraculous that confirmed to me the reality that the Lay Pastors Ministry is truly blessed and endorsed by the Lord.

My wife, Jan, and I recently completed a 28-day mission trip to Bangladesh and Japan. We saw the Lord's hand and power in a variety of ways. As we were preparing to leave Tokyo on July 7th for Honolulu, we had an incredible experience.

Once we had boarded the plane and settled in, an elderly gentlemen took the aisle seat next to us. After takeoff I introduced myself and he told me his name was Alfred Winroth. It turns out that Alfred was a soldier in occupied Japan at the end of WWII and then returned to Japan as a missionary for the past 42 years.

We talked off and on during the six hour flight regarding the beauty and talents of the Japanese. We also spoke of the great indifference they have towards spiritual matters and the difficulty this creates for evangelism. Alfred told me of his longtime work and that he had collaborated in the Gospel with some of the giants of the faith. This list included Billy Graham and Mituso Futchidam, who led the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor and later became a Christian evangelist.

As the flight was coming to a close, Alfred told me that he was traveling to Honolulu to take a fantastic book regarding Christian care of the congregation to a young pastor. He reached into his bag and pulled out ***Can the Pastor Do It Alone?*** written by Dr. Melvin J. Steinbron. This is the very book I wrote one chapter in at Mel's request thirteen years ago. I looked over my wife, Jan, in astonishment and she looked just as amazed as I. I told Alfred that I know the book well and that I had written one chapter in the book. I showed him the chapter and shared my personal experience and endorsement of the Lay Pastors Ministry since the book was written. Alfred gave me the name of the young pastor he was going to meet to give the book to, and I had the pleasure of taking with this pastor several days later. What are the numerical odds of such an encounter? I can't even begin to calculate. What I did realize, after the sheer shock subsided, was a deep, inner conviction that the Lord Jesus was endorsing the Lay Pastors as the ministers of the body of Christ. I believe that the Lay Pastors Ministry is not just one more program among many, but truly the inspired directing of the Holy Spirit for the care of Christ's body on earth.

Confessions of a Lay Minister

by Mary Mayberry, Montgomery, AL

I have always heard you get out of life what you put into it. I like a challenge and when I heard about the Lay Minister program at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church, I said to myself, "I like people and I like to help when possible, so this might be a program for me." As I looked at my own life I wondered, "Do I need a Lay Minister or shall I be one?" After much praying and soul-searching, I decided to try it.

The training to become a Lay Minister was excellent. When my care units were assigned to me, I discovered that each had their own unique personalities. With wonderful support from the church and those responsible for our Lay Minister program, I felt renewed confidence as I began ministering to my "flock."

One special lady to whom I was assigned has many health problems but a wonderful outlook on life and living. She recently celebrated her 78th birthday. I took her to lunch at one of her favorite restaurants. Then she took me on a "tour of Montgomery" through her eyes, when her family was young and her husband was living. What a wonderful day and what insights this precious lady had about the past and the future.

I am privileged to be the Lay Minister of a couple that recently welcomed their first grandchild. This couple has had several problems, but becoming grand parents has seemed to erase the difficulties of the past; and the future has never looked brighter.

One care unit seemed to be only a message on an answering machine, or a mail ministry of sending cards, but no personal contact. I often wondered if this relationship was going anywhere. On an expected meeting with this lady, I found out how much the calls and cards had meant to her, some coming at times when she needed to know someone cared. Can we ever doubt the working of our Lord?

I have learned so much from one of my families who has a retarded daughter. She is active within the Special Olympics Program and has won many ribbons in swimming. She is now employed for the first time and is earning a wage. With her first check she took her parents out for dinner. She is a proud lady and this family has taught me how special each of us is in God's eyes.

Over the years there have been times when things have not worked out the

way I wanted them to. There have been times when I didn't bond with care units. Overall, however, I would not exchange the wonderful friends I have made and probably would not have met if they had not been assigned to me. With the death of my husband a few years ago, I was ministered to by the same wonderful people I wasn't sure I would be able to care for,

At Frazer Memorial UMC we often sing, "I'm so glad I'm part of the family of God." I'm so glad that in Lay Ministry we are family and that I am a part of it. Praise the Lord!

AXIOM 223

Sandy's Salient Suggestions

1. Pray for your people by name - not as a group. Lift up each of their concerns. Convey to them that you are praying for them.
2. In situations where you are paired male and female, take a third person with you, Do not place yourself in a vulnerable situation. when assigning members of the opposite sex, consider area of interest, age and background.
3. Be observant - what do you see that has not been said? What was said that has not been true? Do not Judge.
4. In relationship, beware of responding to requests for you to do too much. Find good resources people in your church or community who can help fulfill the need. In care giving, we can get burned out, so prepare your self for the long haul.
5. Beware of setting yourself up. Watch the words you use. Do not remind the person of past grief or hurt.
6. Consider the physical, mental and spiritual needs. Remember that all people are at times going through adversity.
7. Consider where there is a support group and listen, listen, listen.
8. Help them to deal with the past, grieve it, and rise above it toward healing and forgiveness.
9. If you don't know what someone needs, ask "where are the tears coming from?" "Why are you so happy?" Cry with them and celebrate with them.

From the teaching given by Sandra Sisson, program Director, Navarre, FL.

AXIOM 224

Converted Church

In his book , *Making the Church Work/Converting the Church for the 21st Century*, Eddie Hammett has a new idea about the church - it needs "converting." The Lay Pastors Ministry is going on in churches which have already been "converted."

Eddie is Laity Leadership Development Team Leader for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. He gave two workshops at our conference in Dallas last April. *WARNING: Reading the following press release may cause you to order the book.*

Making the Church Work highlights three key concerns: the challenge of every Christian leader, the criticisms of church cynics, and the cries of our changing pluralistic, unchurched world. Edward H. Hammett has authored this guidebook designed to facilitate a more sensitive dialogue between a disillusioned, searching, and dissatisfied world, responsible church leaders, and seekers who desire to make the church work.

Complex and important cultural issues abound and are impacting every aspect of our society. While the business, political, economic and educational communities have been struggling openly for years with changing family patterns, diversity of values and people groups in our population, the church has floundered. Now the church is being forced to explore these and many other issues to regain relevancy in a rapidly growing society that has increasingly less appreciation for the church. Hammett explains, "If the church is to remain a viable force in our culture, no less than a church conversion must take place so that a refashioning of the church for effectiveness in the 21st century can occur."

Bill Hull, author of *The Disciple Making Church*, from which I have often quoted (e.g. "The decentralization of pastoral care"), endorses this book: "I know Hammett's great passion to see the church be faithful and fruitful. That passion has now been directed into the development of a practical tool to help leaders think through crucial issues that will determine the effectiveness of their mission."

AXIOM 225

Are you listening?

James wrote it this way: "Take note of this! Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak." (James 1:19)

There is an old story about a young man who came to Socrates to be instructed in public speaking and oratory. The moment the young was introduced to the great philosopher he began to talk in a non-stop flow of words. Socrates could not get a word in edgewise. He finally silenced the young man by putting his hand over his mouth. "Young man," he said, "I am going to have to charge you a double fee for my training." The man complained, "A double fee! Why would you do that?" Socrates replied, "Because to make you a good leader I will have to teach you two sciences. First, you must learn the science of holding your tongue. Then you can learn the science of using it correctly."

Good leaders are always good listeners. That is how they learn. Unfortunately, one reason we often don't have alert years is because we have open mouths.

Did you ever wonder why God gave us two ears and only one mouth? He must have intended for us to listen twice as much as we talk! "Everyone should be quick to listen and slow to talk and slow to become angry." The fact is if we follow the first two parts of this verse, the third part is automatic. When we are quick to listen and slow to speak, we are slow to become angry. Studies show that there are four basic styles of listening.

The Judgemental Listener. This person has his mind made up and doesn't want to be confused by the facts. He is critical, negative and prejudiced. 17% of our population fall into this category.

The Interrogative Listener. This person thinks that good listening consists of continuously firing questions at the person. Questions are very important but this gets old quickly. 26% of all people use this approach.

The Advise-Giving Listener. More People (35%) are in this category. They listen only long enough to make a quick assessment and then they get to what they really want to do - offer unsolicited advice. The problem with this approach is that you are also busy thinking about what advice you are going to give, you don't really listen. You aren't hearing everything they are saying.

The Empathic Listener. This style is used by 22% of the population but it is

by far the most effective. You listen to capture the feeling of the person you are listening to, not just the content of their words. You pay attention to tone, facial expressions, and body language - the-verbal signs. Try listening with your eyes, not just your ears this week. You may learn something new!

(Adapted from The Fax of Life, Southland Christian Church)

AXIOM 226

New Wine for New Wine Skin

Matthew 9:17

This transition from the pastor doing the pastoral care of a congregation to lay people doing hands-on pastoral care is quite difficult for both pastors and lay people to make. Jesus's teaching about "new wine" helps us all.

OLD WINE (For old wine skins - the clergy-centered churches)	CLASHES	NEW WINE (For new wine skins - the lay-centered churches)
<p>Minister: The credentialed and principal person in the church.</p> <p>Members: Receivers of Ministry, expected to do "their part."</p>	Receiver vs. Doer	<p>Minister: The servant-leader and equipper of the laity for ministry.</p> <p>Members: Doers of ministry, committed to serve the Lord where he calls</p>
<p>Minister: The person whom God calls to do the ministry.</p> <p>Members: Persons receiving ministry from the one called by God</p>	Called vs. Uncalled	<p>Minister: The person called to do ministry and to equip members to do ministry.</p> <p>Members: Persons spirituality gifted, called by God and equipped to do ministry.</p>
<p>Minister: A specialist who probably cares for each member.</p> <p>Members: Parishioners expecting pastoral care from the pastor.</p>	Generalist vs. Specialist	<p>Minister: A generalist who cares for the congregation as a whole, the shepherd of the "flock."</p> <p>Members: Specialists who pastorally care for specific members of the congregation.*</p>

* This assumes that some members have the pastoral gifts of mercy and encouragement. The spirit has given each Christian spiritual gifts for the ministry he or she is called to do. Those with pastoral gifts are to be specialist in pastoral care. (Romans 12:6-8)

AXIOM 227

Motivation

Do you agree? The toughest challenge we who lead lay pastoral care ministries face is motivation. We need to encourage, fire up, and sustain the vision of our lay pastors. We have to be motivators.

Our lay pastoral care people lose steam. God's people have always lost steam. Deut. 1:38 records his counsel to Moses regarding Joshua, "Encourage him." Centuries later the same counsel from God is, "Encourage one another." Read it in I Thes. 5:11 and again in Heb. 3:13 and 10:25 to get the impact of our call to motivate.

Here are four principles we must internalize if we are to be motivators of our care-giving people.

1. Our motivation is from God.

Steam is generated in our boilers when we spend time with him. I have to discover this over and over, almost daily in fact.

2. Our people's motivation is from us.

The steam generated in our time with God excites us for the ministry. Our excitement is contagious.

3. The people they care for will motivate them.

The motivation is in the ministry. If they do their ministry well, it will excite them. We need to help them do it well by equipping and support.

4. Motivation is mutual.

We encourage one another. This happens when we get together. Nothing keeps me excited about our ministry, after praying about it, like talking with one of our lay pastors and hearing first hand what God is doing through them.

God is the original source of motivation like the sun is the original source of all light in our world. As God brightens our vision and generates energy for his ministry within us, the motivational deepens, enthusiasm builds and the performance level raises.

AXIOM 228

Understanding & Accepting the "Call"

(by Joyce Jansen, LPM Board Member, MI)

"But I don't feel *called* to serve as a lay pastor." How often we hear those words as an excuse for not being involved in lay ministry! Many church members seem uncomfortable with the concept of being *called* into service. Yet, we know that each of us is *called* "to belong to Jesus Christ...to be saints" (Romans 1:6-7), "to be conformed to the likeness of his Son" (Romans 8:29), and "to live a life worthy of the calling" (Ephesians 4:1). (For additional references, see II Timothy 1:8-9, I Peter 1:10, and II Thessalonians 2:13-1.)

But we are called not only to *belong* to Jesus and to live a life worthy of that calling, we are called also to *serve* Jesus. Some Christians are called to serve as lay pastors.

As we help new and potential lay pastors understand their call, we should also help them recognize what that call looks like. We see it in our response to Christ's call to us. In a sermon dealing with "call," Rev. Tom Mayo of Sunshine Community Church, Grand Rapids, MI, used Peter's response to Jesus' call as the pattern for our response. It is found in Luke 5:1-11.

The story is family, yet it provides a valuable lesson for us in answering Christ's call to serve him. Peter's response is our model. As a called follower of Christ, we must be:

Available (vv. 1-3)

Teachable (vv. 4-5)

Able to see Christ's holiness (vv. 6-9)

Able to our sinfulness (vv. 6-9)

Totally committed to Christ's cause (vv. 10-11)

Despite Peter's fatigue from an all-night fishing trip, he and his boat were *available* to Jesus. Getting into Peter's boat to avoid the press of the crowd, Jesus asked him to push out from the shore. Peter did so, providing a place from which Jesus taught the people. Afterward, Peter, the professional fisherman, accept the advice for Jesus, the itinerant preacher, about where to catch fish. Having a *teachable* spirit, he submitted to Jesus. Peter saw the majesty and power of Jesus in this miracle, recognizing his *holiness* alongside of *his own sinfulness*. Peter (and others wjho witnessed this miracle) became *totally committed to Christ* and his cause, having previously left everything to follow him and now, continuing to be available to him. We need to be like Peter in accepting the call to specific service in Christ's kingdom. In our case, the specific service is lay pastoral care.

As a believer and as a lay pastor, ask yourself these questions:

Am I available to Christ?

Am I available to my flock/LP families?

Am I teachable?

Am I taking advantage of equipping opportunities?

Do I see Christ's holiness and my own sinfulness?

Do I respond in gratitude and obedience with loving service?

Am I totally committed to Christ and his call on my life?

Am I keeping PACE with his call?

Paul writes in II Thessalonians 1:11, "We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith." Let's respond to God's call and rely on his power to do the work he calls us to do.

(Other biblical accounts of specific calls to serve:

Moses: Exodus 3:1-10

Isaiah: Isaiah 6:8-9

Peter: Matthew 4:18-19 (His first call to serve)

Peter: John 21: 15-17 (His second call to service)

Paul: I Timothy 1:12, 2:7 ("appointing" is "calling")

Timothy: II Timothy 2:14 ("entrusted" is "called")

For further reading on "call," see pp. 83-85 in ***Can the pastor do it alone?*** and pp. 150-153 in ***The Lay Driven Church***.)

NOTE: Using the references listed, this article can be expanded to provide material for an informational or equipping meeting for new and/or potential lay pastors.

AXIOM 229

A simple formula for managing ministry problems

"We need to first understand the problems, and then we get to do the fun part, which is trying to come up with solutions." This was the very positive outlook of a member of the consulting engineering firm from advising the county traffic engineers on a specific highway problem where I live.

This consulting firm uses a very simple formula to solve gigantic, expensive, community-changing problems. You and I can adapt their successful plan to lay pastoral care ministry problems. There are four steps:

1. Identify the problems.
2. Prioritize the problems.
3. Determine their magnitude.
4. Develop some solutions.

Here is where your Ministry Leadership Group can shine. If you are trying to manage your lay pastoral care ministry alone, I strongly recommend that you begin right now to bring together a group of like-spirited who share your pastoral care vision, and who, along with you, will "own" the ministry.

STEP #1.

You are already aware of some of the problems. A survey of the **Monograph by Mel**, *The Twelve Foundation Blocks*, will help you to be pro-active regarding other problems before they begin to weaken your ministry. Looking at (1) the number of reports not being turned in, (2) the percentage of lay pastors not attending your meetings regularly, (3) the number of church members not yet included in your ministry because of a lack of lay pastors, (4) the number of new lay pastors being equipped and commissioned this year compared with the last year, (5) the ongoing equipping you are providing for your lay pastors, and (6) the indicators of enthusiasm, spirit and commitment your people have for the ministry will reveal some problems. Formalize this first step by making a list of the problems you have identified.

STEP #2

Review the list by assigning priorities. Which appear to be the most important? It is not likely that you can work on all of them at the same time with the energy required to deal with them successfully.

STEP #3

Determine just how serious the number of one problem is. If the problem

continues, what will be the end result? How will the weakness (a synonym for problem) impact the ministry goals and the people doing the ministry.

STEP #4

The first phase of finding a solution is for each member to covenant to pray about it daily until a solution is found. Shore up your confidence in prayer by God's promises such as, "...I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name." Powerful! You may want to consult with other churches which have the Lay Pastors Ministry, your regional director, or our office. However you do it, find solutions and commit to them. Implement them to the glory of God and to the success of the ministry he gave you.

AXIOM 230

Being Obedient to Our Call

Barbara Curtis, NC

Now in the third year of Lay Shepherding Ministry, our biggest problem remains the same as in our first year, with one exception. The Holy Spirit is showing us the power of prayer and we are encouraged as we share these experiences.

Our Lay Shepherds have been so excited about this ministry and have wanted to establish relationships right off with each of their households (our term for "sheep"). When a household wasn't receptive, or hasn't let them make that visit, or just seemed "so-so", the Lay Shepherds have been discouraged. Dr. Steinbron's theory of "minimum contact and maximum prayer" was thoroughly discussed in our initial training along with the fact that not everyone would embrace them with open arms. Our Shepherds thought they were prepared, but when actually faced with this reality, it was disappointing.

Several things have happened over the years that have not taken away the disappointment, but have given our Shepherds hope. First, as our education continues each year, more and more of our members seem to have a better understanding of this ministry, and second, we have found that educating our congregation is an on-going process.

One example in our first year was a widow who was emphatic that she wasn't interested when her Shepherd called. The Shepherd didn't push but mentioned that she had a very unusual name and wanted to know more about it. After a lengthy conversation, it turned out that the widow hadn't really understood the ministry. Later, when the widow had a heart attack, the Lay Shepherd was the one she asked the nurse to call.

Hurricane Fran had most of Raleigh at a stand-still in the fall of 1996. One Lay Shepherd who was fortunate enough to have telephone service received a call from a household. This was the first time there had been any real acknowledgement of the ministry or the Shepherd. For one year, the main contact had been through notes, cards and messages on the answering machine. However, also included had been lots of prayer. The purpose of the phone call was the household's need for prayer.

These situations helped, but the more time that would elapse from the Shepherd's initial contact, the less likely the Shepherd felt a relationship would be established. One Shepherd's experience has proved this wrong.

After several tries, the Shepherd and the person finally met. The person said how things were just terrible and that there wasn't time for anything else in their life. The Shepherd listened and said he would pray for them. Every attempt for further contact always brought the same response - "I'm busy." The Shepherd back off, not out, and began sending cards that didn't require a response, but always mentioned that he was praying for them. Then out of the blue, the household wanted to meet the Shepherd. The whole story came out - it seemed that the cards always seemed to come at low points in their life. They had stopped coming to church and recently began feeling nudges to return. The Lay Shepherd had never mentioned one thing about church attendance!

Neither the household nor the Shepherd believe that these were coincidences, but rather the Holy Spirit at work. The Lay Shepherd says a valuable lesson has been learned. "It's my job to be obedient to my calling and let the Holy Spirit do the best."

Peter said, "Though you have not seen him, you love him..."(1 Peter 1:8), which is a message for us as Shepherds, too. We don't need to the effect of our ministry, but just be obedient to our call.

AXIOM 221

Important Principles for Handling Success

You can be a successful lay pastor:

Success in ministry is the next step in the road to where God wants to take you. It is an open gate to greater possibilities. It is a harvest from good seeds grown. Experiencing these results comes from being the best person you can be as Jesus lives through you.

If we're not continuing to learn and move beyond, we'll drop behind.

When you're not getting results, you feel like a failure; when good things are happening, you feel like the cause. Both attitudes are wrong. Instead, our significance comes from the Lord whose love is not tied to our performance.

Successful people must take care not to self-destruct by thinking their success is their own. Success in many ministries is always a generous gift of God.

See big and go for it. Life's greatest challenge is to be God's person. Be the instrument and steward of the many gifts that God has placed in you.

1. Anything the mind can conceive and you will dare to believe, with God's help, you will achieve.
2. Before you can manage others, you must manage your self.
3. Only what you share multiplies; what you hoard dies.
4. Today's seeds are tomorrow's harvest.
5. You keep only what you give away.
6. You must find satisfaction in building people instead of being the superstar.
7. In love's service, only broken hearts will do. Make love your number one aim.
8. God does not give his blessings to those who think they can do it themselves.

9. Successful people are those who give selfishness a kick in the pants.
10. Success is learning to live a balanced life.
11. Your life is a gift from God, what you do with that life is a gift back to God.
12. For some, success is harder to manage than to obtain.
13. Success is honoring God by living a clean life. Stand up and say no to the shame of immorality.
14. "...Nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37, NIV).
15. "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (2 Thes. 5:18, KJV).
16. "Pride goes before...a fall" (Prov. 16:18, NIV).
17. "To whom much is given..much will be required" (Luke 12:48, NKJV).
18. "Every good and perfect gift is from above." (James 1:17, NIV).
19. "The intelligent man is always open to new ideas" (Prov. 18:15, TLB).
20. It's "God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7, KJV).
21. "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5, NIV).
22. "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30, KJV).
23. "Honor Christ by submitting to each other" (Eph. 5:21, TLB).
24. "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Matt. 20:26, NIV).
25. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4, KJV).

AXIOM 222

How to care for those who resist

I. IDENTIFY THEM: You are not able to be accepted either into their homes or their hearst. They are:

1. Always "busy"
2. Aloof
3. Their lives seem to be full
4. They don't have time for you
5. They don't seem to need your care

After several attempts, perhaps stretching over many months or a few years, it becomes clear to you that they are not open to your caring initiatives.

NOTE: Identify without being judgemental!

II. WHOM DO YOU BLAME?

A. Them? It may be them: (1) they do not need a lay pastor; (2) they are unfriendly, closed, uncooperative personalities; (3) they may be sinning and therefore avoid anyone from the church.

B. You? It may be you: (1) inexperienced; (2) poor personality mix; (3) don't pray enough; (4) not sufficiently gifted.

C. The ministry? It may be the ministry: (1) the lay pastors ministry is not for everyone; (2) lay pastor just cannot pastor some people.

D. None of the above!

1. The nature of pastoral care is that some people are not receptive now, and may not be for some time or ever.

However, someone from the church need sto be concerned about them, love them, reach out to them, pray for them and in general be responsible for their pastoral care. God calls a person to love and care for them regardless of their response.

NOTE: Lay pastors must look at resisters like loving parents look at resisting children. They are in the family, therefore parents are obliged to be patient, persistent, and loving.

2. A lay pastor can do a lot of pastoring without ever seeing a person.

PACE is the way:

P - There is nothing they can do to prohibit your praying for them. The limitation is you, not them.

A - Your availability is made known by the letter sent to them from the church and your attempts to contact them. They know that you care and that you are available.

C - Cards at holidays, along with occasional sensitive phone calls are significant contacts.

E - By PACEing them, you are an Example of one who loves the

church. God and people, one who is committed to Jesus Christ and to ministry.

III. CLASSIC EXAMPLES

A. Many lay pastors have experienced how positive relationships have grow during negative resistance.

B. There are numerous stories of lay pastors who, by being faithful in praying and contacting, broke through the resistance into a serendipitous relationship.

NOTE: Occasionally it may be a wise choice do disconnect a lay pastor from a household. This should be done only with great caution, much prayer and in consultation with the Pastoring Leader (Shepherd).

IV. POSITIVE MIND-SET IS NEEDED

A. The negative mind-set:

1. "They don't want me."
2. "I'm no good at this."
3. "They don't need a lay pastor."
4. "This will never work."
5. "They need someone who can get through to them."
6. "The Lay Pastors Ministry should take only those people who want a lay pastor."
7. "I'm really to give up on them."

B. The positive mind-set, the mind-set of faith:

1. "They haven't accepted me yet."
2. "God wants someone to love them, pray for them, care for them, and try to reach out to them. I'll be that person, tough as it is." With his help, I'll be faithful in pastoring them."

C. Perseverance is the mainspring (key, principle, level, hub), with the addition of a little faithfulness:

"So do not through away your confidence: it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised." (Hebrews 10:35)

"By faith he (Moses) left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27)

"...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus..." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." (I Corinthians 4:2)

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things: I will put you in charge of many things." (Matthew 25:23)

Some ABC of Ministry in this decade

A

AUTHENTICITY, NOT HYPE. People, especially your younger generations, are looking for greater authenticity and less hype....in organizations...in religious activity and programs.

Lay Pastors: The claims (hype) of what the ministry is promises to mean in the congregation has to be matched by what the Lay Pastors actually do - conscientiously PACEing their people, being "love with skin on."

B

BURNOUT AND BALANCE. All generations, from teenagers to senior citizens, are feeling the pressures of a rapidly changing world and living in a society where the "margin" is thin. One hears people, especially Boomers, talk a lot about "running on empty" and trying to find balance in their lives while teenagers are now a major market for Day-Timers.

Lay Pastors: Inventory your priorities (what you spend your time on-both discretionary and non-discretionary) and reset them, with much prayer and perhaps some counsel, to succeed in making your ministry all God plans for it to be.

C

CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY. The U.S. is a nation of disconnected people and the result is that people of all ages desperate to make connections and find a place of belonging, some place where they can experience and be a part of community.

Lay Pastors: You are the person connecting people with their church. In fact, one newly launched lay pastors ministry (First Reformed, Sheldon IA) calls their lay pastors "Connectors."

D

DISCIPLES, NOT DECISIONS. Many churches are reaping the result of decades of getting people to make simply a "decision of faith" rather than the fruit of a life-long process of making a disciple. In 21st century churches, there is a renewed emphasis on making disciples and a recognition that people are at different stages of faith development.

Lay Pastor: Instead of "accept Christ and be saved", it's "accept Christ and be his disciple". That's where you are! Disciple includes saved, launching the saved person into ministry rather than consigning him or her to an inert state.

G

GROWTH AND GROUPS. Significant personal growth comes in the context of group life, not the large gathering, and the interest of people in participating in some type of small group or cell continues to increase. Likewise, the options for participation are also increasing.

Lay Pastors: "Small groups" is one form of pastoral care, and an excellent one at that, if the members really care for one another. but small groups just don't "take" in many churches and in churches

where they do "take"; a large percentage of the people choose not to be in a small group. Hence the need for one-on-one grass roots pastoral care - the Lay Pastors Ministry.

M

MINISTRY BEFORE MEMBERSHIP. Many people today are interested in "testing the water" before formally becoming a member of a congregation. They want to participate in church activities and ministries such as singing in the choir or working in the food pantry before making a formal commitment to church membership.

Lay Pastors: *Only a very rare exception will permit a person to be a lay pastor before they commit themselves to be faithful to the body of people being pastored.*

R

RELATIONSHIPS, NOT RELIGION. People in the 90's are seeking a relationship with Christ, not membership in a religious organization.

Lay Pastors: *People are also seeking an authentic relationship with people. Those not seeking it, need it. The people assigned to a lay pastor as two questions: "Are you for real?" and "Do you care about me?"*

S

SOUL CARE AND SPIRITUALITY. The search for spirituality is one of the deepest issue in present day U.S. culture. Many people are simply empty to the core. "Soul care" means paying attention to what is happening in people's lives "below the water line" where they really live.

Lay Pastors: *"Soul care" is what lay pastoring is all about.*

*Margaux Hemingway took her life in July, 1996 after trying to see inside herself. Hara Estroff Marano reflected on her suicide in the November/December (1996) issue **Psychology Today**. "Or perhaps she finally succeeded in assessing herself and was overwhelmed." What if she had had "soul care" by you, her lay pastor?*

T

TIMES Of TRANSITION. Generations, families, organizations and institutions, governments and economics, and churches and denominations are all the some stage of transition. People are looking for help and acquiring skills that will assist them in coping with personal, family, work and social transition.

Lay Pastors: *One of the major transitions in the church is from clergy-centered ministry to lay-centered ministry. This is called the "New Reformation" by Lyle Schaller of the "Second Reformation" by some others. Lay pastors, you are a major player in the new thing God is doing today (Isaiah 43:19).*

NOTE: The ABC's are copied from the September, 1996 NetFax, a service of Leadership Networks, Tyler, Texas. The Lay Pastor applications were written by

AXIOM 224

Ideas for Lay Pastors Meetings

from "The Lay Driven Church"

You can easily make up meetings with selected sections of my book, *The Lay Driven Church*. These three examples came to mind when I was on the final pages of a special review:

Meeting #1. Pages 153-155. Ask the people to read these pages in preparation for the meeting; and/or have someone teach the content of the pages, writing the three spiritual gifts on an overhead transparency or flipchart. Then pass papers to each person on which the three gifts are listed. Ask them to write:

- a. Which of the three they believe to be their strongest gift;
- b. Their inner promptings and outer actions which indicate the presence of all three gifts;
- c. List what they can do in the next weeks to use these gifts in caring for their people. Aske them to be very specific and detailed.

After they have had time to ponder and write (10-15 minutes), have them assemble into groups of three to five to share their findings with each other for 10-15 minutes. Then bring them together to debrief their sharing by asking for volunteers to tell the best findings from their group experience.

Meeting #2. Pages 156-157. Ask the people to read these pages in preparation for the meeting; and/or have someone teach the contents of the pages. Ask them to take 10-15 minutes to write the following:

- a. Draw a line with 1 at the left and 10 to the right. Put an "x" on the scale of 1 to 10 where they are in feeling equipped to bea shepherd.
- b. Write that they have done to further their equipping since their initial equipping to become a shepherd.
- c. List what they want to do or plan to do in continuing their training.
- d. Write topics which could be used in helping them be better prepared to PACE their people.

Do the same as with #1 above - groups and total group.

Meeting #3. Pages 157-160. Same as in #2.

a. Write four thoughts you have after reading or hearing about the difference between a "volunteer" and "minister."

b. Do you see Jesus as a "volunteer" or a "minister" or a combination of both? List three reasons for your answer. Do the same as above - groups and total group.

AXIOM 225

For Lay Pastors in ...Doubting Castle

*"What a fool!" Christian said to his partner, Hopeful, as they languished in the prison of Doubting Castle. "I have the key, **promise**, here in my bosom." He took hold of it, tried it in the lock and the door opened. Christian and Hopeful emerged from the dark into bright sunlight and continued on their way. (From Pilgrim's Progress, by John Bunyan)*

Have you ever been imprisoned in Doubting Castle? In there you doubt...

- that anything is *happening* with your caring initiatives.
- that *you* are the one to be doing this.
- that you are *meaning* anything to your people.
- that *God* called you to this ministry.
- that this ministry is *significant* to your church.
- that you are making a *difference* in your people's lives.
- that you have the necessary *gifts* to care for God's people.

The darkness encloses you - you are not experiencing the *joy* you once had by doing this ministry.

The dampness makes you shiver - you are afraid that your *caring* is not accomplishing much.

The confinement gets to you - *you* are not sure that what *you* are doing warrants the effort *you* are putting into it.

You have the key called, "promise," with which you can escape this dismal place. Just use it! What promises do you have?

1. "I am sending *you*." John 20:21
2. "Surely I am with *you* always." Matthew 28:20
3. "I chose *you* to go and bear fruit." John 15:16
4. "The father will give *you* whatever you ask in my name." John 15:16
5. "Whatever he does *prospers*." Psalm 1:3

Keep the key handy because you may be imprisoned in Doubting Castle again.

Use "Doubting Castle" for your Lay Pastors Meeting

For a lively and productive meeting:

1. Give a teaching on facing discouragements, perhaps using David's counsel to his son, Solomon, in I Chronicles 28:20, and/or Azariah's advice to Asa in II Chronicles 15:7.
2. Sing some songs dealing with discouragement/encouragement.
3. Have a few people present a skit of Christian and his partner, Hopeful, being in Doubting Castle as written in *Pilgrim's Progress*.
4. Distribute copies of Doubting Castle, one of each person. (Prior to the meeting, retype or photocopy the article, leaving the underlined words blank.)
5. Divided into groups of three to six for the purpose of filling in the blanks the best they can.
6. Call the full group together. Then walk them through the paper, pausing to do a mini-mini-teaching on selected parts of the paper.
7. Celebrate the privilege of being free to serve the Lord as Lay Pastors with singing, testimonials, prayer and refreshments.

AXIOM 226

Do *Type D* People Need Pastoral Care?

What about people who resist you as their Lay Pastor? In some cases their resistance may be due to their unique personality or, yes, even to their genes. If so, it is their nature to be cool toward your caring initiatives or to outright reject you. You may understand their holding you off to be a signal to leave them alone, that they neither want nor need your caring attention.

"Understand?" No! *Mis*understand! You may erroneously conclude that this person neither wants nor needs you. As a Lay Pastor you may be tempted to say,

"Give me someone who *wants* a Lay Pastor," or possibly, "Give me a person who *needs* me."

Or, worse yet, you may unintentionally default in your caring for them because of what is called "avoidance." This is that deceptive delay tactic of one's mind to

sidestep unpleasant or ego-threatening situations.

What are the facts and what should the Lay Pastor do to fulfill the mandate to "shepherd" this difficult member of God's flock? Don't they also need "love with skin on it?"

Your desire to serve your Lord and your commitment to care for this person - even this one - should drive you to discover how this person is "wired."

You have heard of Type A personality. In the May issue of Psychology Today, Dr. John Denollet identifies a Type D personality - one who is timid, insecure and anxious. Dr. John Denollet, of the University of Antwerp, reports that Type D persons are tense, unhappy and always looking for upcoming problems. They are uneasy in their interactions with other people and their reserved nature prevents them from seeking the support of others.

This person we are concerned about, the one who resists the ministry of her Lay Pastor has all the marks of a Type D personality.

You may interpret such personality and behaviour traits as signals that this

person does not *need*, or at least does not *want* to a Lay Pastor. This unique person, a member of your church and a brother or sister in Christ, is wrongly perceived to have chosen to be resistant to our attention.

The reality is that these traits are the cries of a lonely person needing the attention of a Lay Pastor who can provide TLC. In his providence, and for some good reason, God assigned this particular child of his to you. Through prayer he will give you the understanding, insight, patience, persistence, and love to fully accept this person as he is, and to be his Lay Pastor.

Dr. Denollet believes that through counseling, behavioral therapy, and help; however, you as their Lay Pastor have God's promise that they will "blossom" through your prayer and the spirit-to-spirit bonding that consistent love, contact and care generates.

If God has placed one of these Type D persons in your flock, adopt this maxim: "God loves you and so do I." Then proceed to PACE them:

PRAY for them faithfully;
Be AVAILABLE to them;
CONTACT them regularly; and
Be and EXAMPLE to them.

The answer is yes! Type D people and your pastoral care. God has chosen you to be "love with skin on" for them. "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of glory which will never pass away." (1 Peter 5:4)

AXIOM 227

Definition the action of describing

Use this for one of your upcoming Lay Pastors meetings.

Read Ephesians 4:7-12 from the Revised Standard Version, omitting verses 9 and 10. Write these five key words on a flip chart or transparency:

GRACE GIFTS EQUIP SAINT MINISTRY

As you write them, one by one, provide time in between each to get responses from your people.

1. Ask them to call out their definitions of the word.
2. Write their definitions on the flip chart or transparency.
3. Take time to have some fun with each definition. For example:

GRACE: 1. The name of many females. Ask who know someone by this name. Then ask the responder to tell how the name matches the personality.

2. Prayer before a meal ("saying grace"). Ask for a few to recite prayers they learned as children. In one group, jokester volunteered this. "Rub-a-dub dub, thank you God for this grub. Amen."

3. A "warm, fuzzy," but vague religious word. Read the words of some hymns using the word. GRACE, and a few Bible verses.

4. Conclude the definition for the first word by reading the capitalized one (this is the right one), and expanding it with your understandings and applications of the word to lay pastoral care. Then proceed to the second (GIFTS), then the third, etc.

1. GRACE:

- A. The name of many females.
- B. Prayer before a meal. ("say grace")
- C. A "warm, fuzzy," but vague religious word.

D. THE GENEROSITY, FAVOR, GOODWILL, KINDNESS AND GOODNESS OF GOD TOWARD US.

2. GIFTS:

- A. Items you are given at special times, such as Christmas.
- B. Special abilities every person possesses.
- C. GIFTS (SPIRITUAL GIFTS SPECIALLY) ARE SPECIAL, ABILITIES GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH ENABLE CHRISTMAS TO SERVE EFFECTIVELY.

3. EQUIP:

- A. Providing items necessary for an event or journey.
- B. Training for a job or specific task.
- C. PREPARING CHRISTIANS FOR MINISTRY BY TEACHING THEM USABLE SKILLS AND ENCOURAGING THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

4. SAINT:

- A. A Christian who has achieved perfection in faith and life.
- B. A person beatified by the Roman Catholic Church.
- C. A "churchy" person steeped in other-worldly interests.
- D. A CHRISTIAN, ONE WHO IS CHOSEN BY GOD TO BE HIS.

5. MINISTRY:

- A. In England, a government department headed by a Minister.
- B. The religious activity of a seminary-trained person who is called, credentialed, installed and salaried.
- C. THE SPECIFIC SERVICE GOD ASSIGNED TO EACH CHRISTIAN, FOR WHICH GOD PROVIDES SPIRITUAL GIFTS, AND FOR WHICH THE CHURCH OFFERS TRAINING.

After the fifth word, divide people into small groups to confide among themselves how they feel about doing their ministry. End the group experience by asking them to pray for each other, limiting their praying to what they heard during their time together.

AXIOM 228

They Are Known As "Pastoral Elders"

"The Lord is doing some very special things in the lives of his people through our Pastoral Elders Ministry," says Pastor Gary Vankoeving, Minister of Congregational Care at Fair Haven Ministries, Hudsonville, Michigan. "We continue to hear the most positive comments from members of our congregation who appreciate the care, calls, contact, concern and encouragement that our Pastoral Elders are giving."

The Pastoral Elders, lay people, member so the church, are charge with the congregational care and spiritual oversight of the church. Currently they number 275 persons (150 units, each compromised of one or two persons). Every family of the congregation is assigned to a Pastoral Elder, no more than six families per pastoring unit.

Each Pastoral Elder unit is assigned a Pastoral Elder Coordinator (current number, 40) who provide advices, encouragement, support and accountability for each Pastoral Elder. In turn, each Coordinator is assigned to a Pastoral Elder Leader (current number, 12). The Leaders are members of the Consistory, the ruling body of the church.

Serving as a Pastor Elder is seen as *both a privilege and an opportunity* to serve brother and sister members of the Body of Christ. Blessings flow both ways - to those whom the Pastoral Elder through service.

We firmly believe that the Pastoral Elder Ministry is the key component in helping Fair Haven Ministries carry out her mission. In part, our Mission Statement reads:

We will be a people who lovingly say to all "come"...

Come meet Jesus and become a member of his family.

Come grow in maturity and seek to live lie Christ!

Come discover your gifts and see where you may ministers!

Come hear the calls of the thirsty, the broken, the lost and answer in mission!

Come worship God and magnify God's name with us!

The role and task of the Pastoral Elder in fulfilling our mission is to provide spiritual care and nurture personal relationships within the body of Christ.

(Ephesians 4:11-12) Empowerment by the Holy Spirit, Pastoral Elders seek to do the following:

- ❑ TAKE HEED of the lives of God's people. Pastoral Elders are one of the primary connections between Fair Haven and her members.
- ❑ HELP TO LEAD God's people in the process of spiritual growth.
- ❑ MEET THE NEED of God's people in the Body. We will help to blend people's gifts with the church's needs and offer the church's resources to help heal human hurts.

The Pastoral Elders are encouraged and held accountable to make contacts with their families on a regular basis. Throughout the year, we encourage contacts to be made in person, by phone, cards, letters and notes of encouragement to each of their families. The Elders assure their families that they are praying for them and are available to answer questions or concerns. The church office calls the Pastoral Elder when we are aware of a concern, crisis, or illness in the life of a member. The Pastoral Elders schedule an initial meeting with each of their families in their home. They record personal family history such as birthdates, anniversaries, church involvement, thoughts, feelings, and concerns in order to have a more effective ministry and relationship with the family.

We require all Pastoral Elders to attend an Orientation and Training Workshops at the beginning of their term of office. We encourage all Pastoral Elders to attend other training workshops offered through the year. We cover such subjects as:

- ❑ How to make a hospital visit
- ❑ Funeral home visitation
- ❑ Bridging the gap to spiritual conversation
- ❑ Dealing with difficult people
- ❑ Helping parents work with rebellious teens
- ❑ Effective listening

These classes have been very well attended. We have altered the means of presentation and method of learning.

We continue to learn how to better be what God has called us to be, and to recognize that to be a large congregation takes some creative planning to help the members feel connected and to have a sense of belonging.

Pastor VanKoevering, Minister of Congregational Care, Fair Haven Ministries.

What Growing Churches Are Doing

The Pastor of two Presbyterian churches in Canada, Floyed McPee and Gordon Kouwenberg (an LPMI board member), interviewed the pastors and lay leaders of seven churches which were growing. In collating their findings they discovered that all seven had 21 common factors contributing to their growth. (Note that #16 shows that lay pastoral care is an integral part of the life of a growing church.)

1. The has a high level of personal skills; is church growth oriented; has a clear concept of evangelism; is skilled in leading people to Christ; has a deep passion for Gospel; preaches in contemporary style that is biblically based and Christ-centered; and always seeks to make God real to "everyday life" situations. The minister does not routinely visit the congregation, but faithfully visits new comers, the seek and hospitalized, and those seeking baptism or marriage.
2. New people come to the church because of the church, its reputation, and some advertising. A small percentage of the congregational budget is spent on advertising, and very little "door-to-door" visiting is done. However, church members bring others-relatives, friends, neighbors - with them to church.
3. The congregation displays friendliness by going out of the way to welcome new people. For example church regulars will introduce themselves to new people sitting beside them in the pews.
4. The congregation has a statement of PURPOSE which is well-published throughout the congregation.
5. The worship services are joyfully contemporary, yet traditionally based, with freedom to do things differently and spontaneously.
6. The church The church has an organized prayer chain.
7. The congregation provides several Bible studies.

8. Music plays a focal role, with a children's choir, an adult choir, and if there is interest, a youth choir, a seniors' choir, a folk singing group and quartets.
9. People stick with the congregation because they develop a relationship with God, plus significant relationships with others in the church.
10. The minister's spouse actively participates in the life of the congregation.
11. The congregation intentionally - within the first 36 hours to three weeks - follows up one new people attending church services by letter a phone call, or a visit.
12. The church offers a variety of programs in attempt to meet the various age and interest needs of the community.
13. The congregation uses "friendship pads" weekly in the services of worship. (Friendship pads allow people to sign their names and to greet others in their pew by name.)
14. The congregation keeps track of how many and who attends each service of worship. Those who have missed several services of worship are contacted.
15. When the parking lot is crowded, the key members of the congregation covenant to park outside the church parking lot. A few spaces in the parking lot, close to the building, are reserved for visitors.
16. Members of the church are pastorally cared for by an organized lay ministry as well as by the pastor, e.g., a "shepherding" program.
17. The congregation recognizes special events in members' lives such as births, anniversaries, graduations, and joining the church.
18. Lay people play an active leadership role within the congregation, which includes taking part in the services of worship.

19. The congregation emphasizes your activities.

20. The congregation has a plan to reach people outside the congregation; for example, evangelistic Bible study, daily vacation Bible school.

21. The congregation intentionally attempts to get people to know each other; for example, pictures of new members, congregational dinners and socials.

AXIOM 230

The Church At the Edge

Tomorrow's church is seen at today's edge. Watch this church for it continues to move toward the center with great energy, pushing aside the church in which many of us were reared. To observe this new model is like watching the new growth in the aftermath of a forest fire. The bursting life, replacing the old, announces that it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The church at the edge may exhibit some excesses. This was true of the 16th century Reformation so it is no surprise that it is also true of the 20th century "Second Reformation." On one occasion Martin Luther cried out, "Lord, save me from my enemies...and from my friends," as the church at the edge in that day began to move toward the center. It is historically true that the new energies and forms always generate excesses which will be calmed or corrected as the movement matures.

Let me mix my metaphors. Some of the wine in the new wineskin is excessively lively. Letting it age rather than pour it out brings a renewing Pentecost to the church, accompanied by "a mighty rushing wind and tongues of fire." Most of us prefer to deal with the excesses of the emerging church than to continue giving our strength to a church on its way out.

I am observing at least 14 hallmarks in the life of the church on the edge:

1. Ordination as the rite of ministry is replaced by baptism.
2. The focus more and more on the ministry of the laity and less and less on the of the clergy. Note: Millennium III is being called "The Millennium of the Laity."
3. The traditional practice of ordained ministers doing most of the ministry is transitioning into the ordained minister:
 - equipping and empowering the laity for ministry;
 - relinquishing ministry to the people;
 - supporting and resourcing the lay ministers;
 - encouraging the number of ministries to increase;
 - being effective as spiritual leader of the congregation, now that he or she no longer is the "solo minister."

4. Volunteers are being replaced by ministers.

"... That s one reason why the language of "volunteerism" is such an abomination when used in the context of the church. Rotary recruits 'volunteers.' Kiwanis seeks 'volunteers.' The church of Jesus Christ deploys ministers. It is time to banish the language of volunteer from our vocabulary." (Leonard Sweet in **NEXT**, May-June, 1998)

5. The committee and task force concept is being replaced by a team-member and partners-in-ministry spirit.

6. Parishioners have transitioned from spectators to participants. They insist on "a piece of the action."

7. Understanding the church to be an *organism* is replacing the idea of the church as an *organization*.

8. Recruiting, appointing and appealing is giving way to the recognition of spiritual gifts and divine call as the strategy for deployment of human resources.

9. The pyramid is replaced by the pancake as an organizational flow chart. In this "horizontal revolution," the ladder is replaced by a web.

10. Building people is becoming more important building programs.

11. Church growth is being superseded by church health, and size by quality.

12. The church, as well as seminary, is the seed bed for faith. The ordained minister becomes the "Dean" for the seminary in the church. (Seminary means seed bed).

13. Prayer is believed to be the most powerful force in the church, topping strategy, surveys, education, training, office, personality and ecclesiastical manipulation.

Seminaries, take note: "As of 1998, there were eleven medical schools in the U.S. that offered specific courses on prayer and healing. I'm afraid to totally a comparison with divinity schools." (Sweet, op. cit.)

14. Sectors of church life transitioning:

Worship: contemporary, non-liturgical, few choirs and organs

Missions: short-term, culture viewed as a benefit, not barrier

Stewardship: focus on time and gifts, not just money

Denominations: churches moving towards alliances and nondenominational resources

Church buildings: functional rather than symbolic or historic

Organizations: traditional programs for women and men giving way to small

groups, Bible study groups and training classes

Evangelism: churches through meeting people's need; individuals through relationships

Church and culture: adapting style and methods to the culture

Church growth strategy: accentuating quality over numbers

Preaching: storying telling and conversational rather than pontificating

Pastoral Care: the pastor pastors the congregation while the lay people pastor the individuals

AXIOM 231

Pastoral Care Directives From James

Lay Pastoral Skills:

- **1:19, 26; 3: 6-8** Quick to listen, slow to speak
- **1:27** Look after people with special needs
- **2:1-4, 9** Do not show partiality
- **2:8** Love your neighbor as yourself
- **2:13b** Mercy triumphs over judgement
- **2:15-16** Do something about people with physical needs
- **4:17** Do good
- **5:12** Keep your word
- **5:14** Pray for the sick
- **5:19-20** Love the wanderer

NOTE: May of these directives may motivate you to seek training in Listening Skills, Communication Skills, Interpersonal Relations, Healing Ministry, Self-improvement Courses, Confidentiality, etc.

Lay Pastors' Personal Qualities:

- **1: 2-4, 12** Persevere in difficult times and situations
- **1:5** Ask God for wisdom
- **Combine 2:8 and 11** Respect boundaries
- **2:17** Accompany faith with actions
- **3:1** Accept a double standard
- **3:9-12** Integrity
- **3:13** Humility
- **4:7** Live close to God
- **4:11** Do not slander (confidentiality)
- **5:7** Patience

NOTE: All of these directives motivate a Lay Pastor to seek the fullness of the Spirit, the guidance of Scripture, and the help of fellow Christians.

AXIOM 232

From the Field

From The Pacer, the newsletter for the Caregivers of Bethany Community Church, St. Catharines, Ontario Canada. The theme of this issue is "The E in PACE - being an EXAMPLE of caring, maturing, faithful Christian."

Written by Pastor Larry Shantz:

I'll never forget the first time that it really hit home to me. It was the month of December and there had just been a beautiful new fresh fall of snow on the ground. I walked across the lawn to get something when I heard someone behind me. As I turned around there was my daughter, Laura, who at the time was only three years old. There she was, stretching out each of her steps so that she could walk in the tracks that I had made in the snow. It hit me like a ton of bricks how the life that I was living world impact her life.

As caregivers, how we live is just as important as what we say. Our lives must be an example and we need to understand that as leaders we are being watched at all times, even as my three year old daughter was following in my tracks without my knowing it. There is a tremendous need for authenticity. One of my favorite hymns is entitled, "May the Mind of Christ, my Savior, live in me from day to day."

The Scriptures are very clear that the life that Jesus lived was meant to be an example of the life that we should live. I don't think anyone has ever said it better than the apostle Paul when he said, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." (Philippines 2:4-5) Then Paul goes into that beautiful discourse where he describes how Jesus, "Who, being in very nature God..." (v.6) "humbled himself..." (v.8) and come to this world and how God has now..." exalted Him to the highest place..."(v.9)

Written by one of the Lay Pastoral Caregivers, Flo Francey:

Duties Of Caregiver

Jesus asks us in John 21:16 to care for his flock. In I Peter 5:2, Peter instructs us to "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you **must**, but because you are **willing** - as God

wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve..." eager to serve because of our love for the Lord Jesus Christ and because he encourages us to be servant; an example Jesus gave us by the washing of the feet. As for being greedy for money as a caregiver, the wages are low but the benefits are high, with blessings in seeing people grow in the Lord because they feel cared for and are loved unconditionally just as our Lord loves us.

I count it a privilege and an honor to be called by God to serve our people in this capacity.

Listen to how Ann Landers tells about "shopping" for compassion:

Dear Ann Landers:

Like everyone else, I am flat broke from overspending. But I need to go shopping again soon because I am completely out of self-respect. I've said something I wish I could take back, and I am not feeling too good about myself.

I also want to exchange a load of self-righteousness I picked up during the year for an equal amount of humility. I hear it is less expensive and wears well. And while I am at it, I am going to check on tolerance and see if there is any available in my size.

I must remember to try to match some patience with the little I have left. My neighbor is loader with it and it looks awfully good on her. I was told the same department has a repair shop for mending integrity. Mine has become frayed around the edges from too much compromising and not enough self-discipline. If I don't get refurbished soon, there won't be any left.

I almost forgot the most important things of all - compassion. If I see some, no matter what the color, size, or shape, I'm going to stock up heavily, regardless of the price. I have run out of it so many times and always feel ashamed of myself when it happens.

I don't know why it's taken me so long to get around to shopping for these items. They don't cost nearly as much as some of the frivolous things I bought and I'll get a lot more satisfaction from them. I'm going shopping today, and I can leave my checkbook and credit cards at home.

AXIOM 233

Two Forms of Pastoral Care

1 Clergy Pastoral Care:

Clergy Pastors pastor* the congregation as a body. Their ministry is not to pastor individuals, except for the more difficult cases (Ex. 18:22), and then only until the difficulty is resolved. Their ministry of pastoral care includes mobilizing, equipping, supervising and supporting the Lay Pastors whose ministry is to care for individuals in the congregation. Since even this part of their total ministry usually becomes too heavy for them, the mobilizing, etc. is assigned to a Ministry Leadership Group comprised of lay people and, often, one member of the pastoral staff.

2 Lay Pastoral Care

Lay Pastors pastor* the members of the congregation household by household. They usually care for five to ten specific households. Their care is on a continuing basis, whereas the Clergy Pastor care during times of crisis. Their care is relational one-on-one, grassroots, "love with skin on." They are equipped, commissioned, supervised and supported by the Clergy Pastors and are accountable to them. They are genuine partners in ministry, members of the pastoral care team.

Note:

It is only when both forms of pastoral care are in place and functioning well that the congregation is adequately pastored (shepherded/tended - I Peter 5:2).

** The verb, **pastor**, as different from the noun, is best understood when used, **pastorally care for**.*

AXIOM 234

“Tale Bearers”

For your next Lay Pastors meeting, try this idea. Divide into groups of three to five. Assign one quote for The Message. Eugene Peterson's rendering of the New Testament, to equip group. Instruct them to appoint one person as the "Tale Bearer" to bring back to the total group the high points of their experience together. Give them 15-20 minutes to:

1. Exchange understanding of the quote.
2. Dissect it by separating out single thoughts.
Ex. "Give yourselves to the gifts God gave you." I Cor. 14
 - a. "Give yourselves"
 - b. "to the gifts"
 - c. "God gave you"
3. Exchange ideas about each of the single thoughts. Stay with one thought until everyone has participated before moving to the next.
4. Exchange thoughts about what the quote now means to each, and how they can use it in their ministry.

When the time is up, reassemble the group to hear from the "Tale Bearers." The leader is to mentally sift through all that is reported for the most significant and useful points. After hearing from each "Tale Bearers," the leader will write on an overhead, or verbally highlight, what he or she considers to be of greatest importance and usefulness. Summarize and comment.

After this summary, ask the group for any additional insights or ideas anyone had since reassembling and share them with the group.

Return to the small groups for the purpose of praying for one another, for the ministry and its leaders.

Conclude by forming a circle (or circle if the number is large), joining hands and singing. Close with prayer. Ask them to hug at least three people before leaving.

AXIOM 235

SOME SAMPLE QUOTES TO USE FOR OTHER MEETING:

"So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelous functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead to be what we were made to be." (Rom. 12)

"He handed out gifts of...pastor-teacher to train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church." (Eph. 4)

"So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out." (I Thes. 5)

"Here's my concern: that you care for God's flock with all the diligence of a shepherd. Not because you have to, but because you want to please God." (I Peter 5)

AXIOM 236

For Lay Pastors only

Your leaders set the standards for your ministry and pass them on to you when you are equipped. The basic task is to PACE your people:

Pray for your people faithfully

Available to your people

Contact your people regularly

Example for your people

There are several commitments. In general you commit to be faithful in doing your ministry according to the set standards, keep yourself spirituality fit, attend the meetings, and the like.

The Lay Pastors Ministry is not only *agreeing* to the standards set by your leaders. The Lay Pastors Ministry is *doing* the standards, being "love with skin on" to the people assigned to you.

In other words, ***you*** are the key to the ministry. Setting the standards and transferring them to each member of your mind and spirit in the equipping seminar is the easy part. Ensuring care to each member of your households is where the real work is.

If your church issued reports cards like schools do, what grad would be on the Lay Pastoral Care line of your card? Excellent! Good? Fair? Passing? Failing?

AXIOM 237

The Lay Pastors Ministry is not only agreeing to the standards; it is doing the standards

One of the responsibilities of leaders is to hold people accountable. Monthly reports (or whatever system you use) is one method of accountability. One Lay Pastor remark, "I surely appreciate the monthly reports because they get me to make my contacts," If your ministry does not have an accountability component, ask your leaders for it.

But, like standards, reports are not the ministry. They only log the action. You are the key to the ministry! In fact, ***you are the ministry!*** Two things grade you "Excellent":

1. Knowing who you are - a servant of God on assignment (A true minister).
2. Knowing what you are doing - taking care of God's people ("Be shepherds of God's flock").

The One whose ministry it is; the One who has given this assignment is the One who is grading you. His ultimating grade is " Well done!" A significant recognition goes with this grade: "When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory which shall never fade away."

If you are having difficulties of any kind, if you are discouraged in any way, or if you have questions or suggestions about your ministry, talk with your leader(s). They have set the standards they believe God wants the ministry to achieve, and they want to see you get the best grade possible.

AXIOM 238

What Pastoring is...and what it is Not

Pastoring **IS:** Being there and keeping watch.

Pastoring **IS NOT:** Giving advice, saying the right words and solving people's problems.

The Pastoral needs of a very important person - Jesus:

1. He was troubled, distressed and sorrowful. *"My soul is overwhelmed to the point of death."* Mark 14:34
2. His life was at risk. "I will be with you only a little longer." John 13:33
3. He needed someone near; he did not want to be alone. "Stay here and keep watch with me." Matthew 26:38

NOTE: He needed someone who was significant in his life, whose presence nourished his spirit, and who had spent time with him before.

NOTE: But they left him alone. Even though he asked them to stay and keep watch with him, he found them sleeping. So he left them, bearing his pain alone. Matthew 26:43-44

NOTE: He was not asking for counsel, right words or a solution to his problems. He was only asking for someone important in his life to be with him. That was what he needed most.

NOTE: Who would ever guess that Jesus had pastoral needs!

The pastoral role and activity expected from someone who was significant in Jesus' life - is disciples:

The disciples' pastoral role:

1. They were to be there for him, to "stay here and watch."
2. They were to enter into his sorrow and pain with him, to "hurt with those who hurt."

The disciples' pastoral (in)activity:

1. They don't know what to say to him. Mark 14:40 (They erroneously thought they needed to say something.)

2. They abandoned Jesus, leaving him to bear his pain alone. (They didn't understand their pastoring role.)

What did disciples could have done:

1. Depend on the strength of their three-year relationship to be of help to Jesus in his time of need.

2. Stay awake and "watch" with Jesus.

3. Share his pain by being alert to what he was going through.

4. Dismiss any idea that the only way of ministering to Jesus was to counsel him, say the right words, and solve his problem.

NOTE: Who would ever think that the disciples had a pastoring role in Jesus' life!

Pastoral care as understood from this event:

1. Everyone needs pastoral care. Even Jesus needed it.

2. Pastoral care is being involved in the life of others at the point of their need.

3. Pastoral care is a normal caring posture evolving from a genuine relationship.

4. Pastoral care is more about being there and keeping watch than it is about giving advice, saying the right words and solving people's problems.

5. Pastoral care is "love with skin on it."

AXIOM 239

The "E" in pace

For many lay pastoral caregivers, the E of PACE, Example, is the most difficult to understand, do, and explain to others. It is even objectionable to some. In one church, a member of the group putting the Lay Pastors Ministry together adamantly asserted, "No human being is worthy of being an example; only Jesus is worthy of being an example."

This member's humility is commendable, but his knowledge of, belief in, or understanding of scripture is wanting. The Magna Carta of the Lay Pastors Ministry, I Peter 5:1-4, for instance, reads: "Be shepherds of God's flock...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

I Timothy 4:12, Philippians 3:17, I Thessalonians 1:6-7, II Thessalonians 3:7, 9 and Titus 2:7 all expect us who belong to the Christian Church to be examples, models and patterns for others.

God calls us to be people of integrity because he needs examples of Christian truth being lived by humans. Because God observes people who live contradictory lives, "Blessing with their mouths but cursing in their hearts" (Ps. 62:4), he needs examples of people whose mouths and hearts are in sync. He requires that those who "tend the flock" be such examples.

Confession with our mouths that "Jesus is Lord" is to be matched with belief in our hearts that God raised him from the dead - Romans 10:9-10. God needs people whose inner lives corroborate their outer claims.

Jesus was hard on hypocrites, those who only simulated goodness. God wants people to be so real that when others see them, they can say, "It's the real thing." He is looking for his people to visibly demonstrate what true faith is. Lay Pastors should not shrink from striving to be the best examples they can be, even though we know we will never be perfect specimens.

On March 2, 1998, NetFax appealed for authenticity to take precedence over other means of communicating the Christian life, i.e., "Show yourself to be real, and then I can determine if I want what you have." In the March 16 issue, NetFax stated, "The focus on leadership is shifting from acquiring the skills and competencies associated with leadership to an increasing emphasis in the soul, character and integrity of the leader." Lay Pastors are "leaders."

God's requirement that those who pastorally care for his people be examples can, at best, only be approximated. But we can grow in the approximation with the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God molding our lives. The toughness of this requirement drives us to our knees and moves us to depend on God's Spirit to help us grow in being a better and better example.

The Shepherd Ministry at First Presbyterian Church in Mount Holy, New Jersey, puts the following at the beginning of each bi-monthly newsletter.

Prayer - Pray for your people

Availability - Be available in times of need

Contact - Make regular contacts

Example - Set an example in your commitment to Jesus Christ and His Church.

AXIOM 240

The Path we have chosen

by Robert K. Seymour, Director of Care Ministries

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Livonia, MI

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Livonia, Michigan, decided to begin the Lay Pastors Ministry in order to care more completely from the members of our church community. In a congregation of more than 900 members, it is not possible for the ordained clergy to meet all the ministry needs. We recognized long ago the importance of lay ministry and have implemented many ministries to help in the care of our congregation. We have flourishing lay ministries such as Stephen Ministry, Youth and Children, Grief and Bereavement Support, Adult Education, Fellowship, Bethel Bible Study and Kerygma classes. These have improved the care we are able to provide, but we are still not meeting the needs of many people.

The paradigm of ministry that exists in our church is one of being "ministered to" by ordained clergy. Because of this perception, small groups did not seem to adequately respond to the needs of our congregation. Small groups required the active involvement of the congregation and many in our church are not accustomed to this. The success we have had with Stephen Ministry has made inroads into the acceptance of lay ministry and during a time of crisis, many welcome this lay ministry.

The Lay Pastors Ministry works well with the paradigm of being "ministered to." What it modifies is not the basic belief, but who does the ministering on a day-to-day basis. The Lay Pastors Ministry has been greeted with a great deal of interest, enthusiasm and support since our quipping seminar (which Mel came to lead February). The initial number of church members who have answered the call to become Lay Pastors has been sufficient to embrace one quarter to one third of our congregation. Others have indicated an interest in becoming a Lay Pastor as soon as their current commitments to other ministries at the church are fulfilled. We are planning a second equipping seminar at this writing, even before our first Lay Pastors have been assigned to their flocks.

The leadership of St. Paul's is committed to the Lay Pastors Ministry as the best way to care for the entire membership of our church community. The Biblical model of the original church, persons caring for one another, is the path our church leaders have selected for St. Paul's. The ordained clergy will be partners with the laity as we follow our vision statement - "To faithfully walk with Jesus Christ, committed to sharing the gifts of his love and compassion with the world" - into the twenty-first century.

AXIOM 241

All Our Losses

*How does "Love With Skin On It" (this is one of your names) relate to people who are experiencing loss? Linda Tofte, Director of Lay Pastoring, Aley United Methodist Church in Beavercreek, Ohio, identifies five different kinds of losses some of your people may be experiencing even as you read. She then proceeds to explore how you might be of help to them. she wrote the following articles for **Care Gram**, the newsletter for their Shepherds and Lay Pastors.*

Often, when we think of loss, we think of the kind of devastating loss that occurs when we lose someone we love. But the fact is, we are all at any given time experiencing loss. It is a part of life. We are always moving forward, moving toward something, but also always saying "goodbye" to something.

There are lots of different ways that we experience loss. Most of our growing and changing involves giving up something of our identity, expectations, or understanding of the way things are. It can be helpful to us to think about our life events as loss so that we can more clearly understand the impact these changes have on our lives and on the lives of those near to us.

As children, when we grow and change physically and emotionally, we experience developmental loss. we find ourselves feeling "too old" to enjoy a childhood game, of thing we "should" be more grown up. We experience the loss of our childhood, our innocence, our freedom to be playful.

When we move, have life changes such as the birth of a child, grown children leaving home, a change in careers, the beginning or ending of a relationship, or other similar events, we experience role loss. We become "no longer a single person", "no longer a teacher", "no longer a mom". When my husband, Paul, left Logicon, he was "no longer the boss" and I was "no longer the boss' wife". We experience the loss of our comfortable role and struggle to find a new identity for ourselves.

Material loss is what we experience when we lose our "stuff". If a fire destroys our belongings, if we lose possessions due to a divorce, or even if we voluntarily decide to free ourselves from having so much, it is a loss

experience. When we move to condo, I experienced the loss of my garden. I had done most of the landscaping myself and it was my "spiritual space" - where I went to talk with God and be renewed in the beauty of the flowers, shrubs and trees.

As we age, or experience life changing illness or injuries, we have a sense of functional loss. We can't do the work that we could do when we were younger. Perhaps an illness has robbed us of ability to walk, see, or live independently. An accident might leave us confined to a wheelchair. For several years now my dad has been losing his vision due to macular degeneration. He can't drive, read, look at photographs, or even see people's faces clearly. The bodily changes that come to us as we journey through life are certainly loss experiences.

Have you ever had the feeling that you lost your courage? If so, you have experienced intrapsychic loss. This type of loss happens when we suffer an emotional trauma that changes our sense of self, deflates our self-esteem, or leaves us with the feeling that we just can't carry on.

Perhaps the most common, yet most painful loss experiences are those involving the loss of relationship, or interpersonal loss. When we move away from our home or community, when a friendship becomes broken or a relationship ends, or when a loved one dies, we experience interpersonal loss.

All of these loss experiences vary in degree and in the impact they have on us. Change produces loss which leads to grief. Grief is a normal, God-given, therapeutic response to loss. The intensity of our grief feelings are in proportion to our investment in what we've lost.

Now that we have discussed different types of losses, let's move on to explore some models of helping persons who are experiencing loss and grief.

1. Intervention and relief: coming between the person and the problem, usually in a death or other significant loss. Temporarily stepping in and taking care of household tasks, child care, transportation. These acts need to be carefully examined; tread softly. Don't take over completely and never make decisions for others.

2. Support by listening: Important for the rehearsal and recognition of feelings, be understanding, not condescending. Can't ward off their pain; they

need to express it. Be a listening presence; be careful not to bring premature comfort. There are no answers to the "why?" questions; we don't know the mind of God.

3. Encouragement: not "you'll get over it", but just to affirm them in the grieving process. "It seems like you need to be away from people now; that's okay." Help them remember what or who they've lost; preserving memories is important.

4. Reintegration: moving back into the usual routine - job, community, church. Support them in taking their new reality and integrating it with what was. The goal is not to forget the loss but to let go enough to form new attachments and ways of living. Help them do things on their timetable.

Our losses are frequently the starting place for positive growth and newness. It is when we are able to understand the nature and impact of these events in our lives that we can deal with them in ways that move us along in our journey toward wholeness and health. Grief work is painful, but it also can produce hope, growth, delight and happiness.

Memo to: "Vocational Pastors"

Much of what we write is for Lay Pastors. This is for Vocational Pastors. The 1997 winter issue of Leadership carried a self-disclosure by Dee Duke, pastor of Jefferson Baptist Church in Jefferson, Oregon. Though two years old, the article carries a message of affirmation to you vocational pastors who have made the paradigm shift to discipling and training people, as well as a challenge to those still limited by the old paradigm of trying to do it alone.

As you read Duke's witness, listen for what the Spirit may be saying to you, the same Spirit who had an urgent word for each of the seven churches in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Revelation.

"I was a dairy farmer when I came to this area in 1973 to go to Bible college. While here, I helped start church, and later, they asked if I'd come preach for one year. The church was down to about twelve people meeting in a grade school gym. So I came, and I stayed. That was twenty years ago.

Because of my work ethic from the farm, I jumped in and worked hard. By 1980, we had an average attendance of 180 people. That was pretty good growth in a four-year period. But during the next eight years, attendance would go to about 240 and then down to 150. We did that two or three times. There was a lot of disunity.

Most of it was my problem. I didn't know how to delegate. I wasn't doing a good job of training people. My leadership style consisted of harassing people to do things so we could grow. We ended 1988 with 188 people, and I was just half a step from quitting and going back to the farm.

In February, 1989, the first prayer summit took place in this area. During those four days, I was convinced about my lack of dependence on God, my pride, my fear of failure.

I came back and began to do a lot of things differently. The major shift was in the amount of prayer in the church and in my life. That prayer gave me growing sense of dependence on the trust in Christ; I learned to trust people as well. Now, I'm always working with a group- discipling them, training them, teaching them.

There's also a growing passion to reach the lost. Jesus commanded us to pray, that he would send our harvest workers, so we pray for that every time we gather.

As a result, there's a lot of ministry taking place in the church, developed by different people, that I don't have anything to do with. Before, I felt I had to control everything, oversee it, monitor it. Now, the people are doing ministry. Sometimes I drive into the parking lot, and there are cars everywhere, and I don't have a clue what's going on!"

AXIOM 244

Lay Ministry at St. Mark Lutheran Church

by Martha Peterson, Lay Ministry Coordinator

St. Mark's embarked upon a program of Lay Ministry in 1994, through the guidance of our Evangelism committee and our pastor, David Martin. A program was sought that would support, strengthen and nurture the families of our congregation by calling forth people who have pastoral gifts and equipping for this ministry. The long-term goal is to provide every member with a Lay Minister.*

In May, 1994, Pastor Tom Corbell from St. Johns Lutheran Church in Statesville, North Carolina, along with their Lay Ministry Coordinator, Marianne Wiegmann, led a Lay Minister Equipping Seminar here. Our mandate for ministry is I Peter 5:2, "Be Shepherds of God's flock that is under your care." Each Lay Minister is assigned a small flock of members. The acronym, PACE, tells what they do:

- P - PRAY by name for each one regularly
- A - Be AVAILABLE whenever/wherever possible
- C - CONTACT on a regular basis
- E - Provide an EXAMPLE of Christian love

Our Lay Ministers meet quarterly for ongoing training, fellowship, sharing, and reporting. We have a quarterly newsletter called ***Lay Ministry Notes***.

Some of our Lay Ministers are serving old members who have increasing health problems. Other members need to know that someone cares. Several of our Lay Ministers have been with their flock members at their death. One was called by the family before the family called the pastor. Another spent the evening in the home as death drew near and continued to be present after the death. On a Sunday morning, another sensed the need to visit her seriously ill flock member in the hospital rather than attend the early worship service, and was present when this person died. The Lay Minister participated in the funeral service.

Our congregation appreciates this ministry and looks forward to the time when each member will have a Lay Minister.

** "Lay Minister" is used by this congregation instead of "Lay Pastor."*

AXIOM 245

How People Relate

Any relationship worth having has to be nurtured. For Lay Pastors, relationship is what makes pastoral care possible. P. A. C. E. will be hollow, ineffective and may even be counterproductive without relationship.

Love (agape), of course, is the stuff relationships are made of. People relate on five levels. Knowing this gives operational understanding to the "stuff."

The five levels of relating begin with *ritual* and end with *closeness*. Each step is important in the relationship process as it builds on the previous step. The five steps are: *ritual, small talk, activity, psychological games (humor), and closeness*.

The first is *ritual*. We all do this in making contact with another person. When we meet we say, "Hello," ask, "How are you?" or something similar. We are not exchanging information, just making contact. One indication that persons are angry with each other, or distance themselves from one another, is the cessation of ritual. The first sign of reconciliation is renewal of ritual.

If a relationship moves beyond ritual, *small talk* ensues in which the participants "feel each other out." How the relationship proceeds depends on how they perceive each other through the small talk. Small talk includes weather, sports, news or anything of shared interest. Small talk is *sofa*, nonthreatening. Mother may talk about children, truck drivers may talk about traffic, preachers may talk about church attendance.

If small talk is left out, the relationship cannot proceed to the next step which is *activity*. People connect meaningfully through activity, be it problem solving, walking, spinning tea, assisting with a project, praying, sitting together in worship, or any other of a multitude of activities which can follow ritual and small talk.

When people are able to connect, they move naturally to the next level, *humor*. During the course of activity, participants typically express some humor, called psychological games. Humor may be clever remarks, teasing, repartee, acting out, and wit.

Humor, which is appreciated by both parties, leads to closeness (or intimate). In fact, closeness is not possible without some humor. In Lay Pastoral Care it is easy to get stuck in the activity level because we take the task so seriously.

Of course, humor does present potential pitfall. Misunderstood, humor can lead to hurt feeling, so it should be used carefully. The best humor takes its cue from the other person.

Closeness is the natural culmination of the first four steps. It is essential to any meaningful relationship whether it be friendship, co-worker, pastoral, mentor, parent-child, or marital. Troubled relationships often get stuck on the activity level as people "work" on their relationships. In other words, the way to make a relationship meaningful is to enjoy. People who laugh together, stay together.

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AXIOM 246

Identify the Direction Your Ministry is Going!

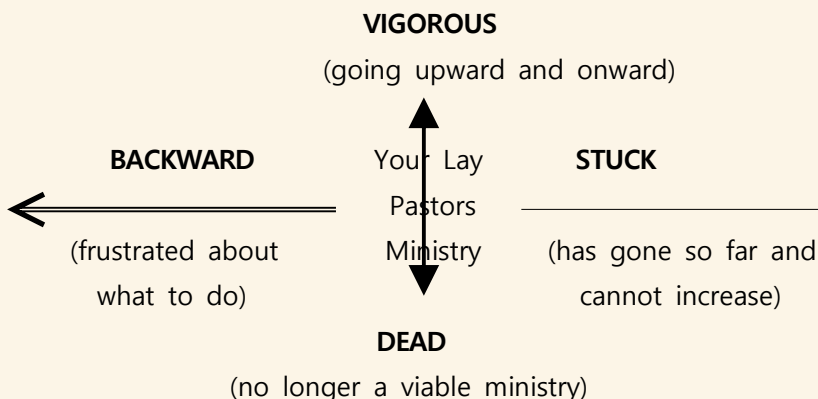
- * "We have 80% of our members cared for by Lay Pastors."
- * "We have just started and the people who have Lay Pastors are so pleased."
- * "Our ministry was stronger at one time, but now it is slipping."
- * "We don't have a Lay Pastors Ministry anymore."
- * "We've had our ministry going for over three years, have over 100 Lay Pastors and will be commissioning more in a month."

I heard these typical statements over a short period of time. Just like each Christian is going in an identifiable direction in his or her spiritual life, and each church is going in an identifiable direction in its growth, each Lay Pastors Ministry is going in an identifiable direction.

Your ministry is going somewhere. Knowing where it is headed enables you to do what is necessary: encourage it, strengthen it, correct it, salvage it, nurture it, celebrate it, or anguish over it.

The following diagram will stimulate your interest in identifying the direction your ministry is going and inform you about appropriate action.

More than likely you are somewhere in between the narrows. A compass has many more points than North, South, East and West. There is North-northeast, West-northeast and many more finely calibrated points between North and East. You may find yourself between *Vigorous* and *Stuck*, or between *Stuck* and *Dead*, or between *Dead* and *Backward*, or not exactly backward, but not moving happily forward either.



The evaluation process of identifying your direction will invigorate your Ministry Leadership Group. After identifying the direction, your MLG will be challenged to create unique, appropriate actions and set achievable goals.

AXIOM 247

The Significance of a commissioning ceremony

1. Ministry by nature is public, not private. Therefore, it is fitting to have some public ceremony to witness to the public nature of ministry.
2. Such a ceremony obviates the danger of individualism in the ministry. Some will see ministry as an ego trip and seek power of themselves.
3. The public ceremony highlights the community dimension of all ministry, requiring support, qualifications and accountability.
4. Every gift of the Spirit deserves a public ceremony. It is a great for the community to clap its hands and sing or shout "Hallelujah!" It announces and confirms that a Christian has been prepared and approved for public ministry.
5. A public ceremony recognizes that the Spirit's gifts are given freely and graciously, and are not given only to the individual, but also to the community.
6. The ceremony involves the community in affirming the ministry of the individual and increase the likelihood of the community accepting ministry from its own membership. It will help to solve the problem cited by Jesus: no prophet is accepted in his home-town. (Luke 4: 24)
7. The ceremony initiates a relationship of support and accountability between the individual and the community. Those who say "Amen" to the commissioning are expressing their intention to support the ministers and at the same time hold them accountable.

The commissioning should be a specific ministry such as pastoring, teaching, administration, worship or mission within a specific body of people, or geographical area.

Creating new forms of the commissioning ceremony is needed. The ceremony

should include proclamation of the Scriptures, singing, praise and thanksgiving for the gifts given the individual's) and the church, prayer and the "laying of hands." "Laying on of hands" is used because this ceremonial symbols has publicly identified specially selected servants of God in both the Old and New Testaments for specially designed purposes.

It reaches as far back into history as to the Patriarchs, when Jacob (Israel) placed his hands on his two grandson's heads to pronounce a special blessing on them. (Gen. 48). God instructed Moses to appoint the Levites to "do their at the Tent of Meeting." Then he was to assemble the whole Israelite community "to lay their hands on them...so they may be ready to do the work of the Lord." (Num. 8:10-11).

One of the "Acts of the Apostles" in the beginning days of the church was to choose seven men "from among you" who are qualified to care for the widows. The apostles prayed and laid their hands on the seven, publicly setting them aside for this specific ministry. (Acts 6:6) The elders, along with Paul, laid their hands on Timothy to commission his for the pastoral ministry. (I Timothy 4:11; II Tim. 1:6) Timothy, in turn, was counseled. "Do not be hasty in the laying on the hands>" (I Tim. 5:22).

This suggests that care must be given to the qualifications of the people who are to do ministry. It also suggests that there is to be a starting point for exercising gifts publicly. In other words, laying hands on committed and qualified people is a way to publicly celebrate their gifts, welcome them to a specific ministry, and pledge to support and hold them accountable. It assures order to the ministry by not laying hands on those either not qualified, or not ready.

John Wesley, who enlisted and trained 653 lay preachers, held that there were four requirements for lay ministry: *The gift; The call; The equipping; The sending*

A commissioning ceremony which includes the "laying on of hands" is the ideal way of "Sending." Wesley contended the church needed to have a ceremony for lay people corresponding with ordination of the clergy. Publicly commissioning lay people for their pastor care ministry does this.

AXIOM 248

What we are and What we do

A brief study and application of 1 Peter 5:1-4

NOTE: This article can be used either for personal study and evaluation, or used for a monthly meeting of Lay Pastors. Suggestion: After teaching and/or discussing I and II in the group as a whole, divide into small groups for people to share III.

ARE: What we are is more important than what we do.

DO: Having a dream takes imagination; making a dream come true takes work.

I. We are servants of Jesus Christ on assignment.*

The Magna Charta of the Lay Pastors Ministry: 1 Peter 5:1-4

(The Magna Charta – Great Charter – was obtained by English barons from King John on June 15, 1215, guaranteeing fundamental personal and political rights. The Lay Pastors Ministry guarantees love and pastoral care to every member of the church.)

A. The Appeal

1. To: qualified people (elders)
2. From:
 - a. A partner (fellow elder)
 - b. A participant (witness of Christ's sufferings)
 - c. A projector (the glory to be revealed)

B. The Assignment

1. Be shepherds:
 - a. The people to be shepherd – God's flock
 - b. The people doing the shepherding – Elders
 - c. The position of shepherd:
 1. Servant (serving)
 2. Overseer

C. Accountability

1. Willing
 - a. As God wants you to be
 - b. Not because you must
2. Eager
 - a. To serve
 - b. Not greedy for money
3. Exemplary

- a. Being examples to the flock
- b. No lording it over those entrusted to you

D. The Award

1. When the Chief Shepherd appears
2. A crown of glory that will never fade away

II. We cannot do it alone. (***Can the Pastor It Alone?***)

A. Jesus could not do it alone.

He assigned the task to Peter: "Take care of my sheep" (John 21:16)

B. Peter could not do it alone.

He assigned the task to elders (pastors): "Be shepherds of God's flock (I Peter 5:2).

C. Pastors cannot do it alone.

They are to assign the task to lay people: "Prepare God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Jesus ⇒ Peter ⇒ Pastors ⇒ People

III. Processing the Principles

A. Using the insights above, identify what you are and what you do as a lay pastoral caregiver.

B. Confidentially, what you are doing to improve (grow) what you are, and how you are doing what you do?

AXIOM 249

Let's Check Ourselves!

Commitments & Checking Our Focus

1. To Jesus Christ

By being regular in Bible study and prayer

By asking daily for forgiveness

By asking for guidance for the day

By asking for ideas for encourage others

2. To PACE

Prayer: Set a time each day

Available: Being there for them

Contact: Various kinds—phone, mail, face-to-face

Example: Always trying to lead a Christ-centered life

3. Of time and Energy

Make good use of time, know what to eliminate

Do not sacrifice family Separate

Seek advice

Continue to serve

4. To Continue To Be Equipped

Take advantage of opportunities

Attend Lay Ministers' Fellowship and Training Events

5. To Accountability

Get reports in on time

Follow-up on prayer requests

Pause and take stock of where I am

6. To Your Church

Encourage, affirm, and pray for pastors and leaders

Attend church regularly

Support financially.

AXIOM 250

Let Love and Faithfulness Never Leave You

I wanted to give a memento to the LPMI Board of Directors which would symbolize "the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love" and etch the core qualities of the Lay Pastors Ministry in their spirits forever. What I saw in a trophy shop clicked — a bronze pendant. I ordered 12 of them, had the LPM logo etched on one side and the words LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS from Proverbs 3:3 on the other.

The proverb gave two instructions: bind them around your neck (for this I threaded ribbons through each loop) and write them on the tablet of your heart (this would hopefully happen in a time of silence during my presentation). As it turned out, I was unable to be at the meeting. The pendants were presented by another member of the board. For the years since, my pendant has been suspended from the corner of the picture of Jesus on the Road to Emmaus which hangs on the wall two feet beyond my desk. I'm glancing at it as I write. The pendant reminds me of my board-member friends again today and to be loving and faithful. The picture tells me again to value highly "What a Friend I have in Jesus."

LOVE and FAITHFULNESS are the two spiritual dynamos of I Corinthians 13, supplying energy to the inner-core of the larger action-core of all pastoral care, lay or clergy. They are like warm sunshine, so welcome on a chilly spring day and at the same time like powerful sun rays purifying infections, lighting up dark corners, and warming cold homes and hearts.

LOVE is tough — not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, and always perseveres.

FAITHFULNESS never fails — it is patient, not self-seeking, not proud, always trusts, and always hopes.

The prize for being loving and faithful is winning favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Let's get the total message of Proverbs 3:3-4 before us:

Let love and faithfulness never leave you. . . this will require prayer and intentionality.

Bind them around your neck . . . place them somewhere so as to see them daily.

Write them on the tablet of your heart . . . use as a mantra for 20 days; will be in your heart for life.

Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man . . . your prize!

LOVE? What is it? Because it's so central to life, pursued by all, and grossly misunderstood, let's spend a couple of paragraphs on it. Definitions don't help a lot, in fact definitions of an unexplainable experience like love reduces a transcendent human reality to a disappointing intellectual or

theological exercise. The best answer may be, "You know it when you see it." Or better, "You know it when you experience it." When we love God, people and self we know it, and when we don't love God, people and self we know it.

Besides that, others know when we love God, people, and self. I saw Jesus artfully scripted on the bottom of an Olympic snow board. Under Jesus was printed, "I can't hide my love." I was awe struck and deeply moved by this witness. I'm sure people who know her, whether they've seen it on her snowboard or not, know she loves Jesus.

Additional love scriptures: Above all, love each other deeply.¹ Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence. This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is another to set alongside of it: Love others as well as you love yourself You're God taught in these matters. Just love one another! You are already good at it.

Keep it up, get better and better at it.² "Get better and better at it" — I like that! God plans that we grow in love as a child grows into larger clothes, without intentionally trying. We grow in love, not by learning more about it, but by doing more of it.

FAITHFULNESS? What is what? Like love, you know it when you see it. We see faithfulness lived out by Jesus and taught regularly. In his parable of the talents (one talent=\$1,000), the master, about to leave on a journey gave three servants a trust of \$5,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 respectively to invest. Upon his return he called for an accounting. The first two increased their trust by investing wisely, "Well done, good and faithful servants! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come, share your master's happiness." The third didn't fare that well, he was censured severely for being unfaithful.

Both love and faithfulness are fruits of the Spirit.⁴ In addition to practice, there are two ways to grow these qualities: (1) be filled with the Spirit who energizes us, and (2) read God's Word which tutors us. "It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."⁵ Lay pastors, you are given a trust by your Master, "Take care of my sheep." In discharging all the duties of your ministry, let love and faithfulness never leave you.

I Peter 4:3

Matthew 22:27-29 & I Thessalonians 4:9-10 (The Message)

Matthew 25:14-30

Galatians 5:22-23

I Corinthians 4:21

The End

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Dr. Byeong was a National director of Lay Pastors Ministry in Korea. He has opened the Institute in 1999, and was working for Korean churches nearly 15 years with staff members. He had been the founding president of PACE International Seminary, Nagaland India (2015-2020).

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