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# The Pastor As Administrator of the Christian Fellowship

By HARRY G. COINER

**I**t may be helpful to say immediately that a church office, receptionist-secretary, an electric typewriter, a motorized mimeograph machine, and a mahogany desk are some of the trimmings and tools of parish administration but not the real substance of it. Parish administration is concerned with Christian discipleship. It is an activity rooted in what God is doing through the Word and the sacraments in the lives of men and women and children and in how they are being built up, trained, and committed to spiritual tasks. The basic assumption of parish administration is that each person in the church is, under God, to be the microcosm in which the Christian message and its meaning is real. That is to say, administration among God's people will express in action what the church is and it will serve as a means to order and direct the church so that the spiritual activities related to its true nature and task may be carried on salutarily and effectively. Administration itself is never a reason for being; but a certain measure of it will be necessary to translate the reason for being into action.

## I

### THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Parish administration in all its phases has to do with people, people being trained and given the opportunity or setting for bringing Law and Gospel to one another and the world. Because of the nature and

purpose of the church under God, the realities of divine revelation, viz., Triune God, Word of God, church, ministry (all having to do with the action of God and the response of His people), are to take shape in the lives and actions of people as they participate in worship, witness, teaching, and service. Administration in a Christian parish is a means of devising ministries in the church, a means both of alerting people to what God is working in them and directing them toward what this means in their life together. Since God's people are to work out the significance or meaning of what God is working in them, the Word of God is to be the moving force of the ministry of Christians as they are guided and directed to carry out certain "Gospel motions" at certain times and in certain ways. At the center of all activity in the church is the reality of the Word of God, as it creates and sustains the church and manifests itself in the concrete and varied forms of Gospel ministry. Richard R. Caemmerer notes that this principle applies even to directing plant maintenance, financial operations, and social enterprises in the church. He applies the principle when he says specifically:

For all of them [whatever activity Christians engage in] it is the pastor's responsibility to alert his people to the opportunities for quickening the spiritual life of the church and its mutual give and take of Law and Gospel. Where a piece of "church work" cannot be thus interpreted,



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it is the pastor's task, together with the people who engage in it, to examine it and possibly discard it. Where it can be so interpreted, the people themselves must be alerted to its objectives and trained to carry out their tasks toward God's own goals.<sup>1</sup>

When church tasks proliferate or become traditional and routine, it is salutary to hold them up under the light of Christian understanding and examine them in terms of ultimate Gospel goals (1 Cor. 12:4-7; 12:28; 1 Thess. 5:5, 6, 8-11; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Peter 4:10). The purpose of all activities in the church must be evaluated and clarified ever again in terms of New Testament realities.

## II

THE BASIC SCRIPTURAL AND  
CONFESSIONAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING  
CHURCH POLITY AND ORGANIZATION

1. The New Testament, beyond describing and implying some of the arrangements which existed at the time of its writing, does not indicate any mandatory form of church polity or organization which is to be imposed upon the church today. The statement of Christ in Matt. 23:8-12 is basic: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren . . . but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

2. The church may select responsible and qualified persons for various supervisory and leadership offices in the interest of effective and unified functioning of church activities. The church may commit to them the rights and powers which will

serve the purpose of the church salutarily and effectively. Such rights and powers are not given for the unrestricted exercise of authority (not a *mandatum cum libera*), but for the welfare of the church. The church must safeguard the interests of all in the commission of such rights and powers. (1 Peter 5:2,3; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:25-31; Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XXVIII)

3. The worship, witness, and welfare of the church is a primary consideration in the development of principles governing church polity and organization (1 Cor. 14:16b; 2 Cor. 12:19b; Eph. 4:12). Of equal concern is fidelity to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. Some of these are: the authority of the Word of God; the responsibilities (under freedom) of believers in Christ; the recognition of the diversity of gifts within the body of Christ; mutual love and working together within congregations; and mutual sharing of spiritual and material gifts (1 Cor. 16; 2 Cor. 8; the Pastoral Letters; Augsburg Confession, XXVIII). Another major consideration is the necessity, without compromising Scriptural principles, of accommodating church polity and organization to the cultural and social pattern of a people. Full attention should also be given to the need for training and growth in all that pertains to the Christian vocation. (John 8:31,32; 13:35; 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4; 2 Cor. 9:19-22)

4. Polity and organization, rightly conceived and designed for service, will not deprive the royal priesthood of opportunities for service with those gifts which the clergy and laity alike have received. A correctly conceived polity and an effectively structured organization will, there-

<sup>1</sup> Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Pastor at Work," *The Pastor at Work* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 11.



fore, provide opportunities for further training and exercise in the God-given functions of members of the body of Christ. (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 3:21-33; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4)

5. The authority by which administration is performed in the Lutheran parish is the Word of God (an important principle to remember when the question is raised of who is "boss" in the church). Therefore, the power of order and jurisdiction is always to be exercised by preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, judging doctrine, absolving and retaining sins, guiding, counseling, advising, admonishing, etc. Decision in the church comes from the Word of God rather than through any imposition of arrogated human authority. (Cf. Augsburg Confession, V, 1; XXVIII, 5-11, 21; Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XIII, 7-13; XXVIII, 13-16; Tractate on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope, 74.)

### III

#### THE "OVERSEER" IN THE CHURCH

God's people have always had some person among them to speak about God to them, to shepherd them, and to lead and rule them in terms of the Word of God to men. The line of the ministry runs from the Old Testament to Jesus Christ and through Him into the ministry of the New Testament church. God gave the church certain persons to equip the members themselves πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἀγίων for the work of serving εἰς ἔργον διακονίας (Eph. 4:11, 12). The pastor is one who feeds and leads (Acts 20:28). This is how he gets "Gospel motions" started in people. The term

ἐπίσκοπος originally implied the double task of feeding and leading. He brings the Word of God to people (feeds) and provides the guidance and direction (leads) which lets the Word become functional in them toward Gospel goals. The pastor facilitates function and order. He works to give the function of the Gospel form in people and through people. In tending the flock of God, the pastor should certainly exemplify the Gospel at work in his own life as he feeds and leads to maturity of faith and service, τύπος γινόμενος τοῦ ποιμνίου (1 Peter 5:3). As a servant of Christ he preaches and teaches, trains and equips, guides and directs so that people are edified, are able to edify one another, and bear witness to the surrounding world. The pastor works to join the members together in Christian life and endeavor (he connects people to people in ways that enable them to minister to one another) that no one may live in isolation or fall away. (1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Cor. 14:12; Eph. 4:17-32; Acts 2:42; John 13:3-5; 13:12-16; Heb. 10:23-25)

Two essential qualifications of the "overseer" (not casting aside the other personal qualities listed in the New Testament) may be named. They are competence and integrity. The first consists in native ability plus achievement; the second is a matter of character, the quality of acting in accordance with sound and proper ethical principles. These qualifications fit him to "care for God's church." (1 Tim. 3:5)

The competence which the "overseer" needs in order to be a leader of God's people is really identical with that ἱκανότης spoken of in 2 Cor. 3:5, 6; for it is God who gives the qualification, the sufficiency. And yet, intellectual capability



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and personal development must be held to play a highly significant part in the competence of one who leads God's people. The person who suffers from serious defects of temperament and personality (such as being afraid of people, habitual and painful indecision, inability to make up one's mind, and lack of initiative) can hardly be a leader.

Integrity is certainly a necessary mark of a man who carries the responsibility for guiding God's people. The person who is careless about the truth, who trims and shaves the facts for his own advantage, who is careless in money matters, unreliable in speech (a gossip), an idler, a self-seeker and one insincere in matters of faith and confession, can hardly be a leader, much less a pastor. St. Paul tells Titus to appoint elders of unquestioned integrity in every city (Titus 1:5, 6 ff.). He tells Timothy that he should never be in a hurry to ordain a man, or else he may find himself responsible for other people's misdeeds (1 Tim. 5:22). St. Paul declares that his only defense is a life of integrity. (2 Cor. 6:1 ff.)

## IV

## THE "PASTORAL" APPROACH TO PARISH ADMINISTRATION

A Christian parish is certainly not something that one runs like a locomotive; it certainly is not administered like a corporation. The pastor does not play the role of boss or commander in the sense that he exercises power over people or manipulates people. Nor is he the "executive" of the organization in the sense that he runs the show by sheer adroitness and power of influence.

There is no clearer way of describing the role of the pastor as leader than to

say that he functions "pastorally." He offers his people leadership that is pastoral in spirit and concern. He serves God and God's people toward ends which are Christian. Together with his flock he stands responsible under the Word of God, the highest authority in the church. The terms authoritarian, democratic, and laissez faire are not appropriate at all, although, under the right conditions, all three types of leadership are legitimate and effective if they are exercised for the welfare of the people and in relation to specific needs.

What are the ingredients or the "givens" of the pastoral approach to parish administration? A number of theses are proposed.

1. *The person of the pastor sets the tone or atmosphere of church life in a way that no procedure can ever do.* The way he relates himself to people in dozens of informal contacts will shape the unspoken dynamics present in the pastor's relationship with the members of a committee, for example, as they sit down to "devise a ministry."

The pastor is the agent of a power that uses him to summon, focus, and release the voluntary efforts of God's people toward those objectives believed to be important. He leads a group of Christian people toward Gospel ends by the power of the same Gospel.

The pastor who feels insecure (lacks faith?) will usually employ subtle or brute legalism, depending on the degree of his insecurity and his ruthlessness. If he has a drive to dominate, if he must always be right, and if he attempts to personalize the authority of the Word of God in his own person, one may say that he is "afraid"



to let the Word of God speak to anyone unless it be through him.

The Christian pastor is not above being tempted in his own ego (Phillips translates 1 Peter 5:3 to say, "little tin gods") or above being a victim of psychical or physical weaknesses. It is a truism to say that love of power, emotional instability, obsessive fears, inferiority feelings, tendencies to rationalize, sexual frustrations and maladjustments, sadistic tendencies, problems of resentment, debilitating doubt and guilt feelings, a martyr complex, conceit, etc., will seriously limit the pastor's leadership or make it ineffective altogether. Jerome speaks of soundness when he says that a minister of Christ should have his tongue, his heart, and his hand agree.<sup>2</sup>

2. *The pastor's conviction about the church is basic to his attitude toward people and the way he treats them.* When persons are viewed as cogs in a machine (because the pastor views the church organization as a machine), the project or program usually gains the priority over the persons involved, and their real and felt needs are ignored. When the pastor confuses ends and means and forgets that his primary consideration is always what is happening to the people in terms of growth in faith and service, he may attempt to put the welfare of the machinery of the church ahead of the welfare of its members. The pastor may forget the importance of people, and anything that serves to make the organization look prosperous will take precedence. It is almost trite to say that the proper pastoral leadership will strive to make the welfare of the organ-

ization and of its members one and the same thing. Success fever, however, may short-circuit the proper objective of *diakonia*, and the pastor may seek his personal success in a smoothly operating system of boards and committees, becoming an "organization man" who, having forsaken the view of his people "being the children of God," worships the idol of "doing the work of the church."

3. *The pastoral approach to parish administration will emphasize dialog as a principle of effective communication.* There is a certain monological illusion about communication, viz., that all one needs to do is to tell people what they need to know. Reuel Howe notes that "in monological communication the speaker is so preoccupied with himself that he loses touch with those to whom he is speaking . . . and others exist to serve and confirm him."<sup>3</sup> Dialog, by contrast, "is that address and response between persons in which there is a flow of meaning between them in spite of all the obstacles that normally would block the relationship."<sup>4</sup> Dialog is interaction between persons freely given, each seeking to know the other as he is, each not attempting to impose his own truth and view on the other.

When persons are treated as "things" to be exploited for personal ends, they are being ignored and not respected and valued for what they are in themselves. Therefore they are obliterated in a sense, and no real communication takes place. But when people are seen, known for what they are, heard for what they are saying, they are

<sup>2</sup> "To Nepotian" in Paul Carroll, *The Satirical Letters of Jerome* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, Gateway Editions, 1956), p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Reuel L. Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue* (Greenwich: The Seabury Press, 1963), pp. 32, 36.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.



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honored and invited to meet in meaningful communication. This is a great deal different from just talking to people or answering their questions or securing their agreement with one's point of view.

The pastor will welcome dialog and respond to others with his whole being and listen to them with his heart and mind. He will reveal his convictions to others, not being afraid to stand for what he believes, yet he will be open to correction and growth. When the pastor feels the need of always being right, this usually keeps him from hearing what others say, and he may need to hear what others are saying. "It is easy for us," Reuel Howe reminds us, "to reach a point in life where we assume that because we have chosen to say something it should be said, or that because we have done something, it should be done. It is equally true, on the other hand, that we sometimes refrain from saying what needs to be said and from doing what needs to be done. And here we fail to speak and act because we are afraid."<sup>5</sup>

Pastors are sometimes separated from their people and able to talk with them about religion and the church only at the level of program and organization. Pastors also may believe that their task is to tell people monologically what they should know and believe. But the pastor's task is not merely transmission of knowledge about the faith or instruction about the mechanics of the organization, but it is also training people for action in the faith. The "content" illusion may well cause the pastor to fail to communicate the meaning of the Gospel in terms of people being members and servants of Christ and how

and where and when they are to serve Him in the complexity and concreteness of their living.

4. *The pastoral approach to parish administration will emphasize and develop mutual interaction and responsibility.* Pastors are sometimes inclined to think of their ministry as something they will do for people rather than with them. The "strong man" pastor will draw the blueprints and make the decisions and dish out a ready-made program which he endeavors to "put over" by means of vigorous and inspired leadership. Does he do this because he thinks clergy are better than people? Or does he fail to see himself in the context of responsible, reciprocal relationship?

Kierkegaard says that pastors are needed who understand how to exercise authority through the art of sacrifice, who have been educated to obedience and so are able to correct, admonish, edify, move, and also constrain, not by force, anything but that, but rather through their own obedience.<sup>6</sup>

The "pastoral approach" begins with the premise that the church is the body of Christ and a responsible community in which the pastor has the privilege of offering responsibility in the name of Christ. In this community all are called, enlightened, and joined to one another and to God. He will trust the people as he hopes they will trust him, since the Holy Spirit works His fruits in all. He will weigh their findings ("Whatever the group decides deserves attention"); he will seek their opinions ("What do you feel should

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> From the "Journals," quoted in Eduard Geismar, *Søren Kierkegaard, seine Lebensentwicklung und seine Wirksamkeit als Schriftsteller* (Göttingen, 1929), pp. 390 f.



be done in this situation?"); he will listen as they seek a course of action ("What do you see as the alternatives and their consequences to the proposed course of action?"); assist and permit decision and action to emerge out of the thinking and concerns of the people. By no means is he passive and unproductive himself in the area of ideas, proposed actions, or decisions. Yet he can be wrong and will be wrong. So will the people. There is nothing remarkable in that. The fact not to be forgotten is that pastor and people have a life to live out together, a life that grows by mutual trust in the working of God. In fact many of the ideas and decisions offered in a free climate eventuate in advances that would never have budded and fruited had the pastor always spoken his piece and laid the decision on the line.

Robert Rodenmayer makes the observation that "given then a pastor who has a parish to administer, and given the fact that in that parish there is a group of converted persons knowingly involved in the Christian battle and glad of it," there is one primary suggestion one can make. Rodenmayer posits that the pastor should sit down with the church council and ask them to define their terms: What is the church for? and the other questions which cluster around this one. If the church leaders at this point do not think the pastor to be "as screwy as a four dollar bill," to use Rodenmayer's phrase, he will spend the time with them necessary to think through and ascertain what the essential nature and function of the Christian congregation is. What is more, the forms of church life need to be judged constantly against the vitality and need of the times. Then they may arrange the responsibilities

or needs to do in the order of their importance, for instance: worship, education, evangelism, property maintenance, and finance. Then they may plan, and whatever plan they use will be important in terms of what it seeks to do about the Word of God to people, in people, and out of people; never for the successful working of the plan itself, however impressive that might be.<sup>7</sup>

Church members who have never experienced this kind of pastoral approach may find it upsetting and irritating to be placed in a position in which responsibility rests on their shoulders. When they learn that the pastor really believes that the church should express in action what it is, that he most surely intends to involve people in its ministry for the right reasons, and that he accepts the fact of their right and capacity to respond—and will not cushion the reality of failure—a new birth of creativity usually emerges.

## V

### THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF THE COIN

Although principles are worthy of discussion, what about actual person-to-person practice? When we say that administrative leadership is essentially the art of helping people achieve mutually shared goals and that it functions within a matrix which involves purposes, values, and faith, we have not yet said how one carries it off. What specific skills should the pastor have as basic equipment in order to function as a person who gives wise guidance to the directive effort as a whole? These three are suggested as basic:

<sup>7</sup> Robert Rodenmayer, *We Have This Ministry* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1959), pp. 50 ff.



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1. *The skill of inductive thinking.*

The effective administrator is one who is skilled in problem analysis. He is (a) able to see and perceive the similarities and dissimilarities in a given situation; (b) capable of specifying tentative categories and relationships based on observation and deduction from prior experiences or discoveries; and (c) proficient in developing tentative working hypotheses which are tested by experience or experiment. As soon as one rises above routine work, problem recognition and problem solving are his to work with.

The known elements of the reasoning process have been defined as follows:

- a. the *recognition* of the problem to be faced.
- b. an adequate *observation* and *accumulation* of facts, of all possible data relevant to the problem at issue.
- c. the *classification* and *arrangement* of the data into related groupings, a *categorizing* which should help to throw light on what the problem really is and provide a tentative answer.
- d. the formulation of an *hypothesis* or trial solution.
- e. the *testing* of the tentative solution.
- f. the *adoption* or *acceptance* of the trial solution as valid and useful.

2. *The skill of planning.*

Goals are achieved by plans, not chance. Planning involves study of the goal to be attained, the problems connected with attaining it, the capabilities and resources at hand which may be organized and utilized to attain it, a study of the alternate courses of action (advantages and disad-

vantages of each) and the precise steps necessary to attain the plan chosen. Planning brings order out of desire to do something. There is an old motto: *Ubi ordo deficit nulla virtus sufficit*. It may be freely translated: "No high quality avails where the rule of order fails." Or to say it another way, "Order is heaven's first law."

There are at least four steps in the planning process which the pastor and church leaders may legitimately follow:

- a. The first step in procedure is to know the will of God for His church. Goals in the church are made out of God's plan for his people. The primary question is: What is the task of the church in the place where it is? Every plan should be made under the sanction of this question.
- b. The second step is to know the situation and the people. The plan comes into focus when the responsible leadership observes, listens, asks questions, comes to know people, evaluates and makes tentative decisions as to the direction and pace of the action planned. A plan should be realistic and make sense.
- c. The next step is to involve the people. This is done by clarifying the objective with them through explanation of what needs to be done and why it should be done. Clarification of an objective entails a "working through" of the reasons why this proposed action is a valid thing to do in relation to the mission of the church and its welfare.
- d. After the objective(s) has been clarified and validated, the necessary organization should be structured for more specific planning and for the



carrying out of the objective. This step will include coordination, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. Of concern here are two questions: What will happen to the people engaged in this activity in terms of growth in faith and life? In what ways will this activity promote the Gospel?

### 3. *The skill of teaching.*

It is axiomatic to say that the good administrator is a good teacher. He sets up a goal, poses the problems involved, provides motivation, guides subsequent activities, and helps the group work through experiences which may bring a changed mind, motive, and conduct. The idea that good training can largely take the place of order-giving is gaining wide acceptance in business organizations. How were the disciples to accomplish their task? Our Lord said they were to baptize and teach. The pastor who teaches will not have to be a boss in any sense of the term. He will bring people with him along the same road of desire and conviction as he internalizes through teaching the acceptance of a group task (what the group is to do, why the group does it, and how the group goes about it).

As long as the events which go on around us "make sense," we are able to cope with life as we see it. When events occur which are suddenly new and different, which we do not understand or which seem unreasonable to us, and in which we are not personally involved, our anxiety is aroused. Emotionally mature persons will usually study and investigate the puzzling situation until it "makes sense" to them, but most people require the "communication that gives meaning" to things.

Learning usually takes time. Therefore the administrator will stimulate interest, manifest enthusiasm, be clear and explicit, but, above all, he will be patient. He will also have faith in the germinative, fructifying power of rightly directed experiences to lead on to attitudinal changes. The pastor must not be surprised or disappointed that after careful teaching the people do not come to the same conclusions as he does. Perhaps people who "cannot fly as eagles must fly as birds." Perhaps they do not have enough information or have not come to care enough. Perhaps they are searching for a better application of the Word of God to their particular situation as responsible Christians, seeing the whole as perhaps the pastor does not see it. The pastor who has made up his mind, however, will attempt to force people to his decisions and no doubt will bruise the consciences of sincere Christians in the process.

Samuel Blizzard's discovery that the average pastor spends only 29 minutes of his day in his role as educator may have missed the point.<sup>8</sup> The pastor can be in the center or at least related to the educational process at work wherever the needs of individuals are being met, where people are learning, changing attitudes, and engaging in meaningful activities. In the broadest and truest sense of the term, there is an educational approach to everything the pastor does with people.

### 4. *The skill of initiating action.*

There are many impediments to action when working with "volunteers." Moreover, as it takes a bit of doing to get an

<sup>8</sup> Samuel W. Blizzard, "The Minister's Dilemma," *The Christian Century*, LXXIII, 17, (April 25, 1956), 509.



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inert object moving, people will also resist a new movement or a new change of direction. A call to action may be heard, read, understood, and accepted as valid but not acted upon. Why? Because action involves learning and the application of an accepted idea or the mastering of a new one, and change is usually involved. The change may affect routinized habits which have been practiced for years, or the reconstruction of one's life. The fear of failure may loom large as a reason for not acting. People are naturally uncertain about exchanging a present success, even at a known lower level, for a problematic success at a higher level. In the face of change, people will rationalize their inaction. Instead of saying quite honestly, "I am comfortable and don't want to change . . . Failure is hard for me to take . . . Let someone else do it," they say, "The time isn't ripe for such action . . . It's a foolish idea and won't work . . . It's not a bad idea, but we ought to wait a while."

More than routine or passive action on the part of the people is desired, of course. The pastor rightly strives for thoughtful and purposeful action—not people merely going through motions like puppets because he pulls the strings. The people should know both the how and why of the action. Sometimes an old action needs to be stopped before the new action begins. How may the pastor get appropriate action? These suggestions may be helpful.

- a. Start where people are. It is hard for a specialist who has spent years of study or service in a certain field to understand how limited a person's background can be in an area in which he is not experienced, yet it is possible to develop a feeling of

empathy for the level of the people. The pastor who consistently overestimates or underestimates the ability of people suffers a great deal of "slippage on the belt."

- b. Try conversion through diversion. That is, let new learning hitchhike on the old—do the old thing in a new way while explaining clearly what is happening. It is hard to get people to do something entirely new, and no trend reverses itself quickly. A sudden and dramatic change distracts people, and they do not hear what may be the perfectly logical and proper reason for what is happening.
- c. Be satisfied with little changes. Progress is a series of nudges, not a big jump. Instead of moving people like the blast-off of a rocket, it is usually better to lift them gradually, bit by bit. A parable might be this that very few farmers in Iowa started out with a big plot of hybrid corn, even though farmers here and there had already gone over entirely to this new seed. Since many farmers thought their own land to be unique, a trial planting was first made and then decision came. It took about 20 years to get hybrid corn accepted in Iowa.
- d. Provide local examples. People do not usually warm up to examples brought in from too great a distance. What happens in Pittsburgh, Pa., usually strikes little spark of interest in Pittsburg, Kans. However, if a new approach to Bible study is successful locally, people will more likely pay attention to it and study it.
- e. The personal flavor in communication may also be an important factor in getting action. Many actions result



not because we reach them by logical processes, but because a friend persuades us to do something. Fund raisers work on the principle that people make "personal" gifts, giving largely to persons rather than to the cause alone. President Lyndon B. Johnson is noted for the personal flavor he adds to his leadership. Saint Paul certainly made his personal appeals not on behalf of his own person or interests, but always in relation to the Gospel and his calling to serve Christ. The Christian pastor cannot escape the fact that he is a living symbol of God in action and the personal flavor of his dealing with people certainly influences their response. There is no doubt that he must walk the thin line between interjecting his personality too strongly, that is, having people do things for him instead of for God, and playing down his personality to the degree that his personal influence is ineffective.

- f. Team effort is an effective way of getting action. In an atmosphere of "what we do we do together," proposals and explanations are more readily accepted. Team effort facilitates mutual decision and policy making; it crystallizes and strengthens motivation; it reinforces the standards or goals that have been set up. A coach (and the pastor is not distorting his role when he thinks of himself as a coach) certainly wants to win the game, but he also wants teamwork—his whole squad stretching toward the same goal. In team effort an expert doesn't come in to

"lay down the law" or "to run the show." But the leader who knows how to play the game coaches the team, is consulted by the team, and gives the signals when needed to help the team. The pastor lets the people know, makes the people care, and helps the people act.

The Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu is credited with having said: "A leader is best when people barely know that he exists; not so good when people obey and acclaim him; worst when they despise him. Fail to honor people, they fail to honor you; but of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is finished, his aim fulfilled, they will say, We did this ourselves."<sup>9</sup>

## VI

### "SUCCESS" IN PARISH ADMINISTRATION

The Christian pastor needs to remember that his ministry is effective only because of the grace and power of God. That he is able to preach fine sermons, work hard, and conduct the affairs of his congregation as a good pastor and administrator are not marks of *his* success. That he is able to have an above-average salary, good clothing, and a new car every two or three years are likewise no marks of success. The pastor's success, under God, rests always in what God is doing through his ministry of Word and sacraments in the lives of men and women and children and in how they are being built up, enlisted, trained, and related to spiritual tasks.

There are temptations in many forms to fall into a rut, to take it easy, to say

<sup>9</sup> Gaines S. Dobbins, *A Ministering Church* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), pp. 55, 56.



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the same things in a dusty way, to put off unpleasant tasks, to belittle the success of others, to neglect personal spiritual nurture, to read other men's sermons instead of searching into and mining out of the Scriptures, to think more of personal success than the salvation of others and the glory of God. Insulated by the affections and considerations of faithful parishioners, the pastor may not know that he is dragging his feet and that his people are disturbed about it.

Pastors may become either popes or puppets. A "pope" usually carries his responsibility quite heavily. A puppet will carry it quite lightly. Pastors may become either funnels or bottlenecks. As funnels they fulfill their rightful purpose of pouring in the grace of God. As bottlenecks they dam up the channels of grace, stifle growth, and choke off service.

After all, it is not a matter of how much the pastor himself is willing and able to do, but how much he is willing and able to do with his people that together they may share the riches of God's grace and fulfill their common calling. St. Paul speaks of "grace given *you*." He tells his people "*you* are enriched by Him." He says, "The testimony of Christ is confirmed in *you* that *you* come behind in no gift." The accent is on what has happened in the lives of believers by God's doing. St. Paul expected it to happen. He looked for it and was thankful when it came. (Cf. Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3.)

## VII

## THE FEEDER-LEADER'S DEEPER RESOURCES

Although the pastor's professional equipment may include enough grasp of the

ways and means, of the techniques, processes, and dynamics involved in leading people toward realizing the purposes of the church, his strong and optimistic faith in the power of the Gospel in the lives of people will breathe new life into the people he leads. His burning conviction that he works with God's church will transmit assurance, enthusiasm, and value to every activity. His readiness to serve will inspire service, and his goal will give meaning and direction to the people. People sense when they are being joined together in a great enterprise. Because of the very nature and purpose of the church, God makes real His promises in the lives of His faithful people. It is the greatest enterprise in the world, not a local, limited, confined thing. What Christians do in any place is related to God's redemptive purposes and has eternal significance.

How shall the pastor maintain the "spiritual glow" (2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1:6, 13, 14)? He faces, does he not, the danger of losing the sense of the splendid possibilities of his vocation (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 1:4, 12). However, he gets more than he gives in loving his people and serving them (Gal. 6:6; Matt. 10:39). His people witness to him and strengthen him. He has the benefit of the brotherly admonition, advice, and encouragement of his people if his attitude is permissive. He may receive nurture and refreshment from his family and his colleagues. Above all, he will recognize the blessings of regular study of the Word of God, of worship, and the Sacrament. He will pray, believing that the Christian's potential is in God. Conscientiously and faithfully he will draw regularly upon the water springs of God's giving as a way of life. If he is truly filled with the Holy



Spirit, the gifts will shine forth in his life.

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