

1-1-2012

# Catechetical approach to redefining relationship between pastors and members of the congregation with an eye to mitigating pastoral burnout

Laurie J. Mulkey  
*George Fox University*

This research is a product of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at George Fox University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

---

## Recommended Citation

Mulkey, Laurie J., "Catechetical approach to redefining relationship between pastors and members of the congregation with an eye to mitigating pastoral burnout" (2012). *Doctor of Ministry*. Paper 18.  
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/18>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Seminary at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University.

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

CATECHETICAL APPROACH  
TO REDEFINING RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN PASTORS AND MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION  
WITH AN EYE TO MITIGATING  
PASTORAL BURNOUT

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

LAURIE J. MULKEY

COTTONWOOD, CALIFORNIA

APRIL 2012

Copyright © 2012 by Laurie J. Mulkey

All rights reserved.

The Scripture quotations contained herein are taken from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

George Fox Evangelical Seminary  
George Fox University  
Newberg, Oregon

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

---

D.Min. Dissertation

---

This is to certify that the D.Min. Dissertation of

LAURIE MULKEY

has been approved by  
the Dissertation Committee on March 15, 2012  
as fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation  
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation

Dissertation Committee:

Primary Advisor: Derek Voorhees, D.Min.

Secondary Advisor: Laura K. Simmons, Ph.D.

Expert Advisor: Donna Wallace, D.Min.

## CONTENTS

Section	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	9
SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM.....	19
SECTION 2: OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS .....	25
Pastoral Preparation	
Pastoral Rehabilitation	
Pastoral Appreciation	
Conclusion	
SECTION 3: THE THESIS.....	35
Exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-16	
Survey	
Contextual Analysis	
Historical Context	
Literary Context	
Formal Analysis	
Detailed Analysis	
Synthesis	
Reflection	
SECTION 4: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION.....	73
SECTION 5: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION/BOOK PROPOSAL.....	75
Query letter	
Fiction Book Proposal	
SECTION 6: POSTSCRIPT.....	81

APPENDIX: ARTIFACT: *CARRY THE YOUNG LAMBS*.....86  
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....137

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Were I to acknowledge each person who contributed energy and encouragement to me in this endeavor, there would be little space to write anything else. Since beginning the Leadership and Spiritual Formation program at George Fox Evangelical Seminary, I have encountered and depended upon administrators, faculty, and staff who have proven that they care for the program's success, but even more for each individual student's success. The combination of academic rigor and deep spiritual connection to the Godhead first attracted me to the program and then held my attention and heart throughout the three year process. Dr. Loren Kerns, Dr. Cliff Berger, Dee Small, David Nixon, Dr. Chuck Conniry, Dr. Dan Brunner, Dr. Frank Green, Dr. Leonard Sweet, Dr. Jules Glanzer, Dr. Cecilia Ranger, Dr. Richard Sartwell, Dr. Carole Spencer (in no particular order), among many others became more than instructors and administrators but friends, confidants, mentors, and family in a relatively short period of time. To them I offer my profound admiration and gratitude.

The members of my cohort, dubbed the "special K's" by one of our fellows, have become as important to me as many of my family. To CV Hartline, David Herrmann, Donna K. Wallace, Jerilyn Felton, K'Lynne McKinley, Merrie Carson, and Rodney Bertholet (in alphabetical order), you are more than partners; you are my brothers and sisters and I could not have completed this undertaking without the discussions, arguments, tears, and hysterical laughter that you afforded in the process. I love you all dearly.

I thank my advisors Dr. Derek Voorhees and Dr. Donna K. Wallace. You drove me to the brink and then calmly held my hand and walked me across. Without your wisdom, knowledge, and kind support, this would never have been attempted. Now that I

am here and it is finished, I want to thank you. Words cannot express what you have meant to me through this process. You are both truly God's hands in my life.

My family has sacrificed more than anyone can imagine in allowing me this opportunity to launch out into academia and scratch an itch which most often they did not understand. Jeff, Erin, Katie, Kylie, Kelsey, Kalyn, Ian, Cade, Audrey, Cassidy, and Abigail have loved me and stood beside me and picked up the slack of my absence in ways that cannot be enumerated, most particularly, my daughter Kylie. She brought an imagination that I do not possess to this project and breathed life into David in a way that I never could have on my own. She is my hero.

Lastly, and most importantly, I thank my husband, Alan. He is the most honorable and humble person I have ever known. At each crossroad in this journey, I have asked him to seek the Lord and tell me what he hears. Each time he has said, "I don't see how you can not take advantage of this opportunity. Go for it!" Through the days of separation, hours of study, months of pressure and mounting bills, he has been unfailingly supportive and encouraging. He truly is a manifestation of the grace and love of the Lord Jesus in my life for he has loved me unconditionally and approved of me unwaveringly. Were I ever to doubt that God loves me I need merely to look at Alan and that doubt dissolves.

For all of the above I thank and praise my Lord Jesus Christ, who created us to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.



## ABSTRACT

Although many recognize the pressing problem that the Western Christian Church faces regarding the holistic health of pastors, the number of suffering pastors continues to grow, as we will document. While there are myriad factors that influence the ability to handle stress such as: education, age, physical condition, family size, age, and health, area of ministry, urban, suburban, rural, it is our considered opinion that the majority of failure on the part of pastors to shoulder the burdens of the ministry lies more with an ignorance of the roles of shepherd and sheep in the Western Christian Church than with other life dynamics. To address this problem, I propose a catechism in the form of a parable. This fictionalized recounting of a vivid dream series given to a church member who is facing the burnout of his beloved pastor will address the roles of shepherd and sheep.

Pastors, specifically those who carry the responsibilities of their churches alone, without paid assistance, commonly work 50-80 hours per week.<sup>1</sup> The expectations placed upon the pastor by his/her family, the pastor, and the congregation, prove to be a burden too difficult to bear while maintaining healthy physical, emotional, and spiritual relationships. The number of pastors who have considered withdrawing from the pulpit<sup>2</sup> speaks emphatically of a dysfunctional church system.

We will consider other possible solutions to this problem which are currently available to the pastoral leaders serving congregations with less than 100 adult parishioners. While seminary preparation, pastoral appreciation, and rehabilitation are

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark Kelly, "Pastors' Work Hours Tallied in New Survey," Baptist Press, January 6, 2010, <http://bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=31993>, accessed February 27, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Richard J. Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors, What's Going on with Pastors in America," Into Thy Word Ministries, 2007, [http://www.intothyword.org/articles\\_view.asp?articleid=36562&columnid=id=-53513](http://www.intothyword.org/articles_view.asp?articleid=36562&columnid=id=-53513) (accessed February 27, 2012).

valuable additions to a healthy clergy, they do nothing to address the unrealistic expectations of the congregation and do not assist the pastor to reduce the workload under which s/he labors.

The thesis of this dissertation is that the rate of pastoral burnout reflects a need to re-educate both clergy and congregation to a more biblical design of the shepherd/sheep relationship. Because this agrarian metaphor has been misunderstood, one can gain a great deal of insight into the failure of the pastor to flourish in the Western Church model with closer study. For example, shepherds do not reproduce sheep; sheep reproduce sheep. Shepherds reproduce shepherds. Through careful exegesis of the Ephesians 4 description of the church as a body of believers being equipped for the work of the ministry, this relationship is more clearly understood.

In writing a catechism, this student hopes to offer a re-educational tool that will result in new, more scriptural behaviors in both congregation and clergy. By asking specific questions regarding the relationship between shepherd and sheep, and answering them with scripture and practical application, the catechism will teach truth rather than provide new techniques for pastoral health.

## INTRODUCTION

My first experience of pastoral burnout was when the pastor of my youth, at the church my family had attended since before I was born, imploded in the pulpit. He had served our independent congregation for over 20 years while operating a strawberry and livestock farm in our neighborhood. We watched as he stood and declared that he was Abraham and we were Isaac and the Lord had instructed him to kill us. He then proceeded to do everything in his power to destroy the church, and finally succeeded after two years. We failed as a congregation to salvage the great work to which he had dedicated his life because both he the pastor and we the congregation failed to recognize that we were operating on a CEO model and not on a biblical structure.

We, the congregation, had abdicated our responsibility as the Body of Christ to do the work of the ministry; instead we signed on to a plan in which the pastor is the go-to guy. Our pastor took control of the church and we sat back and watched him work himself into a state of exhaustion that led to an emotional and mental breakdown. Had any of us, him included, taken the time and effort to examine scripture and seek the Lord, we would have discovered that God's design does not include the destruction of the pastor. We all needed a new way of thinking about how the church is designed to function. Even though we were an agricultural community with many livestock farmers in the congregation, we failed to appreciate the shepherd/sheep metaphor that permeates scripture.

For our church, being just one of many in such a situation, perhaps the most powerful lesson to be learned is that the church is designed to be based upon relationship, relationship first with Jesus Christ and second with each other. It is not about control and

production, which is the core of the CEO model. The work of the church is to continue what Jesus was doing when he was on the earth, transforming lives through the power of God.

God's plan is to transform us, make us into what He designed us to be, not force us to do what we should be doing. Romans 12:2 discusses this process: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect," (NASB) hence the model of the shepherd and the sheep. A shepherd does not force a sheep to do what it is designed to do. The shepherd merely creates an environment in which the sheep can be what it is designed to be. The rest is a natural result of that identity. Ask any shepherd what kind of a fight would result if he or she attempted to force a sheep to give birth before it was ready. Such an action would defeat the purpose of a flock, producing nothing but dead lambs.

While any metaphor carried beyond its intended purpose will break down, the metaphor we find throughout scripture referring to the leaders of God's people still has power. Even though we, as 21<sup>st</sup>-century urban Christians, may find the shepherd imagery archaic and beyond our ability to apply, we are encouraged to work at understanding its ramifications. If we read Ephesians 4:1-16, we find that the shepherd is given the task of *equipping* the sheep to do the work. It is not in the design of the shepherd to reproduce sheep. Rather, the shepherd provides what the sheep need in order to do and be what are natural byproducts of sheephood.

In contrast, with the adoption of the world's model, that of the CEO, the church has also imported the world's results. Anyone who has operated as CEO of any

successful company will relate the amount of stress, physical and emotional, that such a position imposed upon the holder. Success costs, and for most CEOs that includes paying in physical health and relationships that are ignored and/or neglected in the pursuit of success. Do we in the church actually accept that as an expected accompaniment of a vibrant congregation? Can we honestly suggest that God has a hand in the design of a system that eats the leaders alive and severely endangers family and congregation in the process? And yet we continue to follow the same model, simply replacing the fallen leader with a fresh one, blaming his/her personal issues for the leader's demise.

Perhaps my history explains my concern for the leaders in God's churches, especially those who serve as tentmakers.<sup>3</sup> They have always been part of my ministry to the Body of Christ. As a pastoral counselor, I have served many pastors who have suffered shipwreck as a result of the demands of unreasonable expectations from their congregants, family members, and themselves. When a pastor burns out resulting from emotional, physical, and spiritual exhaustion, it is devastating to all concerned. I have taken part in the rehabilitation of several pastors who have returned to the pulpit, and some who have not. The end result for both is that the work of the Kingdom of God is hindered and God's children suffer needlessly. Out of this concern for the clergy, a notion began to take shape in my mind, fed by two very specific incidents in my seminary education.

---

<sup>3</sup> Because the Apostle Paul worked at making tents to feed himself as he ministered so that he would not be a financial burden to the church (2Thessalonians 3:8), the term "tentmaker" has come to refer to those clergy who support themselves financially, either totally or partially, with employment outside of the church. Some refer to those who do not receive financial support from the church as "non-professional;" in this case we prefer to not use this term since it may connote a lack of training, education, or commitment on the part of the unpaid or low paid minister, when the opposite is often the case.

While we were in class for the DMin program at George Fox Evangelical Seminary, a young pastor broke down and wept over issues stemming from his young church plant and his inability to coax his congregation to commit themselves to the work of the ministry. He was exhausted and could find no new method to employ to make the ministry succeed. As the members of the class surrounded him to pray, I said to our professor, “All of these things that we are learning here are valuable. But they will be of no use unless we can learn to deal with *that*.” I have never pastored a church; I spoke as a pew-sitter, and identified myself as such to the professor. His response was, “Maybe we need the pew-sitters to address this problem.” From there I began to explore ways the solution could come from the congregation, rather than another training seminar aimed at the leadership of the church.

While I was visiting with this same young pastor, he related an incident that happened to him as he was seeking God regarding his church. He had taken a long weekend retreat at the Mount Angel Abbey and after three days of intense prayer and silence, he had sat down with the abbot to debrief. Upon explaining his position and concerns, he admitted that he had no great revelation from the Lord. The abbot looked at him and said, “Sounds like you need a catechism. Let’s go eat dinner.” That statement rang like a bell in my mind. I began to research catechism with an eye to retraining a congregation. Much to my surprise and chagrin I learned that catechism has nothing to do with training anyone for any task. Rather, a catechism is designed to teach truth, not modify behavior.<sup>4</sup> Having studied different modalities of psychotherapy, I have come to

---

<sup>4</sup> According to *Miriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Ed.*, a catechism is “a summary of religious doctrine often in the form of questions and answers.”(180) Further, to catechize is “to instruct systematically especially by questions, answers, and explanations and corrections; specifically to give religious instruction in such a manner.”(ibid.)

more closely align with cognitive therapy, whereby, the client's thinking processes are addressed. It is through learning to think differently that unwanted behaviors are eradicated, and healthier, more life-affirming behaviors are encouraged.<sup>5</sup>

To begin the construction of a catechism regarding the church's responsibility for the work of ministry, I first had to examine scripture. How did the Lord define church and its members? One of the greatest scriptural bases for the church is found in the epistle to the Ephesians. The Apostle Paul writes to the church, concentrating on the ascension and exaltation of Christ Jesus and what that means regarding the church's position and responsibility. I will use Ephesians 4:1-16 as the scriptural basis for the catechism. In this manner the church, both clergy and congregation, will be re-educated in a new way of thinking, rather than attempting to merely adjust behavior, to affect the health and well-being of the pastors of the church.

In every move of God, the Holy Spirit appears to relax his observable behavior, but the people of God do not. For example, in the first century when God, the Holy Spirit, descended upon the disciples gathered in the upper room, they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and then "acted" as the Spirit gave them ability. Looking back to what Jesus had told them before his ascension, they understood that this phenomenon was their "walking papers" to begin their part of the pronouncement, to go and witness. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:7, 8)." The church has continued to follow this example. The Holy Spirit moves upon a person or congregation, and in response the human aspect of the

---

<sup>5</sup> Raymond J. Corsini and Danny Wedding, eds., *Current Psychotherapies*, 5th ed. (Itasca: F. E. Peacock, Illinois), 242.

command is carried out. Unfortunately, many of these men and women of God work themselves into a state defined initially as ‘stress-out’ and, if not treated, ‘burnout’. This is especially true for those who serve congregations with fewer than 100 adult congregants, since those are the churches least able to afford paid assistance for their pastors. In the words of Eugene Peterson,

How do you spend three days exegeting the text, “I am crucified with Christ,” stay up half of Friday night on retreat with the youth listening to their rock music, attend a Saturday meeting with your deacons trying to decide how much money to budget for janitorial services, and step into the pulpit on Sunday morning as a radical pastor?<sup>6</sup>

Although a majority of pastors are faced with long working hours,<sup>7</sup> those who have assistants, such as youth pastors, counselors, and bookkeepers to take on some duties, are able to entrust aspects of the church’s ministry to fellow leaders, giving them a greater opportunity for respite. However, for those who find themselves as the lone leader, the number of hats they are required to wear demands, many times, more than they can fulfill. This hardly seems in keeping with the character of God to assume that he has designed the ministry to so debilitate his called pastors. Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research, points out, “The total hours pastors work in addition to biblical priorities shows that more of the other ministry tasks need to be shared. Jesus Christ designed the work of the church to be done by believers together in unity.”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Marva J. Dawn and H. Eugene Peterson, *The Unnecessary Pastor: Rediscovering the Call*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 10.

<sup>7</sup> H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2003), 20.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Kelly, "Pastors' Work Hours Tallied in New Survey," Baptist Press, January 6, 2010, <http://bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=31993> (accessed February 27, 2012).



The problem of pastoral burnout has become widespread in the Western Christian church. According to London and Wiseman in *Pastors at Risk*, “Pastoring is harder now than ever before. Unprecedented shifts in moral, social, and economic conditions are jolting congregations and bringing into question the way ministry is done.”<sup>9</sup> The busyness of life and the demands of an ever more technological culture have bled into the clergy in such a way that traditional models can no longer survive the onslaught. Chris Erdman, Presbyterian pastor and seminary teacher, argues,

Pastors are trained in the skill sets of life within a modern world in which technology and technique provide answers to every problem. Those [pre-technological culture] skills are not helpful now, and our over-reliance on them only proves that the assumptions and practices of the dominant culture have co-opted our imaginations to a way of organizing our lives according to technique rather than the Bible.<sup>10</sup>

Although most pastors recognize that burnout is not the will of God, they see no other alternative than to work to the point of exhaustion and beyond in order to meet the demands of ministry in their particular contexts. Treating these pastors has become an industry within the wider work of the church. I believe such situations are the result of ignoring or misunderstanding the instructions left to the church by God through the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:1-16.<sup>11</sup> In this pericope, Paul describes the roles played by the gifted leaders and the gifted members within the church in which such leader equips the members to work in ministry. By examining Paul’s language and context, one can

---

<sup>9</sup> H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Risk: Help for Pastors, Hope for the Church* (Wheaton, Ill., USA: Victor Books, 1993), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Chris W. Erdman, "Entering the Wreckage: Grief and Hope in Jeremiah, and the Prescribing of the Pastoral Vocation in a Time of Geopolitical Crisis," *International Review of Mission* April 2003 (April 1, 2003): 169.

<sup>11</sup> This passage is written in its entirety on page 30, taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

suggest how to build on the gifts left to the church by Jesus to create a pastor/congregation relationship that fulfills the call of God upon the Body of Christ. By recognizing that Jesus Christ designed both the work of the leadership and the work of the saints, the church can become the one Jesus builds. Until the church comes to understand and implement both leaders' and congregants' responsibilities in tandem, it will continue to see pastors unable to complete the call upon their lives to serve and equip, and the saints will continue to rely upon the pastors to do the work that they themselves are gifted by God to do.

The contemporary church member has been led to believe that s/he chooses her/his church. More and more, church is becoming an expression of how we view the world. In recent research by the Barna Group, they found that the reason people attend a specific church is more dependent upon how they perceive themselves and their surroundings than how they perceive God and his instruction.

Traditional ventures such as integrating discipline and regimen in personal faith development are becoming less popular. Repeating the same weekly routines in religious events is increasingly deemed anachronistic, stifling and irrelevant. Rigidity of belief--which includes the notion that there are absolute moral and spiritual truths--[is] perceived by a large (and growing) share of young people to be evidence of closed-mindedness. The result is a nouveau form and structure for the Christian faith that will have broad-based consequences on the practice of Christianity for years to come.<sup>12</sup>

According to Pauline theology, Christians are called into a body; they do not choose to participate in what they find relevant, but are summoned into fellowship with His Son. This juxtaposition is scarcely considered by those Christians who decide where to worship and with which congregation to identify themselves. New Testament scholar

---

<sup>12</sup> "Barna Finds Four Mega-Themes in Recent Research," The Barna Group, December 3, 2007, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/13-culture/89-barna-finds-four-mega-themes-in-recent-research?q=choose+church>, accessed February 23, 2012.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones has stated, “The Christian must never be thought of as someone who has decided to take up a certain type of life. The Christian life must never be thought of in terms of something that we have decided to take up. It is the exact opposite, it is something into which we have been ‘called.’”<sup>13</sup> Although the church may think that it has been “doing” church well, to a great extent, it has been following its own notions and not the design of the Father. The identity as members of His family and His body is one of *design* and not *decision*. Such errors in thinking have resulted in a church that is run by consensus and not divine guidance. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that such a configuration will lead to problems for those in leadership. This issue is not one that can be corrected through techniques and trainings, but requires a new *zeitgeist*. Rather than being trained into new ways to do church, this scripture is calling Christians to an education: an education that realigns its students’ thinking to come into agreement with what God has designed and ordained, rather than what has previously been conceived in the minds of humanity. The church appears to have devolved into what caused the problems in Israel during the time of the Judges: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

The polity under which churches operate is either handed down by denominational leadership or, in the case of independent churches, it is established based upon the founders’ understanding of church government. This issue, however, is not one of polity but of mindset. Whether governed by a board of elders, denominational presbyters, or elected officials, the church, according to Paul in Ephesians, is to be a body of believers who individually carry out the functions for which they were uniquely

---

<sup>13</sup> David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Christian Unity: an Exposition of Ephesians 4:1 to 16* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 27.

designed. These individuals cooperate in such a way that the corporate workings of the congregation resemble the efficiency of the human body. According to this description, burnout is not an issue since each member fulfills only that for which s/he was designed. Therefore, the liver cannot complete the function of the elbow, nor does it attempt to do so.

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold: one, to suggest that both pastors and congregants have come to an erroneous conclusion regarding their respective roles in the Church; and two, to provide a catechism to implement a system of re-education.

## SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM

The struggle of pastors of churches with less than 100 adults in the congregation (41 per cent of adults attending a Protestant church associate with a congregation of 100 or fewer adults),<sup>14</sup> usually without financial wherewithal to hire support staff, suffer more, simply because their loads are heavier due to fewer to share them. In addition, according to recent research done by the Barna group, “On seven of the eight behavioral measures, attenders of large churches were substantially more likely than those of small churches to be active. (These included behaviors such as attending church in the past week, reading the Bible in the past week, volunteering at their church in the past week, etc.) The average difference related to these seven behaviors was 17 percentage points.”<sup>15</sup> Expectations placed upon such pastors by denominations, congregations, families, and the pastors themselves have created a scenario in the local church that dooms many pastors to choose between the call of God on their lives and personal and family survival.

According to Methodist pastor Carlyle Fielding Stewart III,

No other profession demands competency in such a variety of roles as the ordained ministry. Ministers are expected to be administrators, spiritual advisors, caregivers, healers, preachers, teachers, conflict negotiators, arbiters, lawyers, biblical scholars, church and denominational historians, visionaries, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, confidants, psychologists, sociologists, economists, fundraisers, prophets, priests, advocates for social justice, defenders of the poor and oppressed, evangelists, spiritual warriors, truth tellers, armor bearers, and leaders of workshops, worship services, Bible studies, and church retreats. Given all these expectations—not to mention the expectation that clergy be God’s representatives—is it any wonder that some people expect clergy to be God and

---

<sup>14</sup> “How Faith Varies by Church Size,” The Barna Group, 2009, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/289-how-faith-varies-by-church-size?q=church+attendance>, accessed February 22, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

are disappointed when they are not? What other profession requires and demands so many different things of one person in order to be successful?<sup>16</sup>

Studies done across denominational lines reveal the difficulties that pastors and their families face in finances, long working hours, contentious members, and physical, emotional, and spiritual fatigue, leading to discouragement, depression, and burnout.<sup>17</sup>

According to Karen D. Scheib, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Candler School of Theology,

The spentness of clergy burnout takes a toll not only on individuals but also on congregations, annual conferences, and the denomination [United Methodist] as a whole. Recent studies indicate that burnout affects 20 to 40 percent of clergy at any given time in the populations surveyed. Its symptoms include physical and emotional exhaustion, a sense of helplessness, a reduced sense of accomplishment, spiritual malaise, and loss of meaning related to one's work.<sup>18</sup>

The issue of stress and burnout within the local church has become a subject of interest and intervention over the past 15-20 years. However, as we examine the number of pastors in crisis, we recognize that we have made little progress toward healthier ministers. In a recent article in the *New York Times*, Paul Vitello writes, "The findings have surfaced with ominous regularity over the last few years, and with little notice: Members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension and depression at rates higher than most Americans. In the last decade, their use of antidepressants has risen,

---

<sup>16</sup> Carlyle F. Stewart III, "Why Do Clergy Experience Burnout?," *Quarterly Review, A Journal of Theological Resources for Ministry*, Spring 2003, 23, no. 1, 79.

<sup>17</sup> Namely, Fuller Theological Seminary's Church Growth Study (1991); Pulpit and Pew, Duke Divinity School (2001); Michael Low Morris and Pricilla White Blanton for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1994); Gallup, for CNN and *USA Today* (1996); Austin Theological Seminary Study (2002); Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development Project (1989-2006).

<sup>18</sup> Karen D. Scheib, "Why do Clergy Experience Burnout?" *Quarterly Review, A Journal of theological Resources for Ministry*, Spring 2003, 23, no. 1, 78.

while their life expectancy has fallen. Many would change jobs if they could.”<sup>19</sup> More and more books are being written and seminars are being developed to assist pastors and their families in making adjustments intended to strengthen them while meeting the overwhelming challenges of 21<sup>st</sup>-century church leadership. Insert “clergy burnout” in the search engine at Amazon.com and it will generate 136 books, 94 of which have been published in the past ten years.<sup>20</sup> As well, centers are being opened to give pastors and spouses “R and R” in the midst of ministry fatigue. The term “compassion fatigue”<sup>21</sup> has been coined to describe the particular affliction suffered by those in the helping professions, of which the pastorate is just one.

While compassion fatigue is to be expected while working with those in need, ministry in the body of Christ is not a choice but a calling. In informal round-tables with pastors of less populous congregations, it was suggested that the level of stress experienced by them is compounded by the assumption that they should not be suffering stress-related problems to the same extent as those in secular helping professions. The rationale is that ministers in the church, since they are called by God, should be especially blessed by God to overwork without the deleterious effects.

For a called, gifted, and anointed minister, the power of the Holy Spirit is available, a power that other helping professions do not necessarily have. Francis, Hills, and Calder write in their 2010 project,

Coate argued that ministers find it difficult to admit to stress, feeling that they should be more able to cope with it than their secular counterparts. Davey drew

---

<sup>19</sup> Paul Vitello, "Taking a Break from the Lord's Work," *New York Times*, August 1, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Amazon.com, accessed February 21, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Patricia Smith, "What Is Compassion Fatigue?," Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project, 2010, accessed July 11, 2011, <http://compassionfatigue.org/pages/compassionfatigue.html>.

attention to the difficulties experienced by the clergy in matching performance to role expectations and considered that clergy are particularly susceptible to feeling overworked and unappreciated, and that their particular skills will be overlooked and underused.<sup>22</sup>

The questions then remain, if one is called, gifted and anointed to serve the church as a pastor, why is s/he subject to such an overwhelming task? If God has designed the call, why is it accompanied by such risk to family, health, and life? Jesus said, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:30).” And yet, while Jesus’ words were not directed specifically to church leaders, many pastors claim that their yoke is hard and their burden heavy. According to a study presented to the Religious Research Association, in 2003, by Dean Hope and Jacqueline Wenger, of pastors who left the pulpit from various Protestant denominations in the preceding eight years, 56% listed being drained by unrealistic demands made upon them as the biggest factor in their decision.<sup>23</sup>

The problem of clergy burnout has become such an item of concern that, although there are several burnout measurement scales for the occupational syndrome,<sup>24</sup> one has been developed strictly for use in measuring burnout among ministers in the church. The Oswald Clergy Burnout Scale was developed by Roy Oswald, of the Alban Institute.<sup>25</sup> In

---

<sup>22</sup> Leslie J. Francis, Peter Hills, and Peter Kaldor, "The Oswald Clergy Burnout Scale: Reliability, Factor Structure and Preliminary Application Among Australian Clergy," *Pastoral Psychology* 57, no. 5-6 (January 2009): 244, doi:10.107/s11089-008-0165-7.

<sup>23</sup> Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, “Experiences of Protestant Ministers Who Left Local Church Ministry,” presented to The Religious Research Association, Norfolk, VA, October 25, 2003, 19.

<sup>24</sup>The most widely used and investigated measure is the Human Services Survey of the Maslach Burnout Inventory according to Francis, Hills, and Kaldor study in *Pastoral Psychology* 57, no. 5-6, January 2009.



his book *Clergy Self-Care*, Oswald has included the burnout self-assessment tool which allows clergy to rate levels of burnout based upon feelings and responses to sixteen issues common in ministry.<sup>26</sup> Oswald addresses the notion of unrealistic expectations in the church: “[Pastors] have gone like lambs to the slaughter because...the message they hear from the church at all levels—and from themselves—is ‘you can do more’ and ‘you can do it better.’”<sup>27</sup> Unrealistic expectations from both congregation and clergy have contributed to the dire conditions of many pastoral ministers today. Oswald goes on to point out that “some clergy scramble out of the boiling cauldron and find saner professions. Those who remain pastors often plug along in cynical exhaustion.”<sup>28</sup>

According to statistics amassed by Gallup, for *USA Today* and CNN; Injoy Ministries; Fuller Institute of Church Growth; and Carl Dudley and David Roozen, for *Faith Communities Today*, and reported in *Pastors at Greater Risk*,

- 50 per cent of all congregations in the United States are either plateauing or declining.
- 33 per cent of pastors confess “inappropriate” sexual behavior with someone in the church.
- 90 per cent of pastors work more than 46 hours a week.
- 80 percent believe that pastoral ministry affects their families negatively.
- 33 per cent say that being in ministry is an outright hazard to their family.
- 75 per cent report they have had a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry.
- 50 per cent feel unable to meet the needs of the job.
- 90 per cent feel they are inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands.

---

<sup>25</sup> "About Alban," Alban - Building Up Congregations and Their Leaders, section goes here, accessed July 19, 2011, <http://www.alban.org/>. (The Alban Institute was founded in 1974 as a major resource for American congregations facing the challenges of a changing society.)

<sup>26</sup> Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1991), 61-65.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., ix.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

- 40 per cent report a serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month.<sup>29</sup>

In the face of these startling statistics, the church needs to ask a simple question, “Is this the design of God?” If the answer is “yes,” then pastors who are struggling just need to make adjustments and accept the responsibility for their own shortcomings in the ministry, and get on with the work of the church. If the answer is “no,” then all members of the church, not just the pastors and their families, need to look at how the church is functioning, or dys-functioning, and accept the responsibility for changing it to come into alignment with the scriptures and God’s revealed plan for the church. Regardless of which answer is chosen, the problem remains one that will continue to plague both ministers of the Gospel and those who expect and receive ministry. The completion of the call of the Gospel to disciple nations depends upon the people of God, pastors and congregants, being able to operate within the design of God. Therefore, the core issue becomes whether or not God designed the structure within and rationale behind which the majority of congregations carry out the call to be the Body of Christ.

---

<sup>29</sup> London and Wiseman (2003), 20.

## SECTION 2: OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

In seeking to mitigate the stress placed upon pastors in the local church, several methods of dealing with the problem have surfaced. Though these three, pastoral preparation, rehabilitation, and appreciation, are not the sum total of the solutions being implemented, they do represent the general approaches to dealing with the issue. While the author encourages each of these measures, it is imperative that the church take a more proactive view of the foundational causes of pastoral burnout. It is not enough to prepare clergy, to rehabilitate them, or to pay lip service to their dedication. These solutions merely treat the symptoms. It has become increasingly obvious that the goal must be a cure; palliative treatment is not enough.

### **Pastoral Preparation**

Denominations have begun to recognize the need for treatment for pastors who suffer the effects—both temporary and long term—of too much stress in the ministry to the local church. However, for many this recognition comes as too little, too late. Some seminaries have in their required curricula coursework designed to prepare the new pastor for the demands of ministry, and it is becoming more common.<sup>30</sup> Such coursework is generally designated “Pastoral Self-Care.” Archibald Hart, Ph.D., then head of the School of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary, has written extensively on the subject of depression resulting from stress and burnout. Included in Hart’s books are ways in which the individual can train him/herself with coping mechanisms and exercises to relieve

---

<sup>30</sup> Each seminary has its own nomenclature for clergy self-care coursework. In researching online catalogues, and examining course descriptions, it has come to the attention of this student that it is more often the case that specific material for preparing clergy for the demands of the pulpit in order to mitigate stress related debilitation is not included in required classes. Dallas Theological Seminary, Denver Seminary, Multnomah Biblical Seminary, Vanguard University, and Fuller Theological Seminary, are among those that do not require such specific coursework, though they may address the issue in other classes; A. W. Tozer Theological Seminary, and George Fox Evangelical Seminary, do.

stress in the workplace.<sup>31</sup> Fuller Seminary, however, does not require coursework specifically designed for the soon-to-be overworked and overstressed pastor in its masters-level programs.

One seminary that does address this need is A. W. Tozer Theological Seminary in Redding, CA, on Simpson University's campus. Every Masters-level student is required to take a course entitled "Personal Health of the Ministry Leader." The course description taken from the online catalogue reads,

This entry-level course addresses the spiritual, psychological, emotional, and relational aspects of being a leader. It addresses issues of diet, exercise, sleep, time and energy management, and the danger zones that often lead ministry leaders to burnout or moral failure. The course also deals with the complexities of church family life, the great need for self-awareness, the discipline of staying mindful of other people's expectations, and honoring wise boundaries in relationships.<sup>32</sup>

Although George Fox Evangelical Seminary requires its students to take a similar course just prior to graduation, Tozer has chosen to make this one of the first courses required, because so many of the students are already in pulpit ministry. Adding educational pursuits to their already busy schedules puts these ministers in even graver danger of debilitating stress. Having taken the course, the author of this dissertation can testify to its value not only in preparing prospective pastors but in mitigating personal issues that have already become hazardous to one's health. Such coursework is invaluable for those in the caring professions, in or outside of the church. It prepares the clergy to be proactive regarding the workload they can expect in the pastorate, which can be life-saving, in that

---

<sup>31</sup> Archibald D. Hart, *Coping with Depression in the Ministry and Other Helping Professions* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984).

<sup>32</sup> "Courses," A.W. Tozer Theological Seminary, 2010, <http://tozer.simpsonu.edu/Pages/Academics/Courses.htm>, accessed July 11, 2011.

the minister can have in place practices that will promote physical, emotional, and spiritual health, in personal, family, and church life.

The Alban Institute, as previously mentioned, provides training webinars, books, and articles that help the minister to develop good habits in the ministry in order to establish and maintain holistic health practices. In *Clergy Self-Care*, Oswald offers the minister an in-depth analysis of what causes burnout and how a balanced approach to emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being can prevent the effects of the ministry from becoming debilitating and destructive. According to the author, “We are called, first and foremost, to become whole ourselves, and second, to help others catch the vision of this wholeness. The one is as important as the other.”<sup>33</sup> For Oswald, burnout is a symptom not only of overwork, but of imbalance in the understanding of the pastoral role and the carrying out of that role in the church. The notion is that if the pastor is properly prepared for the demands of the congregation, then s/he will be less liable to fall victim to them. It becomes, in this understanding, the responsibility of the minister to guard her/his soul and body and thus make the best of a possibly deadly situation. Not only, then, must the minister guard her/his own health, but s/he must take on the responsibility to model that health for those to whom s/he is called.

As valuable as such preparation can be, it fails to reduce the amount of work in the pastorate. It does acknowledge unrealistic expectations but does little to address them in the congregation. While instructing the minister to recognize when s/he is placing unrealistic expectations upon her/himself and family, it fails to put in place a structure from which such expectations can be adjusted within the congregation. This instruction

---

<sup>33</sup> Oswald, 89.

presupposes that such unrealistic expectations will exist and prepares the pastor to deal with them, rather than adjusting or replacing them.

Some denominations, Evangelical Covenant for example, offer retreats and pastor support. Their “Constancy Retreats” offer programs in which “faithfulness, longevity, and fidelity are nurtured through a personal state of wellness, issuing out of a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. The ‘Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Initiative’ resources pastors, missionaries, and chaplains for retreats to encourage healthy patterns and habits of renewal.”<sup>34</sup> Such retreats are designed to address specific issues that can lead to burnout and have been inaugurated to ease the effects of emotional, physical, and spiritual stress in the lives of pastors and their families. Also, the Church of the Nazarene has a “Soul Care, Clergy Development” link on their home web page that states, “Through *Soul Care*, Clergy Development wants to come alongside our clergy to encourage you, to remind you of how vital your ministry is to so many people, and to affirm how much you are treasured on the ministry team of the Church of the Nazarene.”<sup>35</sup>

In addition, the Lilly Endowment recently announced a grant program in which congregations can make application for up to \$50,000 in grant moneys to provide renewal opportunities for their pastors. The “What Will Make Your Heart Sing? 2011 National Clergy Renewal Program”<sup>36</sup> is designed to promote holistic health among practicing

---

<sup>34</sup> "ECC Vocational Ministry Constancy: Retreats," Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC), <http://www.covchurch.org/vocational-ministry/spe/retreats/>, accessed August 23, 2011,.

<sup>35</sup> "UCME - Clergy Development - Soul Care," UCME, Clergy Development, Soul Care, 2011, About Soul Care, <http://www.nazarenepastor.org/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=228>, accessed September 02, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Lilly Endowment Inc. - 2011 National Clergy Renewal Program, 2011 Application Guidelines, <http://www.clergyrenewal.org/>, accessed August 23, 2011.

clergy in church settings. Yet again, there is little offered in the way of changing the structure under which these pastors operate to reduce the amount of stress visited upon them. Renewal is a valuable and necessary piece of pastoral ministry, but when it is used as a vehicle to prepare and strengthen pastors to withstand unrealistic and devastating workloads, it becomes just another item on the pastor's list of things for which s/he is responsible.

### **Pastoral Rehabilitation**

In most cases, however, the issue of pastoral self-care is not addressed until the pastor and family have entered the crisis phase. That is, once the pastor becomes afflicted with symptoms of too much stress and possibly burnout, either the pastor and her/his spouse, the regional governance of the denomination, or both, initiate treatment and relief of stress-related issues. Depending upon the presenting symptoms, the clergy person can be treated on the job, given a sabbatical, or removed from ministry. Such removal is common if the symptoms include some sort of moral failure. It is little wonder that in times of particular crisis, clergy may fail to notify or consult with denominational leaders. According to a study done by Rosemead School of Psychology, BIOLA University, in 2003, regarding ministers' reticence in seeking professional counseling services, "Not surprisingly, there is great fear of negative reprisal. Will it be perceived as weakness or professional incompetence? Will it be a sign to others that God is not enough? Pastors are especially concerned about who will have access to the information, making confidentiality an issue of paramount importance."<sup>37</sup> Recognizing this problem, more denominations have developed a confidential counseling system whereby pastors may

---

<sup>37</sup> Katherine R. Meak, et al., "Maintaining Personal Resiliency: Lessons Learned From Evangelical Protestant Clergy," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 31, no. 4 (2003): 345.

consult with denominationally appointed clergy who advise and assist them without going through the system's chain of command, thus providing ministers with access to help without jeopardizing their positions in the church.

The Church of the Nazarene has a toll-free number pastors can use to access such a confidential resource offered through *Focus on the Family*.<sup>38</sup> Duke Divinity School has developed a website/clearinghouse for articles and resources to assist the local minister in caring for her/himself in the face of overwork. Though the school is United Methodist, Duke's goal is to assist ministers in all denominations to find balance in health issues related to ministry overload. The website provides links to resources for diet, exercise, spiritual, and emotional support that provide guidance for whatever manifestation of stress and burnout the minister may be suffering.<sup>39</sup> It is interesting that one of the articles included was originally published on the *Huffington Post*, a secular blog that deals primarily with political issues. "No Rest for the Holy: Clergy Burnout a Growing Concern" was written by a Catholic author in 2010. The author states, "Many other clergy from all denominations are still battling the high expectations... from congregants and themselves --and they are paying the price."<sup>40</sup> Bruce Drake goes on to explain that the demands of the pulpit are no respecter of denomination or religion. In speaking with a female pastor of an Episcopal church, he quotes her as lamenting, "The untenable nature of the experience for me was being designated the holiest member of the congregation,

---

<sup>38</sup> "Clergy Development Home Page," Clergy Development, Counseling for Nazarene Clergy, 2011, <http://www.nazarenepastor.org/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=228>, accessed September 02, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> "About | Duke Divinity School," Duke Divinity School | Be Transformed By The Renewing Of Your Minds, Initiatives and Centers, <http://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/clergy-health-initiative/about>, accessed August 09, 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Bruce Drake, *Politics News and Opinion on The Huffington Post*, report, 2010, Disputations, [http://www.politicsdaily.com/2010/08/02/no-rest-for-the-holy-clergy-burnout-a-growing-concern/?sms\\_ss=facebook](http://www.politicsdaily.com/2010/08/02/no-rest-for-the-holy-clergy-burnout-a-growing-concern/?sms_ss=facebook), accessed August 09, 2011.



who could be in all places at all times and require no time for sermon preparation."<sup>41</sup> The expectations of the congregation place a burden upon the pastor that many cannot sustain and all the preparation in the world can do nothing to mitigate. For this particular pastor, withdrawing from the pastorate was her only hope of survival; she simply could not fulfill the demands placed upon her by her congregation.

While such withdrawal from the ministry is not always the solution, it is the one chosen by many suffering burnout and the debilitating results of it. Though those who do leave ministry understand their original call being from God, they have found themselves in a position in which they can no longer attempt to fulfill the church's expectations and remain healthy either physically or spiritually. They come to the conclusion that the call of God is more than can be expected of themselves or their families. Such a conclusion is devastating to their self-concept and their faith in the God who called them to this position. In *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, Olsen and Grosch write, "Clergy burnout is a concern of all religious denominations. Meeting the constant demands of visitation, pastoral counseling, administration, preaching, teaching, facilitating church growth, as well as being expected to be an expert in crisis intervention, leaves many clergy feeling inadequate, exhausted, frustrated, and frequently questioning their call to ministry."<sup>42</sup> Counseling the recovering minister can be very helpful and life affirming, but cannot return the wasted years in which congregational, denominational, and self-inflicted unrealistic expectations have wrought destruction upon the clergy and family. It must therefore fall to the congregation to accept its share of the responsibility for the situation.

---

<sup>41</sup> Drake, accessed August 9, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> David C. Olsen and William N. Grosch, "Clergy Burnout: A Self-Psychology and Systems Perspective," *The Journal of Pastoral Care* XLV, no. 3 (1991): 297.

While preparation and rehabilitation are crucial elements of the solution to this problem, congregational participation is essential if the minister is to thrive in the call of God.

### **Pastoral Appreciation**

Another solution that is being considered is the issue of Pastor Appreciation. Congregations are encouraged to spend at least one Sunday a year on “Pastor Appreciation Day.” In fact, National Clergy Appreciation Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in October, while the entire month is designated Clergy Appreciation Month.<sup>43</sup> On this day, churches give special attention to their pastors by giving gifts, trips, money, any number of things that recognize the valuable work that they have done all year. It is assumed that such recognition will energize the pastor and family. Googling “Pastor Appreciation” yields over one million sources dealing with ideas to appreciate the pastor, from cards and banners, to gifts and testimonials. While everyone recognizes that they should make the pastor aware of how much s/he is appreciated for being the “go-to” person in the church, not many in the congregation truly grasp the demands of the pastorate. According to the aforementioned article on the *Huffington Post*, “In religious communities, each congregant tends to have a different view of what a cleric should be—preacher, fundraiser, counselor, spiritual exemplar, etc.—but few have any real conception of what the job entails. ‘Some congregants think their clergy work one hour a week preaching, and maybe another hour to prepare.’”<sup>44</sup> A more proactive attitude must

---

<sup>43</sup> The inauguration of Pastor Appreciation day and month has been spearheaded by HB London and Focus on the Family. See <http://www.thank-your-stars.com/clergy-appreciation-day.html> (accessed February 22, 2012), for explanation.

<sup>44</sup> Drake, accessed August 9, 2011.

begin to take hold in the pew in order for the expectations of the congregation to come in line with what is reasonable and healthy for both clergy and church membership.

### **Conclusion**

It is not the purpose here to debunk or belittle the solutions offered in dealing with the issue of clergy burnout and overwork. Rather, the solutions being practiced in the church are to be lauded and encouraged. However, they are not enough. The question being asked by healthcare professionals who treat these suffering pastors has concentrated on dealing with the stress inherent to the job, rather than finding a solution that alleviates it. They ask,

How can we as mental health professionals learn from these pastors and become advocates for others by communicating an expectation of personal and professional success, encouraging them toward spiritual and emotional health, and educating them about those who have walked before them and have maintained well being under stressful and demanding conditions? What can we tell their organizations and parishioners about how to protect and sustain these people who will work so diligently to protect and sustain so many others? Finally, how can we effectively restore them in times of distress?<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps the most powerful indictment against the solutions offered here is provided by Bowen's Family Systems Theory, as described by Dr. Edwin Freidman. In this model of therapy, the concept of the "identified patient" speaks to the issues of treating the pastor as independent from the system, church, in which the symptoms of burnout exhibit themselves. The

member with the obvious symptom is to be seen not as the 'sick one' [identified patient] but as the one in whom the [church's] stress or pathology has surfaced...the 'sick' part does not have to be removed or corrected if other

---

<sup>45</sup> Meek, et al., 340.

components in the system can be made to function differently or to change their relationships with one another.<sup>46</sup>

If we follow Friedman's logic, the problems that surface in the pastor need to be treated within the church system, not separated from it. Change the system; mediate the symptoms.

The solution to the problem is not preparing for overwork, rehabilitating those who are overworked, nor appreciating them when they are overworked. The solution must include a structural apparatus that changes the expectations to overwork. Instead of dealing with the results of overwork, why not address the cause of the overwork and examine whether that cause is one designed by God or people? If God designed it, then by all means continue the trend, on the other hand, if it is a construct of humanity and not scriptural, then it needs to be changed to be in line with the design of our Creator.

---

<sup>46</sup> Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation, Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, (New York: Guilford Press, 1985), 18, 19.

### SECTION 3: THESIS

The problems of overwork and burnout among clergy in the Western church are well documented, as we have shown. The solutions detailed in the previous section, well-intentioned and positive, fail to address a foundational mindset that is exhibited in many congregations: that of clergy responsibility for the lion's share of the work of the church's ministry. Anecdotal evidence supports such a notion. Baptist Pastor and doctoral candidate Brian Tubbs recently posted on his blog,

Most churches today don't look to the biblical role of a pastor. They want their pastor to be a people-pleaser. They are not interested in their pastor leading them or challenging them or rebuking them or calling them to sacrifice. They want their pastor to "take care of them." When they have a complaint or a grievance, they expect their pastor to solve it. When they don't like something, they expect their pastor to fix it. When they object to something the pastor is doing, they expect him to stop it. And when they hit a crisis or problem in their life, they expect their pastor to drop everything and come running to their aid. Little wonder that the average church in America has fewer than a hundred members, and that pastors, as an occupation group, have alarmingly high rates of depression, anxiety, obesity, and divorce!<sup>47</sup>

Also, in a recent article on *SBC* [Southern Baptist Convention] *Today*, Dr. Randy Stone, Associate Professor of Christian Education and Director of the Doctor of Educational Ministry Program at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary wrote, "Congregations expect the pastor to 'draw' new people to the worship services with sermons. A personal responsibility to share their life and faith is abandoned."<sup>48</sup> In addition, Barna recently published a report, based upon twenty years of research, regarding trends in the American Christian church. Among those trends, there was a reduction in the amount of time

---

<sup>47</sup> Brian Tubbs, "What Most Congregations Want From Their Pastor and Church And Why It's Not Biblical!" Truth-Based Living, December 15, 2011, <http://pastortubbs.com/what-most-congregations-want-from-their-pastor-and-church-and-why-its-not-biblical.html>, accessed March 16, 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Randy Stone, "Ten Trends Impacting American Churches (Part 2)," *SBC Today*, October 3, 2011, <http://sbctoday.com/2011/10/13/ten-trends-impacting-american-churches-part-2/> (accessed March 16, 2012).

congregants spend volunteering at their churches by eight percentage points.<sup>49</sup> While we may dispute the cause of the reduction, the end result is that the pastor either takes up the slack, or the ministry of the church suffers neglect.

It has been suggested that the issue is not one of lack of understanding of the scriptural instruction regarding the work of the ministry belonging to an equipped congregation, but instead disobedience. However, there is ample literature to submit that the issue is one of ignorance as well. According to research done by the Barna Group,

American Christians are biblically illiterate. Although most of them contend that the Bible contains truth and is worth knowing, and most of them argue that they know all of the relevant truths and principles, our research shows otherwise. And the trend line is frightening: the younger a person is, the less they understand about the Christian faith....Churches have de-emphasized Bible teaching; families have become too busy and have demoted Bible learning as a family endeavor and priority; most parents rely upon churches to provide Bible training for their children, but churches rely upon volunteers who are ill-prepared to provide meaningful, long-term Bible training.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, Henry Smith wrote in a 2008 edition of *Bible and Spade*,

One of the most serious problems facing the Church in the 21st century is the problem of Biblical illiteracy. Simply put, most professing Christians do not possess a sound and coherent understanding of the Bible, beginning with sound doctrine and general Biblical history. Evidence for this sad reality is quite overwhelming.<sup>51</sup>

Although there are anecdotal examples of biblical ignorance on late night television programs, more and more Christian leaders are decrying the lack of scriptural

---

<sup>49</sup> "Barna Examines Trends in 14 Religious Factors over 20 Years (1991 to 2011)," The Barna Group, July 26, 2011, <http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/504-barna-examines-trends-in-14-religious-factors-over-20-years-1991-to-2011?q=volunteerism>, accessed March 17, 2012.

<sup>50</sup> "Barna Reviews Top Religious Trends of 2005," The Barna Group, December 20, 2005, , <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/166-barna-reviews-top-religious-trends-of-2005?q=church+attendance/>, accessed February 22, 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Henry B. Smith, Jr., "Biblical Illiteracy," *Bible and Spade* 22, no. 1 (September 9, 2008).

understanding in the contemporary church. Dr. Albert Moehler, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, recently wrote on his blog,

Christians who lack biblical knowledge are the products of churches that marginalize biblical knowledge. Bible teaching now often accounts for only a diminishing fraction of the local congregation's time and attention. The move to small group ministry has certainly increased opportunities for fellowship, but many of these groups never get beyond superficial Bible study. Youth ministries are asked to fix problems, provide entertainment, and keep kids busy. How many local-church youth programs actually produce substantial Bible knowledge in young people...The centrality of biblical preaching to the formation of disciples is lost, and Christian ignorance leads to Christian indolence and worse.<sup>52</sup>

Based upon that condition, the need for expanded biblical teaching in the church is crucial.

To address the issue of biblical illiteracy, then, we propose that another technique or training in how to do the ministry is not needed, but rather a re-education of both leadership and congregation. Training provides techniques to change what we do; education provides ways of thinking that change who we are. The difference between the two, though subtle, is the motivation behind the behavior change. Dallas Willard has said, "...the result of the effort to change our behavior without inner transformation is precisely what we see in the current shallowness of Western Christianity."<sup>53</sup> Training is behavior modification; education is identity modification. It is out of our identity as the equipped workers of the ministry that our activities flow. A catechism, in the tradition of the early church, which teaches a biblical way of thinking, rather than trains in new techniques, gives the church the opportunity to define herself biblically. Each member is

---

<sup>52</sup> R. Albert Moehler, "The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It's Our Problem," AlbertMoehler.com, October 14, 2005, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/10/14/the-scandal-of-biblical-illiteracy-its-our-problem/>, accessed March 08, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 79.

responsible, defined by gifting and maturity, for the work to which each congregation is called. According to scripture, as we will elucidate, the church is to be a unified body that cooperates to fulfill the call and mission of God in the earth.

Since the problem of overwork in the pastorate is based upon a learned concept, that of pastor as worker of the ministry, then it stands to reason that a new understanding, rather than a new behavior, is what is required. To suggest that the congregation alone must be trained in new behaviors simply places yet another task on the pastor's already overburdened shoulders. The problem lies in the manner in which the whole church has come to understand and practice the responsibilities of pastors and members.

To facilitate this re-education, a deeper understanding of the scriptural definition of the church must be attempted. With this in mind, an exegetical examination of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesian church is proposed. Continuing to pile new ideas upon erroneous understanding is a fool's errand. Rather, beginning from scratch and building a definition of the biblical concept of the church community will provide the basis of the catechetical process. By using the term "pastor," literally translated *shepherd*, Paul establishes a relationship between the pastor/shepherd and the congregant/sheep that has been neglected in the present church model. Using this metaphor allows the catechist to paint a simple and memorable picture.

### **Exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-16**

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling: one lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's



gift. There it says, “When He ascended on high He led captive a host of captives and He gave gifts to [people].” (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that he also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature [person], to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are not longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of [people], by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

## **Survey**

This epistle was written by the Apostle Paul to the church around 61 C.E., while he was imprisoned in Rome. Many scholars believe that this epistle was, in fact, a letter that circulated to the churches in Asia Minor, even though the church at Ephesus is specifically named in Paul’s greeting. This theory is supported by the text of the letter since it does not appear to deal with a particular issue or problem within the Ephesian church, and also contains no specific personal greetings as do his other epistles to particular groups in the first-century church. The general theme of the letter is the purpose of God in establishing and perfecting his body, the Church, and the response that such a purpose requires of the members of that body.

Ephesians is set apart in the Pauline corpus in that it appears to move from an emphasis on the cross to an emphasis on the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. The reader is taken the next step, as it were, on the journey of sanctification as a member of a corporate body and not simply as an individual believer. The book of Ephesians

serves as an expansion of Paul's ecclesiology as he encourages and instructs the believers of Asia Minor in living, not as individuals saved by grace, but as mature and maturing members of the Church universal walking out the call and appointment of God in the world. Paul writes this letter to the Ephesians as an argument for, and instruction in, life after salvation. He clearly illustrates a call to unity and service that is unique in the New Testament Canon.

In 4:1-16 it appears that Paul is exhorting the church to remember the call of God, to serve it diligently and in unity of the Spirit, and to recognize the design and purpose handed to it by Christ in the gifts that he gave upon his exaltation, quoting Psalm 68:18. "You have ascended on high, you have led captive your captives; you have received gifts among [people]." Using this passage of the Old Testament, Paul not only introduces the subject of gifts from Christ, but also reestablishes the understanding that Jesus ascended only after having descended to earth, that he is not an ordinary man but one who has the ability to "fill all things," emphasizing that Jesus is seated in the heavenlies following his resurrection. It is from this position, on high, that he has empowered the church to act on his behalf on the earth.

Beginning in 4:11, Paul describes five gifts which Jesus gave, his purpose in giving them, and the result of their proper functioning. All of this is the consequence of Jesus' resurrection and ascension, that is, a result of his exaltation rather than being a direct result of the passion and the cross. In Ephesians, Paul moves beyond writing a treatise on either and takes Christology to a new level in defining God's purpose in raising Christ up to an exalted position. If we examine what Paul has written in light of this thinking, we may see the further development of the Body of Christ beyond that of a

group of redeemed sinners to the gifted people of God doing the work of service. This pericope is the basis of Paul's ecclesiology in Ephesians, in which he describes the church of Jesus Christ as a gathering of saints cooperating to fulfill the call of God in Christ Jesus, and the result of such cooperation as the gifts enumerated operate among the leadership.

In order for the saints to become that cooperative body, there needs to be in place a humble recognition of the call and a dependence upon the understanding of unity, not only unity in the local church, which Paul addresses in other epistles, but a unity in the larger community of believers. The author introduces in verses four through six, beginning in typical Pauline fashion with a quote from the Old Testament to support his assertion, that the gifts that Jesus gave are part of the design of the author of that unity. In examining the terms which Paul used in their context, how these gifts are defined will reveal aspects of ecclesiology that, when neglected, put the vitality of the body at risk. At risk of what? For the answer we need only look at what the result is supposed to be and imagine the church that does not exhibit such characteristics.

## **Contextual Analysis**

### *Historical Context*

Understanding the place in history of the epistle to the Ephesians may add to our understanding of what Paul has written in this particular segment of scripture. Ephesus was the provincial capital of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor, and as such was a wealthy city. It was strategically located on the major road to Rome and was the gateway to the east and Asia proper.<sup>54</sup> It was a commercial as well as a religious center of that part

---

<sup>54</sup> David Arthur DeSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 714.

of the world, being a center of Greek, Roman, and Jewish religions. Ephesus maintained the title of *neokoros*, “temple warden,” of the imperial cult that worshiped the emperors of Rome. It was also the center for the worship of Artemis, the Eastern mother-goddess.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the city of Ephesus was home to a vital Jewish community who had gained respect and acquired permission from the Roman government to practice the cult religion to the extent that they were exempt from military service and allowed to contribute moneys to the support of the sacrificial system in Jerusalem.<sup>56</sup>

It has been surmised by scholars that Ephesus was most likely the missionary center for Asia and it was from here that the missions into Laodicea, Colossae, Hierapolis, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Sardis, and other churches were launched. Although we do not know the size or origin of the church in Ephesus, Acts 19:1 reports that upon Paul’s arrival in Ephesus he found some disciples. It is unclear precisely how these believers were initially introduced to Jesus Christ, but it is here in Ephesus that Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos under their wing to instruct him more accurately in the way of God.

In Acts 19 we read of Paul’s activities in Ephesus. Paul ministered there for approximately three years, during which time he possibly wrote the letters to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Philemon.<sup>57</sup> It is here that the seven sons of Sceva were attacked and defeated by the demoniac who cried out, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?” (Acts 19:15). As a result of this incident and the many wonders that Paul performed, a revival erupted as the people renounced magic and

---

<sup>55</sup> DeSilva, 715.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 716.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

burned books and paraphernalia associated with it. Paul and the believers in Ephesus became the center of a violent controversy started by those who profited from the worship of Artemis. The silversmiths who crafted shrines for worship stirred up the people, and caused a near riot by exploiting the religious fervor of the crowds in order to protect their economic prosperity. Although the crowds were whipped into a frenzy, they were still subject to the reasoning of the city officials. In Ephesus, the strength of rhetorical reason converged with the power of religious fervor.

Although it is believed that Paul's letter to the Ephesians was meant to be circulated, we must recognize the culture of which the majority of Paul's readers were a part. Ephesus was populated by a sophisticated people with well developed intellectual and economic communities which required a level of reasoning and organization not necessarily demanded in more rural areas. Amid this cosmopolitan community was a thriving mystical theology which practiced magical arts. To these people came the message of Jesus Christ with the working of signs and wonders. This was a people that demanded sound theological argument and the workings of the power of the Holy Spirit in order to be converted. It was through the miracles of God that they came to renounce their own inferior magical powers. The story of Jesus' resurrection and ascension becomes the more powerful story, as Jesus liberates his people from the domination of the inferior powers of the evil one.

Issues in dating the writing of Ephesians are myriad and inextricably connected to questions of authorship. Although there are doubts as to Pauline authorship, there are none regarding the Pauline nature of the letter itself. It has been suggested, and is believed by many scholars, that Ephesians was written pseudonymously by some Pauline

disciple much later than the earlier established date of 61 C.E. However, those closest to the writing of the epistle, the early church fathers, never questioned its authenticity. In fact, Pauline authorship did not become a serious question until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Tübingen school.<sup>58</sup> Because of the letter to the Ephesians' similarity in organization and message to that of Colossians, it is believed to have been written about the same time from Rome during Paul's imprisonment. And, while Colossians addresses a particular congregation, it is held that Ephesians covers similar ground but is more generally addressed to all the churches of Asia Minor.

### *Literary Context*

#### Outline of the Book of Ephesians

- I. Greetings (1:1, 2)
- II. The Position of Believers (1:3-3:21)
  - A. Chosen and Sealed (1:3-23)
  - B. Saved by Grace (2:1-10)
  - C. United in One Body (2:11-22)
  - D. Equal in the Body (3:1-21)
- III. The Practice of Believers (4:1-6:9)
  - A. In Relation to Other Believers (4:1-6)
  - B. In Relation to Spiritual Gifts (4:7-16)
  - C. In Relation to the Former Life (4:17-32)
  - D. In Relation to Evil (5:1-17)
  - E. In Relation to the Holy Spirit (5:18-21)
  - F. In Relation to Home Life (5:22-6:4)
  - G. In Relation to Economic Responsibilities (6:5-9)
- IV. The Protection for Believers (6:10-20)
  - A. Against Whom? (6:10-12)
  - B. With What? (6:13-20)
- V. Conclusion (6:21-24)<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> The argument regarding the authorship of Ephesians continues. However, for the purposes of this paper, we will assume Pauline authorship based upon the scholarship of such notables as Klyne Snodgrass, Luke Timothy Johnson, Charles Hodge, and H. J. Cadbury, while acknowledging that reputable scholars, including Andrew Lincoln, Ralph Martin, and James D. G. Dunn, hold to the opposing viewpoint.

<sup>59</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2008), 1779.

Ephesians 4:1-16 introduces the subject of the believers' behavior in which Paul initially describes the attitude necessary to the one who has been called. However, before we can grasp the implications of his account in chapter 4, we must examine 3:20-21 immediately preceding it, recognizing that the chapter delineations are a later construct. The section regarding the position of believers concludes with a profound doxology: "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever, Amen." To proceed with the instructions in behavior and service without this understanding of our position in Christ, the reader could incorrectly assume that his/her actions are dependent upon his/her abilities and not upon the power of God. This foundational understanding of position is crucial to the pericope we are addressing, as well as essential in the building of the author's argument for the necessity of unity and maturity in the church.

In the section relating to the practice of believers, following the relation to spiritual gifts, are the subjects of the former life, evil, Holy Spirit, home-life, and the cultural context of the church. Paul's argument proceeds from the internal to the external to the surrounding community with which the church interacts. In other words, first the church must recognize her foundational principles; then, as individuals and as a community, the church works together to fulfill the call of God in gifting and ministry. Practice can only follow when position is established.

### **Formal Analysis**

Although this epistle is recognized by many scholars as a cyclical letter, its form does not strictly follow the accepted form of Greek epistolary literature. According to

Andrew T. Lincoln, among others, Ephesians can be evaluated as a piece of rhetorical writing in which the author uses both persuasion and exhortation to instruct and encourage the church to continue to be, and yet seek to become, that which Jesus Christ ascended to heaven in order to empower. By examining the book as a combination of both ceremonial and deliberative rhetorical styles one sees that Paul is not so much writing a letter as preaching a sermon on the church as she is and called to be. Using a rhetorical lens the reader sees four sections, *exordium*, 1:1-23, *narratio*, 2:1-3:21, *exhortatio*, 4:1-6:9, and *peroratio*, 6:10-24.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, Rudolph Schnackenburg, in examining all the possible and proposed definitions of the writing, reasons that Ephesians can be understood as being closest to 1 Peter as a catholic epistle, “a general writing to the whole of Christendom.”<sup>61</sup> Using an epistolary lens, Ephesians is divided into three sections: prescript, 1:1-2, body, 1:3-6:20, and postscript, 6:21-24, with the body containing an extended thanksgiving and a *paranaesis* or exhortation. Still other scholars, including Schille, consider Ephesians a piece of liturgical literature used in either baptism ceremonies or as a baptismal confession, because of its liturgical language, eulogy, doxology, and intercession.<sup>62</sup>

Of particular interest to scholars in determining the authorship and purpose of Ephesians is the difference between this epistle and others in the Pauline Corpus. Authorship is questioned because, among many reasons, there are no personal greetings included in Ephesians and it fails to address a specific issue within the Ephesian church.

---

<sup>60</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary.*, vol. 42, Ephesians (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), xlii.

<sup>61</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 23-4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*



However, there is within the academic community the suggestion that the book subtly addresses the issue of the influence of the Artemis cult upon the members. Markus Barth contends that there was at work in the Ephesian church the syncretistic practice of despising authority, specifically male authority. He suggests that “Artemis is a symbol of Women’s Liberation: fulfillment of motherhood without male assistance...woman’s glory at the price of the castration of males (which indeed was a prerequisite of her priests).”<sup>63</sup> Thus Paul is writing a corrective to that pagan thinking.

Although consideration of literary form may initially appear to contribute little to the understanding of Ephesians as an ecclesiological foundational piece of scripture, whether we recognize it as a profession or a didactic encouragement will affect our practice as leaders of congregations. For example, if one regards Ephesians as liturgical or baptismal confession, the result will be less power and more profession leading to a decreased impact upon how apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers lead the congregation. However, if Ephesians is regarded as an epistle with specific instruction regarding how leaders define themselves and their behavior toward their congregations, locally, and globally, then it becomes more intentional and focused in applying said instruction. In this instance the text will be examined as the latter, an encouraging instruction intended to shape the activities of both leadership and congregation in the Body of Christ.

### **Detailed Analysis**

This detailed analysis will focus on those portions of Ephesians 4:1-16 which deal directly with the subject at hand, that is, the relationship between pastor and congregation, shepherd and sheep, and how that affects our understanding of both roles in

---

<sup>63</sup> Markus Barth, "Traditions in Ephesians," *New Testament Studies* 30, no. 01 (1984): 16.

the church. Although coming to scripture with an open mind and desiring to read only what the author and the Holy Spirit intend, there is a specific application herein sought. The focus is therefore narrow. In taking apart this pericope the hope is to achieve a deeper understanding of the Apostle's instructions to the Ephesian church, in particular, and the global church, in general, regarding how leaders and congregation respond to each other and what they should legitimately expect from one another.

*Verses 1-2*

Paul begins this chapter with the words *παρακαλω ουν*, "I therefore entreat you." This "therefore" opens the door to the second part of the epistle to the Ephesians. The first three chapters are the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. They set the rationale for the remainder of the book, which is the practical outworking of Paul's profound doctrinal display. However, the reader must be careful not to put too deep a division between these two sections of the epistle. To attempt to separate theory from practice is a fool's errand. According to Ray Sherman Anderson, "If practice takes priority over theory, ministry tends to be based on pragmatic results rather than prophetic revelation."<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, David Martyn Lloyd-Jones argues, if doctrine takes priority over application, the danger is "forgetting that Christianity is, after all, a way of life and a way of living,"<sup>65</sup> and relying upon the principles rather than carrying them to their divine application.

Throughout the epistle, Paul refers back to doctrine while drawing his readers into living out in word and deed the doctrinal truths of Christianity. In Chapters One through

---

<sup>64</sup> Ray Sherman Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 14.

<sup>65</sup> David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Christian Unity: an Exposition of Ephesians 4:1 to 16* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 15.

Three Paul lays the foundation for his ecclesiological praxis, while in the remaining chapters he builds up the edifice of the church based upon that foundation. Paul's use of "therefore" takes the reader from the pinnacle of praise at the end of Chapter Three, where one may love to reside, and forces her/him to go on. Again Lloyd-Jones asserts, "The [person] who is interested in doctrine only, and the [person] who is interested in the mystical type of experience only, are alike neglecting this important word 'therefore.' This word safeguards us against all these possible dangers."<sup>66</sup>

In order for the church to apply the doctrines which Paul has so eloquently written, each believer must recognize the basic requirements of membership. In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul employs the phrase "in Christ" twelve times. For the apostle, the Christian has been given a position "in Christ" which then invites behavior in keeping with that position. In chapter two Paul describes where the Christian used to reside, "dead in trespasses and sins," but is now made alive and seated with God in heavenly places in Christ (2:6). Since he has established that the believer is in Christ and is therefore found worthy apart from any actions of his/her own, Paul now entreats these believers in chapter four to behave in a manner commensurate with that position.

The Apostle Paul begins with general principles in his description of how one should then live in light of the doctrines of Christ set forth in the first three chapters, and moves to the particular. Understanding the transition from the foundational principles to the practical outplaying of them, the reader is then asked to understand the general basis of behavior, walking in a worthy manner, or more simply, the kind of character that is the underpinning of all Christian practice. The word used in 4:1 and translated worthy, *αξιωσ*, carries the connotation of balance with the understanding that the walk be suitable

---

<sup>66</sup> Lloyd-Jones, 15, 6.

to the call. To walk in a manner worthy would therefore be to walk in a balanced way so that neither doctrine nor practice becomes inordinately more important, and thus out of balance.<sup>67</sup> This principle is essential in understanding the subsequent verses of the pericope. Such wisdom is the basis of all behavior in the church regardless of position, gifting, or ministry.

Paul then reiterates the doctrine of which he speaks, the *calling* of the Christian. The New Testament is replete with reference to the call. The word translated “church” is *εκκλησια*, the community of the called ones, “That you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:18).” Paul is exhorting the reader to behave in a manner that coincides with such a summons, that is, in balance with it, in a manner that does not contradict nor conflict with it. David Martyn Lloyd-Jones asserts, “The Christian life must never be thought of in terms of something that we have decided to take up. It is the exact opposite; it is something into which we have been ‘called.’”<sup>68</sup> The calling is at the heart of the Christian message, which Paul reiterates in the first three chapters of Ephesians. It is God who calls us. Our response then is to behave in a manner both fitting and complementary to that call, thus displaying our worth in Christ.

At this point the reader needs to understand the emphasis that Paul places on the Christian walk. *Παραπατεο*, the root word for “walk” in verse one, is literally translated “I walk around.” The connotation in this instance is to live one’s life. The life of the Christian is one of activity. S/he is not called to be saved so that s/he may spend eternity in heaven; one is called so that s/he may live a life, walk around, in a way that evidences

---

<sup>67</sup> Lloyd-Jones, 24.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 27.

the position to which one has been called by God himself. Christians are called to take what they learn and apply it in a manner of living. Their position is one with Christ in heavenly places, according to what Paul previously has written to the church in Ephesians 2:6. Therefore, Paul is calling the church to respond and act in accordance with such a position. Not only must they come to grasp this positional basis for their behavior, but they must come to understand that through this position in Christ comes the power to respond with worthy behavior reflecting worthy attitude.

The Apostle Paul is describing the church as a congregation of individuals. When they become part of the body of Christ, when they respond to the call, they do not divest themselves of their individuality; rather, they subject it to the will and purposes of God. They humbly recognize that it is “not about me.” They are called into a body of selfless beings who willingly agree to forbear with one another, in all humility, gentleness, and patience in love. That type of behavior depicts the manner in which they may walk worthily of the call. According to A. W. Tozer, “To be called to follow Christ is a high honor, higher indeed than any honor [people] can bestow upon each other.”<sup>69</sup>

#### *Verses 3-6*

In verse 3 Paul introduces the concept of unity within this group of individuals. As individuals they must be diligent, “...especially conscientious in discharging an obligation, be zealous/eager, take pains, make every effort, be conscientious,”<sup>70</sup> to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Remembering that Paul did not insert verse and chapter into his epistle; this phrase leads directly into verse 4 in which

---

<sup>69</sup> A. W. Tozer, *Man, the Dwelling Place of God* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1966), 4.

<sup>70</sup> Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 939.

the apostle introduces the controlling metaphor for the remainder of the pericope, that of the church as a body. Although throughout this letter Paul uses different terms and titles, he continues to refer to the church as a body and its people as members or bodily parts. In chapter four, this metaphor lends itself perfectly to Paul's treatise on unity as he speaks of one Spirit, one Lord, and one God and Father of all. Unity in the church must reflect the unity of God. Although he is triune, the church serves and worships one God.

The picture of divine unity is to be reflected in the church. While God fulfills three roles, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, He is one. God is over all, through all, and in all. Just as the church is "in Christ," so is He in them. Paul reminds us that Christianity is Christ. It is not a collection of beliefs or a creed to follow, but an active life that lives in each member and each member in him. New Testament scholar David Martyn Lloyd-Jones suggests, "The argument is, that as the Person is one, so the relationship must be one. There is only one Lord; therefore there is this essential unity in all who belong to Him and in all who are truly related to Him."<sup>71</sup> Just as the Godhead cannot be divided, so the church must not be divided nor attempt to divide itself. The church is formed not from a committee that authors its by-laws, but is "based on the adamantine platform of the Lord's own sovereign fiat and backed by His own paramount decree,"<sup>72</sup> suggest Bruce and Simpson.

#### *Verses 7-10*

In order to emphasize the difference between unity and uniformity, the Apostle Paul begins verse 7 with the particle,  $\delta\epsilon$ , "but," signifying contrast. He has explained how

---

<sup>71</sup> Lloyd-Jones, 97.

<sup>72</sup> F. F. Bruce and E. K. Simpson, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians: the English Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1965), 90.

the church is one in spirit, hope, faith, baptism, etc., but now turns to how this unity is walked out in diversity. The question is answered as to how this unity can be preserved, when each one is accorded grace individually, with a parenthetical reference to Psalm 68:18. In it Paul reassures the reader that the diversity within the body of Christ is owed to Christ's exaltation as the Son of God (vs. 13). Even though he has ascended on high, he is still the one who gathered his people. It is through his exaltation that he is empowered to fill all things. The apostle is reminding the church that the one who gave the diversity is the one who remains active and fills all things in it. Simpson states,

He seems suddenly to have shattered the unity by this 'every one of us.' But he has not done so, for we have not become merged into a solid and undifferentiated mass; we have not lost our identity. We are still our individual selves. We are being regarded again as single personalities and must think of ourselves as units in a whole. The amazing and astonishing fact is that, though we are all 'one,' we can nevertheless be addressed in the phrase 'every one of us.'<sup>73</sup>

As is typical of the Apostle Paul, he draws the reader into the continuity of the Old Testament with the New. The God whom he preaches to the Ephesian Church is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the God to whom David addressed Psalm 68. In referring to the role of Christ, descended, in comparison to his role now, ascended far above the heavens, one most certainly can conclude that Christ's exaltation is the source of the gifts which he has given to the church. Paul is also reminding the reader of the whole story of salvation. While he is emphasizing Christ's position in the heavenlies as being requisite to the gifting of the church, the apostle suggests the reader not forget what had to happen before that exaltation. Jesus humbled himself to be like humanity on the earth; he descended. According to Lloyd-Jones, "And it is because He who ascended and is in the position to give gifts first descended, and conquered all our enemies and captors,

---

<sup>73</sup> Bruce and Simpson, 145.

and led them in His triumphal train. He has earned the right to be the Head of the Church, and has all power. Thus He dispenses these gifts to His people in the Church according to the measure that He Himself has determined.”<sup>74</sup>

In looking at this reference to the Psalm of David, the Apostle Paul further expands upon the authority of Jesus’ exaltation. In writing Psalm 68, David is eulogizing the actions of a victorious king, who upon returning from battle brings with him captives who had once been in positions of authority: authority that sought to enslave the subjects of the victorious king. By comparing that king to Jesus Christ, Paul reiterates the authority of the exalted Christ and that which he has overcome. By his exaltation Jesus regains human authority that was relinquished at the fall. Humanity gave away all authority in the earth that had been entrusted to them by God through an act of disobedience leading to subjection to sin and death. Jesus Christ, by defeating both on the cross and through his resurrection, returns triumphant with that authority and immediately gives it back to the church through the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor and teacher. The authority is passed through these gifts but given to the church as a whole as each member recognizes the call and responsibility in the purposes of God in the earth. Those who were slaves have been called to active authority by the victorious Christ. These gifts he gives are representative of the authority redeemed and returned to those called into the body of believers.

#### *Verses 11-12*

In studying this list of five gifts the Lord has given to the church, the reader sees that He gave “some” gifts to people, suggesting that not all people will receive one of these five gifts. There is no basis from which to discern that every member of the church

---

<sup>74</sup> Lloyd-Jones, 166.



has been called into one of these five roles. Neither can one gather from the wording of the scripture that this list is the sum total of the leadership gifts that God has given. However, one may understand the purpose for which He gave these five—the maturity of the church.

In attempting to understand the different leadership designations Paul presents in this section, many scholars depend upon the omission of the Greek article, *τους*, translated “some,” before the word *διδασκαλούς*, teachers, thereby suggesting that the two roles, pastor and teacher, are one gift to the body, which fulfills two distinct functions.<sup>75</sup> While some will argue that the responsibilities of the pastor differ from those of the teacher as seen in particular recipients of this call, others will argue that the differences are related to personality idiosyncrasies rather than two specific roles in the church. Again, Simpson tells us,

The chief aim of the provision of shepherds, here only so designated in the New Testament, is to supply plentiful and wholesome pasturage for the flocks. Some follow Calvin and Owen in differentiating pastors from teachers; but the omission of the Greek article between the two substantives militates against this duplication of functions. The ministry has not only the duty of promoting an intelligent insight into the Christian verities, but also the task of winning over outsiders.<sup>76</sup>

Markus Barth goes so far as to translate the two terms as “teaching shepherds.”<sup>77</sup>

At this point it would seem appropriate to examine what the apostle means when he speaks of gifts. The purpose of Ephesians is to emphasize not only the unique position of Jesus Christ as exalted, but also the unique position of the believers in the world.

While this section of scripture does not specifically use the term *authority*, nevertheless,

---

<sup>75</sup> Bruce and Simpson, 96.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introd., Transl. and Commentary by Markus Barth* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), XXX.

it is a crucial concept in the understanding of Paul's ecclesiology. The gifts of leadership given by Jesus Christ are given through His authority as the exalted Redeemer/King. These gifts are given not as authorities in the church but as representatives of Christ's authority. As such, a key component of such authority must be humility, since that is representative of the actions of Christ in the world (Eph. 2:13-18).<sup>78</sup> Such authority demands humility, rather than precluding it. Just so, Paul establishes how authority is exercised in the church. Listing the first gift as that of apostle emphasizes this servant authority since the term *αποστολουσ* refers to people sent as delegates by one in authority.<sup>79</sup>

Not only are Christians unique in their connection to that exalted God/man Jesus, their identity and therefore purpose in the world is distinct from that of those who surround them. In describing the leadership in the church as gifts to the church, Paul identifies the difference between the leadership in the world and that in the church. While some scholars designate these gifts as offices, there seems to be no justification for using such a controlling term,<sup>80</sup> since the word *διακονια*, which the KJV translates "office" in two other places (Romans 11:13 and 1 Timothy 3:10), is best translated in verse 12 as "the work of service." It appears that the apostle, in using gift terminology, wishes to add to the authority a responsibility not only to the Lord but to the saints as well. Paul does not remove the authority of the position; rather, he reminds those in the church that

---

<sup>78</sup> See also Phil. 2:5, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant...humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death."

<sup>79</sup> Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, 122.

<sup>80</sup> Lloyd-Jones, 67.

leadership is a gift and not a curse to those in the congregation. Leadership is not something that is sought and earned but something that is bestowed upon the person as well as given to the body. The Greek word in this case is *δοματα*, which simply means good gifts or presents. Unlike the other lists of spiritual gifts Paul enumerates in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, wherein he employs the word *χαρισματα*, or grace endowments, the connotation in Ephesians is that the gift is a permanent one and not necessarily for certain circumstances or people only.

To describe these gifts as simply functions or roles taken on by the person would not be a reliable translation, since the gift appears to be *the person* as well as *the function*. It goes beyond function or responsibility to the very identity of the gift. In the NASB, the translators inserted the word “as” before each of the four gifts. In the Greek text, there is no conjunction between the noun in the accusative case and the definite article which in this instance is translated “some,” with reference to the *τουσ μεν...τουσ δε* construction. It therefore renders the translation: “he gave some...and others,” referring to the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor and teacher.<sup>81</sup> Though one may not establish and develop a doctrine of gifts as identities, there is room for questioning whether the definitions of gifts in this case can be strictly limited to functionality.

Paul’s emphasis on the exaltation of Christ, indeed his use of the title Christ, rather than Christ Jesus, could imply that he is attempting to establish the divine authority with which these five gifts are placed within the church. However, to use the word “office” to describe these human gifts places perhaps too great an organizational bent to the passage. Perhaps what the reader is seeing here is Paul attempting to assist both

---

<sup>81</sup> Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, 686.

Ephesian Hebrew and Greek Christians into a transition from their legalistic religious and civic traditions to one of freedom in Christ Jesus. He emphasizes the authority aspect of leadership while at the same time softening it with the love of the Lord in which the leaders serve and are gifts to the congregation rather than officials who use and abuse those under their authority. The apostle is creating a new manner of leading from the perspective of those who are being led, and at the same time reminding those leaders that they have been gifted to the body and not unto themselves.

Some scholars have come to the conclusion that of these five gifts, some were temporary and no longer function, while others are permanent and still exist within the church. Other scholars dispute such a conclusion with the question, “When did Jesus decide to renege on some of His gifts to the church?” While scripture does not support the temporary nature of the gifts of apostle and prophet, an argument can be made in support of the former conclusion. It is not the purpose here to enter into the dispute, but merely to point out its existence.<sup>82</sup> Since the focus here is on the gift of pastor, the concentration will remain there.

The word here translated pastor is literally “shepherds,” *ποιμενασ*. Such a term for the leader of a group of people was common in both Hebrew tradition and the local Greco-Roman tradition, of which the Church of Ephesus would have had a majority of members. Theologian Charles Hodge has said, “The shepherd shepherds his flock, keeps

---

<sup>82</sup> This discussion is addressed, or referred to, in nearly all major commentaries on Ephesians. For example, John R. W. Stott, *The Message Of Ephesians*. (I. V. P., 1984); Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991); and Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002); represent the opinion that the gifts of apostle and prophet are legitimately active in the contemporary church, while David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Christian Unity: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1 to 16* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981); Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010); and Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); hold to the opinion that these two gifts were temporary and no longer function in the church.

the sheep in order, directs them where to go and where to feed, brings them back to the fold, looks after their safety and guards them against enemies liable to attack them...The teacher gives instruction in doctrine, in truth.”<sup>83</sup> One finds the two generally operational in the pastoral office of the local church. Hodge continues, “The [person] who teaches duty and the grounds of it, does at the same time admonish and exhort...the two functions could not be kept separate...The absence of the article before *τους* proves that the apostle intended to designate the same persons as at once pastors and teachers.”<sup>84</sup>

Verses eleven and twelve are each phrases of a single sentence. Jesus gave these gifts for a specific purpose which is outlined in verse twelve, the dependent clause. These five mentioned gifts are for the express purpose of equipping the saints for the work of service. The service is the building up of the body of Christ. *Καταρτισμος*, “indicates ‘equipment’ or ‘co-adjustment.’ The verb, *καταρτιζειν*, is used in Hebrews 10:5 of the body prepared for Christ’s incarnation; but it can also be employed as the setting of a fractured limb, the repairing of a dislocation or rent, as in Matt. 4:21. Perhaps ‘coordination’ would best represent its scope here,”<sup>85</sup> says Hodge. As such, the equipper is coordinating those gifts which are manifest within the community of believers to best meet the needs of the ministry. The root word is used elsewhere in the New Testament to variously describe mending the nets, *καταρτιζοντασ τα δικτυα* (Mark 1:19), and a student fully trained, *κατηρτισμενοσ δε πασ* (Luke 6:40). Perhaps the most apropos example of New Testament usage of the verb is found in Hebrews 13:21. The author

---

<sup>83</sup> Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Old Tappan, NJ: F.H. Revell, 1980), 193.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 226.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 93.

exhorts his readers: “May the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip [καταρτισσαι] you in every good thing to do His will.”

The remainder of the pericope, verses 13-16, describes the result of the five gifts properly functioning in the church. Some scholars divide this statement into three general purposes: 1) for the perfecting of the saints; 2) for the work of the ministry; and 3) for the edifying of the body of Christ. While the first “for” is the preposition *προς*, the second and third use the preposition *εις*.<sup>86</sup> The difference, though not reflected in the Authorized Version is evident in the NASB.

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (KJV)

For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (NASB)

Notice that the King James Version (KJV) puts a comma between the first clause and the second, giving them equal strength in the sentence while the New American Standard Bible (NASB) omits that comma, making the second clause dependent upon the first, changing the meaning of the sentence. (There are no commas in the Greek.) In the former version, the five gifts have been given to perfect the saints, do the work of ministry, and edify the body of Christ. In the latter version, those gifts are given to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry, and to build up the body. While both can be defended, the second version has become more depended on, based upon that differing

---

<sup>86</sup> Kurt Aland and Bruce M. Metzger, *The Greek New Testament* (London (101 Queen Victoria St., E.C.4): United Bible Societies.), 663.

preposition in the second and third clauses of the sentence.<sup>87</sup> In addition, the reader will notice that in the first and third clauses the author used the participial form of the verbs (equipping, building), while in the second clause used a nominative singular noun with descriptive genitive singular, the work of the ministry [*εργον διακονιας*], giving further weight to the difference in translations between the NASB and KJV. For the purposes of this project, the student will rely upon the scholars who translated the NASB and accept the construction that recognizes the five gifts as existing to put things in order in the church so that the saints are prepared to do the work of the ministry.<sup>88</sup>

The word herein translated “equipping” in the NASB and “perfecting” in the KJV is *καταρτισμων*. While Hodge leans toward perfecting, or rendering complete, as does Lloyd-Jones, Simpson prefers coordination. Danker and Bauer, however, describe it as a medical term used in the setting of a fracture, but specifically state “equipping for something.”<sup>89</sup> The translation of this word is foundational for the previous study of the meaning of the prepositions. If the word “equipping” is chosen then it makes much more sense to lose the comma before *εισ*, since there must be something for which the saints are being equipped. The imagery is that of constructing a building. Jesus did not leave the church to fumble through on its own, but has provided the raw materials and plans by

---

<sup>87</sup> The difference in meaning between the two prepositions is dependent upon the scholar and his/her interpretation of the meaning given in both scripture and extra-biblical Greek writing of that day. According to Danker the preposition *προς*, in this case leans toward a meaning “of goal (*aiming*) at or (*striving*) toward with conscious purpose *for*” (Danker, 874). At the same time the preposition *εισ* in both instances can best be understood as signifying “extension involving a goal or place, into, in toward, to.” (ibid) Hence the use of “to” rather than “for” in the final clause in the NASB version. One can spend days researching a preposition in Greek and still not plumb the depths of the possible constructions.

<sup>88</sup> It can be argued that the translation of the Authorized version was colored by the *zeitgeist* of the church at that time toward the strict authority of the leadership within the church. The translation was originally commissioned by King James in opposition to the most popular English version, the Geneva Bible, because he felt that the latter’s marginal notes encouraged disobedience to established royalty.

<sup>89</sup> Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, 526.

which the leadership may assist the members in completing the task of construction through the operation of the Holy Spirit at work in the body of Christ. “A spiritual house must grow, not by astuteness of tactics, but by spiritual agencies and methods,”<sup>90</sup> according to Simpson.

Having dealt with the issues involved in the translation of the key terms in this portion of the pericope, the reader must move on to what the purpose of this gifting ultimately is. What are the parts each play, in the business of the church? For the sake of this argument, one may draw a line between these five gifts and the saints to whom they are a gift from the Lord. If one accepts that the gifts are given in order to prepare and set right the saints to do the work of the ministry, then one may read on and see the result of that equipping.

#### *Verses 13-14*

In verse thirteen, Paul tells the reader how long this relationship will last. “Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature [person], to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” It is in this one word *until* that we get a glimpse into Paul’s eschatology. Who would argue that this has yet happened?<sup>91</sup> The sentence requires that *all*, not just some, attain to such a lofty stature. Paul does not argue that the unity of the church is an eschatological event, quite the contrary. He tells the church that unity in diversity is a present condition to which the church is called. Klyne Snodgrass suggests, “Unity is not some goal for the

---

<sup>90</sup> Bruce and Simpson, 94.

<sup>91</sup> Paul describes such a time in 1Cor. 13:10. He refers to “when the perfect comes,” or when all is complete.



eschaton; it is to be lived now.”<sup>92</sup> However, the goal of that unity is the perfection of the church when the condition previously described will mark the completion of the need for the church. Paul goes on to describe how this situation will look. Such equipping leads to maturity in understanding and discernment. It would seem that the pastoral responsibility is to prepare the church not only to understand sound doctrine, but to stand firm and unshakable upon it.

The question can thus be asked, “Is the church moving away from childish behavior and into a position of wisely following the guidance of the word of God and the Holy Spirit, or does it continue to be swayed by every pretty and enticing invitation proffered by crafty and evil people?” Paul is aware how easily believers can stray from their first love.<sup>93</sup> He is also aware of and warns against false prophets in the church in Acts 20:30, and in Colossians speaks out against other religious systems as inferior to that of the Christian church. It would appear that Paul sees the gifts of Christ as the bulwark of defense in the church against such pitfalls.

While Paul is describing the result of leaders not fulfilling their call to the church as gifts of Jesus, he points out that their failings will lead to manipulation by evil people. Perhaps the apostle is here instructing in the power of the gift that Jesus gives. Used to his glory and for the good of the church and its mission in the world, it produces mature believers working together to promote unity of faith, knowledge of Jesus Christ, and complete growth into a likeness comparable to the Lord himself. However, that same power, when in unscrupulous hands, results in a church of adolescent thinkers who can be

---

<sup>92</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 169.

<sup>93</sup> The Ephesian church was scolded by Jesus in Rev. 2:4 for just such a failing.

manipulated by clever leadership into following all manner of doctrines that glorify humanity.

The differences between being ‘child-like’ in faith and ‘childish’ in faith are enormous. Paul recognizes such, as should his reader.<sup>94</sup> In this section of scripture, both the leader and the follower are indicted for the same crime. The mature church who continues to seek the Lord and do his bidding in the world is the responsibility of the entire body, whether they understand themselves to be leaders or followers. The apostle exhorts both leaders and members to speak the truth and hear the truth so that they are capable of recognizing the consequences of neglecting the powerful and glorious call to which they have been summoned and gifted by an exalted Christ.

In the church today, there are those who believe that theology is the work of the academic and that the learning of sound doctrine is the work of the pastor, not the congregation. On the contrary, in Ephesians, the Apostle Paul is instructing and exhorting the entire church to do the work of studying, understanding, and relying upon sound doctrine. The shepherd is responsible to teach and prepare the people in doctrine, but the people themselves are responsible to be teachable. In the words of David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, “Let no one think that this subject is only appropriate for a theological seminary or for a gathering of ministers, and that it has nothing to do with members of the Church who are not called into any ministerial office.”<sup>95</sup> The shepherd has not been given to the church to secure the members eternal reward and do theology and doctrine for them. S/he

---

<sup>94</sup> See Luke 18:16. Child-like faith is to be admired, in that it is simple and completely dependent upon the Father, as Jesus describes in Luke 18:16. Childish faith is immature and petulant and easily swayed by appealing to the native self; it is the indulgent, uneducated, and undisciplined mindset of the child.

<sup>95</sup> Lloyd-Jones, 201.

has been given to the church to equip them to do the work, to prepare them to understand the doctrines, and to assist them in learning what they need to know to edify, build up the Church.

The Apostle Paul sets the goal for the operation of the five mentioned gifts; when “all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature [person] to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” If the reader has a difficult time judging such a situation, s/he goes on to read what the church will *not* look like, in case there is confusion. If we can look at any member of the church and not see Jesus at his fullest, then we have not arrived at the point where these gifts are no longer needed. If we can look at the church and find any evidence of immature confusion regarding doctrine, brought about by arrogant behavior, then again, we have not arrived at God’s divine purpose for these gifts.

*Verses 15-16*

Paul then supplies the remedy for the situation he describes in verse 14. Metaphorically, he provides the reader with a sandwich in which the ‘meat’ is encased in love. He begins by admonishing leadership and congregation alike to “speak the truth in love.” In this situation, speaking the truth in love has a broader meaning that encompasses the way in which one lives one’s life. Truth and love are balancing. Mature Christians hold truth and love in tension between loyalty to what is right and mercy and grace through which Christ operates. In C. Leslie Mitton’s words, “It includes doing the truth as well as speaking it.”<sup>96</sup> As discussed earlier, “in Christ” is our position. However, “growing up into Christ in every way” is our assignment. In other words, the means is

---

<sup>96</sup> C. Leslie Mitton, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 156.

living the truth in love; the end is growing up in every way into him who is the head. It is by this action that the members of the body will grow up in all aspects into the head, which is Christ.

The coupling of truth and love in this context reminds the reader that one without the other is a dangerous proposition. Love without truth can create a downward spiral of maudlin sentiment. However, truth without love is equally destructive in that it can easily become legalistic, judgmental, and self-righteous. Truth can be a weapon that destroys the strength of the previously described clever and manipulative people or, if devoid of love, can just as easily destroy the tender heart of the child-like follower.

Previously Paul uses the metaphor of the edifice of the church; in verse 16 he returns to a more organic image by using the human body as the ultimate representation of the church with its many members. In this metaphor of the body, Paul puts Jesus Christ in his position as the head. This word “head,” *κεφαλη*, in this case can be viewed from at least two perspectives. Scholars dispute the exact meaning. Some believe that it refers to the superior rank of Jesus in relation to the members of his body, or church.<sup>97</sup> In 1:10, the first use of a form of *κεφαλη* in the book of Ephesians, *ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι*, is translated in the NASB as “summing up of all things.” It can be literally translated that all things are brought together in Christ,<sup>98</sup> thus suggesting his superior position. In addition, in 1:22, Paul refers to Jesus as “head [*κεφαλη*] over all things,” not just the church. Establishing Jesus as the one holding superior rank over all the earth by the order of God, Paul emphasizes his position as exalted at the right hand of God in the heavenlies.

---

<sup>97</sup> Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, 542.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 65.

On the other hand, the use of the word *κεφαλη* can also be interpreted as source or origin, in that it is from Christ that each member of the body derives her/his abilities and functions. “Christian life is not one lived by the unrestrained use of human resources. It depends on Christ, who supplies what his people need for their spiritual growth,”<sup>99</sup> states Leon Morris. Although there are definite differences between these two interpretations, they need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, Christ as the superior in rank, head of the church, is, without doubt, the source from which each Christian gains what s/he needs to fulfill the call upon the individual life. Andrew T. Lincoln avers,

Implicit was the idea that he was head over the church. Now this relationship is made explicit, as the one toward whom believers grow is identified as Christ the head...the church as body is seen as receiving its life from Christ and Christ’s headship is understood in the sense of both rule and origin...As the one who has been exalted to sovereign rule over all things, Christ is in the position and has the power to supply his church with the leadership, the life, and the love that are the requisites for its growth.<sup>100</sup>

Paul goes on to remind the church that she is made up of individuals and individual wills without which the whole cannot function properly or to its optimum capacity. The call of leadership to equip and connect does not remove from the congregation the responsibility to practice what each member has been gifted and called to fulfill. The congregation cannot depend upon leadership to be healthy and function as it has been called and gifted by Jesus Christ. Each individual is designed to fulfill a specific need in the body. Whether it is to stabilize, articulate, or feed, each member,

---

<sup>99</sup> Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 131.

<sup>100</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary.*, vol. 42, *Ephesians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), 262.

leader, and follower must be contributing that for which s/he was called or the body fails in purpose and identity. The body is not a body without all members doing their parts.

Paul describes an organism that is constructed of many diverse parts, not a community of identical members. Unity does not equal uniformity; in fact, quite the contrary, unity refers to an agreement in purpose and principle while recognizing and valuing diversity of design. It is within this diversity that the maturity of the church will be established as s/he does the work of ministering to each other and to the world. Paul's description refers to the church universal and the church local. He is building a rationale that not only allows for but promises a diversity of call and assignment in the world for individual congregations.

Paul, in using two participles, *συναρμολογουμενον*, being joined together so as to form a coherent entity,<sup>101</sup> and *συμβιβαστομενον*, being brought together into a unit or uniting,<sup>102</sup> suggests that this co-ordination of activity is an ongoing process. Lincoln states "Taken together, [their use] underline[s] forcefully that for unified growth of the body its members have to be involved in a process of continual mutual adjustment."<sup>103</sup> This understanding also emphasizes that each member, though distinct and unique, cannot function outside of this mutually beneficial and dependent community.

This fitting and holding together is accomplished by each joint contributing the unique offering for which it is designed. This word, *αφη*, is translated "joint" in the NASB and KJV, and "supporting ligament" in the NIV. Danker states that according to

---

<sup>101</sup> Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, 966.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 956.

<sup>103</sup> Lincoln, 262.

Philo, the term is a medical one describing “ligament, literally joint, connection.”<sup>104</sup> According to Lincoln, “Each ligament is seen as a means of support or supply for the other parts of the body...the writer pictures the ligaments functioning to provide the connections between the various parts and thereby mediating life and energizing power throughout the body.”<sup>105</sup> It is only as each member, leader and congregant, supplies what s/he has been given through the head, Christ, that the body is able to grow to a stature commensurate with the head. Without this cooperation and coordination the body will be out of balance and fail to grow and thrive. Morris suggests, “A baby’s head is much larger in proportion to its body than is that of a grown-up person. Growing up may thus be seen as bringing the body into the right proportion with the head.”<sup>106</sup>

Some scholars contend that the verbal construction here supports the notion that *αφη* refers directly to the leadership gifts that Christ gave. Simpson explains, “Unobstructed conduits must subsist between the reservoir of supply and its ramifying channels of distribution, and the circulation of life needs to be equably apportioned in order that the organism may exhibit a consonant whole.”<sup>107</sup> In this understanding, then, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers, are the “joints” that supply, coordinate, and connect the members to each other. Thereby, the leadership supplies what is needed for the proper connection of the members to the head and each other.

The pericope concludes with the final words of verse 16, “in love,” and thus Paul closes his sandwich. While it is the nature of each member to do what s/he has been

---

<sup>104</sup> Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, 155.

<sup>105</sup> Lincoln, 263.

<sup>106</sup> Morris, 131.

<sup>107</sup> Bruce and Simpson, 101.

designed to do, it is within the prerogative of each member to do so willingly, begrudgingly, or not at all. In this way the metaphor of the body must, as all metaphors eventually do, break down. While the human body has been designed in such a way as to operate without volition, the members of the church have such volition. Each member has the will either to commit to articulate with one purpose or refuse. These two words, “in love,” therefore, contain the final and most important instruction in this section of scripture. “The development can only be successful to the extent in which all parts, the leaders and the rest of the faithful, peaceably work together in love,”<sup>108</sup> according to Schnackenburg. The volition of the member has to be one of love, or the function is pointless. It is impossible to operate in Christ without operating in love. For, after all, God is love according to scripture. The previous admonition to be “in Christ” is fulfilled by the final, “in love.” As one becomes more deeply established in Christ it must follow that one’s behavior of necessity is activated by love.

### **Synthesis**

The book of Ephesians has been the object of disagreement regarding audience, authorship, and form, but the conclusion that it contains an important understanding of Pauline ecclesiology is not in dispute. The Apostle constructs a Christian doctrine of salvation, the power and purpose of the passion, the cross, and the resurrection, but goes on to answer the “How should we then live” question for those in the church. While some use the fivefold (5) gifts of Jesus as a basis for their church polity, the author means these gifts to answer much deeper and more powerful questions within the doctrines and practices of the Body of Christ.

---

<sup>108</sup> Schnackenburg, 190.



Specifically in 4:1-16, Paul provides a model from which the church may construct the relationship between those called as leaders and those called as followers by making each and all responsible for the place the church fills in the earth. By defining who does the work—everyone—Paul expands the readers’ understanding of ministry beyond that of the head person who does the work, with a congregation that supports her/him in it. Rather, Paul lets the reader see that each member fulfills the purpose for which s/he was designed in order for the church to function as a healthy, productive, and interactive whole. The controlling metaphor of this scripture is that of a body in which many members, though diverse, cooperate to fulfill and execute the purpose and design of God, by submitting their wills to that of the Father, through the gifts bestowed upon the Body by Jesus Christ.

### **Reflection**

The purpose of examining this pericope of scripture in detail has been to seek to understand the horizons of both the past and the present for the church of Jesus Christ. Specifically, the desire is to determine what light Paul’s ecclesiology in Eph. 4:1-16 can shed upon the problem of burnout and stress-out in the ministry for pastors of less populous congregations. The hermeneutic posture we have attempted to maintain is that of discernment and inquiry.

In examining Ephesians, this student finds no reference to misplaced or exaggerated expectations regarding the activities or lifestyles of either leadership or congregation in the church. Rather, what is found is a balanced relationship between doctrine and praxis for every member, regardless of role or function. Neither do we see any evidence of limited activity on the part of those members of the body who are not

recognized as possessing either gifts or roles of leadership. What Paul depicts is an efficient and active life of the body in which all members fulfill their unique and divine destinies as units of a well-functioning whole, leaving none standing on the sidelines.

Specifically this student has come to the conclusion that the role of pastor has a distinct function that does not include doing the work of the ministry, but rather equipping and training the members to fulfill the ministries for which they are designed. There is no evidence in this scripture, or in any scripture, that those leadership gifts to the body should jeopardize health in order to complete the assignments that the Lord has given to the church as a whole. Based upon these conclusions, it is the purpose of this student to therefore examine how the leadership roles are being carried out in the body of Christ, in order to compare them to the model here presented by the Apostle Paul, with the purpose in mind of constructing a catechism through which both leadership and congregation may come to learn how God intended the church to function. Ultimately, then, the church will be moving toward that mature, efficient, and interactive body that builds itself up in the love of Jesus Christ.

#### SECTION 4: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold: one, to suggest that both pastors and congregants have come to an erroneous conclusion regarding their respective roles in the Church; and two, to provide a catechism to implement a system of re-education. Writing a catechism in the classic sense would have no real effect upon either the congregation or the pastor, for two distinct reasons. Firstly, what pastor has time to read and implement yet another “change your church” instruction manual? Secondly, what congregant wants to read a dry academic question-and-answer paper that condemns his or her behavior? In creative contrast, this catechism takes a form that will engage the interest and at the same time encourage the reader to submit his or her thinking to the transformation of the living, breathing Word of God.

According to Merriam-Webster, a parable is “a usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle.”<sup>109</sup> Jesus taught using parables. His parables brought the Word of God into his listeners’ frame of reference in such a way that their thinking was changed; their minds were transformed. The church needs a modern-day parable that enters the readers’ frame of mind and transforms their thinking. *Carry the Young Lambs* is a parable that attempts to accomplish this. It is written in first person by a member of a congregation in the midst of the devastating consequences of their pastor’s burnout. This parable meets the definition of a catechism, though loosely constructed, in that it poses questions, answers them, and supports those answers with applicable scripture.

It is the hope of this student that *Carry the Young Lambs* offers the members of congregations a palatable and enjoyable foray into the world of an experiential catechism.

---

<sup>109</sup> *The Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1997), 841.

Since it is written from the perspective of a “pew-sitter,” it is not intended to become a method for the leadership to change the way the church does business. Rather, it offers the congregation an opportunity to become the church that Paul describes in Ephesians 4:1-16. It is not a fix for deficient behavior; neither is it an excuse for pastors who suffer from control issues. It provides the reader with a possibility. Where that possibility leads the congregation depends upon what the Lord speaks and who decides to hear and be transformed.

Romans 12:2 calls each Christian to examine what s/he thinks in terms of how diligently it lines up with the Word of God: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Dave, the protagonist in *Carry the Young Lambs*, examines his thinking in light of scripture and discovers that he has been wrong. It is the desire of this student that the reader will likewise recognize the error in the thinking that is prevalent in the Western Church that has resulted in the demise of thousands of hardworking pastors, and devastation of their congregations. Perhaps then the “pew-sitters” in the church will arise and, with renewed commitment to the call of God, promote scriptural re-education in their congregations.

## SECTION 5: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

21260 Black Lane  
Cottonwood, CA 96022  
530.526.8487  
lauriemulkey@ymail.com

December 1, 2011

To: Publishing House

Greetings,

In a span of less than 30 days, over 1,000 pastors left the ministry due to burnout, conflict, or moral failure. Commissioning a younger person into ministry is like sending your loved ones out to walk across the freeway during rush-hour traffic. Why have we allowed this condition to continue to exist, year after year? Have we simply given up hope and decided that being a pastor is right up there with underwater demolition in personal risk? *Carry the Young Lambs* tells the story of just one of those pastors. In classic parable form, "There once was a man..." Dave relates in his journal the valleys and hilltops the Lord leads him through as dreams and scripture bring understanding to the question of why and how his pastor managed to become an alcoholic while diligently serving his congregation. Dave's adventure engages our imagination as he attempts to share his newfound understanding of church with his not-so-willing fellow congregants.

The epidemic of pastoral burnout in the Western Church has led to a cottage industry that treats burnout with rehab, counseling, and appreciation. As a pastoral counselor, I have dealt with both sides of the burnout phenomenon: pastors and their congregants. The first response to pastors who quit due to emotional, physical, or spiritual exhaustion and failure is to chalk it up to personal weakness or sin. On the contrary, most cases can be traced to the effects of too much stress due to overwork. While personal weakness needs to be addressed, a more pertinent concern must be the conditions under which so many pastors labor.

*Carry the Young Lambs* is a unique approach to an age-old problem. Rather than treating the burnout, preparing for the burnout, or appreciating those on the road to burnout, based upon Ephesians 4:1-16, this parable builds on the metaphor of the shepherd and the sheep to more carefully examine how the church operates and suggests the need for reeducation.

This 50,000-word parable lends itself to use in churches who desire to base their congregational life upon the Word of God rather than traditional models. Though we do not attempt to build a one-size-fits-all model for church structure, we offer the reader the opportunity to partner their imaginations with the creative Lord to design a life-giving church. May I send you a copy of the proposal through email or regular mail? I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Laurie J. Mulkey

## BOOK PROPOSAL—FICTION

**Title:**        *Carry the Young Lambs*

**Author:**     Laurie J. Mulkey  
                  3075 Carson Dr.  
                  Redding, CA 96003  
                  (530)526-8487  
                  lauriemulkey@ymail.com

**Hook:**        *If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, shall make myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream.* So begins Dave's journey as God teaches him, in his dreams and through the scripture, that church was never designed to be what he has experienced. We follow Dave as he records his journey from uninvolved pew sitter to active worker in the ministry. What Dave finds is that things are never as simple as they first appear, nor as easy. His broken heart is the open doorway into the beautiful world of hearing God speak and following His lead. Through the image of the shepherd and the sheep, Dave finds a way to rescue his church in the face of his own pastor's demise.

**Purpose:**

- Examine unrealistic expectations on the part of both leadership and membership in the church
- Re-educate the church regarding the definition of roles of pastors and members according to Eph. 4:1-16
- Examine the shepherd/sheep metaphor in light of contemporary concepts of pastor/member relationships

### **Promotion and Marketing:**

- Author is exploring marketing the manuscript through the bookstore of Bethel Church, Redding, CA, with a weekly attendance in excess of 4,000 people.
- Through Christian social-networking sites and personal church affiliations
- Seminary coursework that I will teach.
- Denominational Superintendants

### **Competition:**

- *Mad Church Disease: Overcoming the Burnout Epidemic*, Anne Jackson, Zondervan Publishing, 2009

Ms. Jackson's audience includes pastors and other ministers as she examines the burnout epidemic among pastoral ministers. She then offers information on assessing the risk factors in individual ministries and supplies methods to restore health and function in those who have become subject to burnout. Although extremely valuable for the pastor in crisis and those contemplating entry into the career, this book offers little to no suggestions for the church or pastors and their families to adjust the unrealistic and unbiblical expectations placed upon church leaders.

- *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion*, Wayne Cordeiro, Bethany House Publishers, 2009.

Wayne Cordeiro writes his own story of burnout and uses it to assist pastors and other ministers threatened with burnout to reassess their spiritual lives and restore their joy in ministry. Again, this book offers valuable information to the pastor who is beginning to suffer the effects of unrealistic expectations and is a must for

the pastoral library. However, Cordeiro never addresses the causes of such expectations nor suggests that a closer alliance with the design of God offered in Scripture may mitigate such problems.

- *A Soul Under Siege*, Welton C. Gaddy, PhD., Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1991.

Dr. Gaddy shares his own journey of deep depression stemming from compassion fatigue. He illustrates that there is life in the ministry after burnout for those ministers suffering at any stage of the condition. Dr. Gaddy powerfully describes and offers help for the pastor suffering from compassion fatigue. He does not suggest that the problem may lie in the manner in which the church operates.

**Uniqueness:**

*Carry the Young Lambs* is a parable of approximately 50,000 words that deals with a fictional situation in which a congregation member must come to grips with the burnout of his beloved pastor. In that process, he gains an understanding of his own complicity in the pastor's fall and the failure of the church to correctly interpret scripture relating to the shepherd/sheep relationship outlined in Eph. 4, in which the pastor is the equipper and the members do the work of the ministry. To my knowledge, defining the responsibilities of shepherds and sheep has not been explored as a mitigating factor in pastoral burnout. Rather than offer a method whereby those in ministry can prepare for the inevitable burnout or treat it after it is manifest, *Carry the Young Lambs* attempts to re-educate ministers and members alike to follow biblical instruction in how all people in the church cooperate to do the work of the ministry, thereby removing burnout as a result of overwork from the horizon of the pastoral minister. In addition, *Carry the Young*



*Lambs* addresses the systemic dysfunctions of the church that contribute to the epidemic nature of pastoral burnout.

**Endorsements** : (pending)

- Pastor Steve Backlund, (published by Destiny Image)
- Sarah Sumner, PhD. (published by Tyndale and InterVarsity Press)

**Intended Readers**:

Primary Audience

- Pastors who are concerned with too much stress in the ministry
- Leaders in congregations hoping to avoid the fallout of a pastor who burns out
- Church members desiring to restructure their congregations according to the biblical model in Eph. 4:1-16

Secondary Audience

- Those interested in Christian fiction

**Author Bio**: Laurie Mulkey is a DMin Candidate in Leadership and Spiritual Formation at George Fox Evangelical Seminary. She received her MDiv from Tozer Theological Seminary at Simpson University in Redding, CA in Pastoral Counseling, and her BS from Eastern Oregon University in English and Anthropology. Laurie worked for several years as a pastoral counselor at Bethel Church in Redding. Prior to receiving her Master of Divinity degree, Laurie worked as a lay counselor and board member for several small rural churches. During her years as a church member and counselor, she worked with several pastors and their families who suffered from burnout; she has been

privity to the personal and corporate agony it visits upon all members of the congregation. Through seeking relief and rehabilitation for suffering pastors, she was led to explore the notion that burnout is more a result of a misunderstanding of biblical church structure than personal failings. Laurie sincerely believes that what is needed is not behavioral adjustment, but a re-education of the entire church in order to more clearly follow the metaphor of the shepherd and the sheep. It is because of Laurie's deep love and appreciation for those pastors who are gifted to the Church by Jesus Christ that she desires to see them prosper and be blessed in that gifting. Laurie's father-in-law raised sheep all his life, and his love for and care of his flock gave Laurie the picture from which her understanding of the Good Shepherd was born.

## SECTION 6: POSTSCRIPT

Throughout my life as a member of the Body of Christ, I have encountered and been drawn to pastors of small churches. Thanks to the itchy feet of my beloved cowboy husband, we traveled the cattle-producing portions of the Northwest and attended several small churches served by pastors who were “tentmakers.” We invariably became the unpaid support staff for the pastor and his/her spouse. Throughout the ups and downs of their careers we learned that being a pastor of a small congregation, from 10 to 100 adults, was fraught with personal dangers for those pastors and their families. As I became more active in pastoral counseling, I learned that such is the case throughout the Western Church.

During my educational experience in two of the best seminaries in the Western U.S. (my opinion), I came to the conclusion that we do not need more training in leadership, but rather we need to “re-learn” how we do church. In response I set out to write a catechism that would teach us the God-designed structure the church has neglected in recent decades in favor of a CEO-based model. Although I originally pictured myself writing it along the classic guidelines of The Shorter Westminster Catechism with questions, answers, proof texting, the Lord soon steered my little boat in another direction.

I have come to the conclusion, through my work as a pastoral counselor, that experience is our best teacher. As a counselor, I have been in contact with many church members and pastors who have suffered the devastation of pastoral burnout firsthand. It was in the midst of their tears that I came to realize that forming the catechism around the experiences of an everyday “pew sitter” might have more impact upon the reader than an academic question and answer formula. Little did I know that the journey I was

embarking upon would end up leading to my own healing. Dave, the protagonist of my artifact, *Carry the Young Lambs*, has spoken to my heart and produced an even deeper empathy for all involved in pastoral burnout.

Although the artifact is not complete, I have attempted to provide with this document a sample of it that represents the desire to lead the reader into a better understanding of a Biblical model for the church. It does not provide a one-size-fits-all structure for the church. My hope, rather, is that it will provide a foundation from which each church may become aware, and with renewed focus, intentionally design a plan for how they will carry out what the Apostle Paul submits to the church in Ephesians 4:1-16. The nuts and bolts of ministry will depend upon the divine purpose for each congregation, but the notion that the members of the congregation are responsible to do the work of the ministry while the pastor equips and instructs them in that work, must always be the foundational premise.

In sharing *Carry the Young Lambs* with those in the community of small churches to which I have belonged, I have heard comments along the continuum of opinions. What I have not heard is “Why would you pursue this subject?” All pastors recognize the need for another way to do ministry. No matter the size of the church and/or staff, every pastor with whom I spoke had at some point in his or her ministry, if not at the time of the interview, suffered from too much stress that threatened his/her health, family, and finances. However, all too often the “pew sitters” were blissfully unaware of the pressure under which their pastor and his/her family operated. Unaware, that is, until the burnout came, at which time the pain was shared by all.

Dave's story is my story and the story of every church member who has personally experienced their pastor's demise. Whether through physical, emotional, or moral devastation, the pain is shared. Dave embodies the pain of the congregation when the pastor of a church falls, and it is my hope that he can bring members and pastors alike to seek another definition for the church.

In the artifact, Dave comes to a realization, through the destruction of his pastor, that the problem of pastoral burnout does not belong to the pastorate; it belongs to the church. Like any question regarding how we serve the Lord, the methods and models must have their basis in scripture. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." The definition of *catechism* can be taken directly from this verse.

During the writing of the artifact, my expert advisor, Donna Wallace, stressed that I needed to define catechism for evangelicals who, upon reading the artifact, may be initially put off by the use of a term more commonly used in mainline denominations and Roman Catholic contexts. I hope that *Carry the Young Lambs* defines the term but on a larger scope emphasizes that even though we need to assist pastors to personal emotional, physical, and spiritual vitality, the responsibility for the unrealistic expectations under which we all seem to operate in the church belongs to every member who commits his or her life to the Kingdom of God.

Through my experience at GFES, the instructors and my fellow students intensified my desire to find an answer to pastoral burnout. In researching the subject, I always encountered intervention based upon the inevitability of too much stress. We treat the pastor for burnout, we prepare the pastor for burnout, and we appreciate the pastor for

burnout. My question has always been “why?” The basis for this entire project has always been that it is not God’s design that causes burnout. Therefore, here is the solution to which I believe the Lord has led me. God’s design is drafted in scripture. We do not need to be trained to behave in a new manner; we need to be re-educated in what the scripture actually says.

In writing a parable I was stretched almost beyond my ability to endure. While I love academic writing and research, creative writing is quite another feat. David’s experience is a combination of my own struggles and those of people whom I have counseled. It was important for me to write from the congregant’s viewpoint so that this endeavor is not discarded as just another training for leadership. I have never considered myself an artist, but this project requires art more than knowledge. In *The Soul Tells a Story*, Vinita Hampton-Wright challenges those who are attempting to enter the world of creative writing. She asks, “What do you offer to people that makes them feel loved or encouraged or hopeful?”<sup>110</sup> I answered that question with “the truth that God’s design for each of us leads to joy, not despair.” Happily, with that in mind, writing Dave’s story has become a source of delight and not sorrow.

My sincere hope is to share this understanding with those pastors and congregations with whom I have a relationship. In addition I would like to teach this principle to young pastors before they are eaten alive by the unrealistic and unbiblical expectations of the Western Church. Perhaps the combination of *Carry the Young Lambs* and my degree from GFES will open doors of opportunity to share this message beyond

---

<sup>110</sup> Vinita Hampton Wright, *The Soul Tells a Story: Engaging Creativity with Spirituality in the Writing Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 27.

my current sphere of influence. I have faith that the Lord did not reveal this simple understanding of shepherds and sheep just so I could add four letters after my name.

APPENDIX

*Carry the Young Lambs*

By

Laurie J. Mulkey

*Listen to the lambs....all a-crying,*

*Listen to the lambs....all a crying,*

*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,*

*And carry the young lambs in his bosom.*

(Words of African American spiritual by R. Nathaniel Dett)



## Introduction

My first experience of pastoral burnout was when the pastor of my youth, at the church my family had attended since before I was born, imploded in the pulpit. He had served our independent congregation for over 20 years while operating a strawberry and livestock farm in our neighborhood. We watched as he stood and declared that he was Abraham and we were Isaac and the Lord had instructed him to kill us. He then proceeded to do everything in his power to destroy the church and finally succeeded after two years. We failed as a congregation to salvage the great work to which he had dedicated his life because both he the pastor and we the congregation failed to recognize that we were operating on a CEO model and not on a biblical structure.

We, the congregation, had abdicated our responsibility as the Body of Christ to do the work of the ministry; instead we signed on to a plan in which the pastor is the go-to guy. Our pastor took control of the church and we sat back and watched him work himself into a state of exhaustion that led to an emotional and mental breakdown. Had any of us, him included, taken the time and effort to examine scripture and seek the Lord we would have discovered that God's design does not include the destruction of the pastor. We all needed a catechism to create a new way of thinking about how the church is designed to function. Even though we were an agricultural community with many livestock farmers in the congregation, we failed to appreciate the shepherd/sheep metaphor that permeates scripture.

For our church, being just one of many in such a situation, perhaps the most powerful lesson to be learned is that the church is designed to be based upon relationship, relationship first with Jesus Christ and second with each other. It is not about control and

production, which is the core of the CEO model. The work of the church is to continue what Jesus was doing when he was on the earth, transforming lives through the power of God.

God's plan is to transform us, make us into what He designed us to be, not force us to do what we should be doing. Romans 12:2 discusses this process. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect," (NASB) hence the model of the shepherd and the sheep. A shepherd does not force a sheep to do what it is designed to do. The shepherd merely creates an environment in which the sheep can be what it is designed to be. The rest is a natural result of that identity. Ask any shepherd what kind of a fight would result if he or she attempted to force a sheep to give birth before it was ready. Such an action would defeat the purpose of a flock, producing nothing but dead lambs.

While any metaphor carried beyond its intended purpose will break down, the metaphor we find throughout scripture referring to the leaders of God's people still has power. Even though we, as 21<sup>st</sup>-century urban Christians, may find the imagery archaic and beyond our ability to apply, we are encouraged to work at understanding its ramifications. For example, sheep reproduce sheep; shepherds do not. If we read Ephesians 4:1-16, we find that the shepherd is given the task of *equipping* the sheep to do the work. It is not in the design of the shepherd to reproduce sheep. Rather, the shepherd provides what the sheep need in order to do and be what are natural byproducts of shephood.

In contrast, with the adaptation of the world's model, that of the CEO, the church has also imported the world's results. Anyone who has operated as CEO of any successful company will relate the amount of stress, physical and emotional, that such a position imposed upon the holder. Success costs, and for most CEOs that includes paying in physical health and relationships that are ignored and/or neglected in the pursuit of success. Do we in the church actually accept that as an expected accompaniment of a vibrant congregation? Can we honestly suggest that God has a hand in the design of a system that eats the leaders alive and severely endangers family and congregation in the process? And yet we continue to follow the same model, simply replacing the fallen leader with a fresh one, blaming his/her personal issues for the leader's demise.

Currently the manner in which we address pastoral burnout includes pastor renewal for those suffering from the effects of too much stress, training to prepare the future pastors for a life of too much stress, and pastoral appreciation, to give congregations resources to thank and praise those pastors who are under too much stress.

The statistics regarding pastoral stress and burnout are discouraging beyond measure. Putting the words "pastor AND burnout" on the Google search engine produces over 900,000 hits. There is even a web site [www.pastorburnout.com](http://www.pastorburnout.com).<sup>111</sup>

The following statistics paint a grim picture of the state of pastors in the Western church.

- Fifteen hundred pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention in their churches.
- Four thousand new churches begin each year, but over seven thousand churches close.
- Fifty percent of pastors' marriages will end in divorce.

---

<sup>111</sup> This website is administered by Daniel Sherman and is an excellent source for statistics, support, and testimonies of pastors suffering from burnout issues.

- Eighty percent of pastors and eighty-four percent of their spouses feel unqualified and discouraged in their role as pastors.
- Fifty percent of pastors are so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could, but they have no other way of making a living.
- Eighty percent of seminary and Bible-school graduates who enter the ministry will leave the ministry within the first five years. Ninety percent of pastors said their seminary or Bible-school training did only a fair to poor job preparing them for ministry.
- Eighty-five percent of pastors said their greatest problem is they are sick and tired of dealing with problem people, such as disgruntled elders, deacons, worship leaders, worship teams, board members, and associate pastors. Ninety percent said the hardest thing about ministry is dealing with uncooperative people.
- Seventy percent of pastors feel grossly underpaid.
- Ninety percent said the ministry was completely different than what they thought it would be before they entered it.
- Seventy percent felt God called them to pastoral ministry before their ministry began, but after three years of ministry, only fifty percent still felt called.<sup>112</sup>

Being part of the Leadership and Spiritual Formation program at George Fox Evangelical Seminary I learned just about everything there is to know about leadership development trends in the Church and found most of these trends wanting in this particular area. For the most part, these models are focused on training leaders in innovative ways to fill the pews and meet the needs of the masses, both in and outside the church family. Although such strategies are valuable, they add more to the average pastor's to-do list. It is, therefore, my contention that a new training is not what the church needs in order to change the situation for overworked pastors.

While I was sitting in class at seminary, one of the young pastors began to relate his recent experiences with his three-year old church plant. As he shared his struggles, he began to weep. While the other members of the class gathered around in prayer, I raised my hand and suggested to the prof that all the wonderful things we were learning would

---

<sup>112</sup> Rich Murphy, "Statistics about Pastors," *Maranatha Life*, 2002, <http://maranathalife.com/lifeline/stats.htm> (accessed June 12, 2011).

be of little to no value if we were unable to deal with the anguish that so commonly accompanies the pastorate. I tend to speak before considering what the prof's response might be. I quickly identified myself as a pew-sitter since I have never served as a pastor. His answer to me was, "Laurie it just might take a pew sitter to address it." As a pew-sitter, I began to study what God has to say about how the church should operate.

Returning to Romans 12:2, I found a clue for how we might go about addressing a change of such radical proportions. Rather than making our behavior fit the world's model, being conformed to the world, we are instructed by Scripture to change the way we think, be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Perhaps we have become comfortable with our traditions and need to reexamine what we have learned and from whence it came. In so doing, we may discover that our traditions are not based in scripture, that we have learned a way that is more worldly than godly.

In the early church when the fathers desired to impart the purposes of God to the members of the body, they designed a catechism. A catechism is "a popular manual of instruction in Christian beliefs, normally in question and answer form."<sup>113</sup> For example, the Westminster Shorter Catechism includes 107 short doctrinal questions that are simply answered, and include Biblical proof-texting to support that answer. Here are the first two of those questions.

Q. 1. What is the chief end of [humanity]?

A. [Humanity]'s chief end is to glorify God, [1] and to enjoy him forever. [2]

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, [3] is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. [4]  
[1] Psalm 86. Isaiah 60:21. Romans 11:36. 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; Revelation 4:11.

---

<sup>113</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 211.

[2] Psalm 16:5-11; 144:15. Isaiah 12:2. Luke 2:10. Phillippians4:4. Revelation 21:2-4.

[3] Matthew 19:4-5. With Genesis 2:24. Luke 24:27, 44. 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37. 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:2, 15-16.

[4] Deuteronomy 4:2. Psalm 19:7-11. Isaiah 8:20. John 15:11. Acts 17:11. 2 Timothy 3:15-17. 1 John 1:4.<sup>114</sup>

The Westminster Confession of Faith was written by the Westminster Assembly, a group of 121 Puritan clergymen meeting in Westminster Abbey, in 1643 for the purpose of drafting official documents for the reformation of the Church of England. The Scottish Parliament required that the Church of England be officially reformed in order for them to agree to go to war against King Charles I. The Anglican Church of England had historically persecuted the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Parliament and people of Scotland would not align themselves with the rebellion against Charles unless such a document abolishing the Anglican Church and forming the Presbyterian Church was put in place. The Westminster Catechism was the result of the English Parliament returning the Confession to the Assembly with a request for Biblical proof-texting. Subsequent revisions to the Confession and the Catechism are a colorful and engrossing study of the history of the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches, but the Catechism remains as a foundational document within the Protestant Church.

A traditional catechism in the church contains three necessary aspects; 1) The question, 2) the scripture, and 3) the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the scripture. It was through such catechisms that the doctrine of the church was established among illiterate members. Likewise the concept of shepherds and sheep can be taught to

---

<sup>114</sup> Michael D. Marlowe, "The Westminster Confession of Faith," Bible Research by Michael Marlowe, 1996, Introduction, accessed November 25, 2011, <http://bible-researcher.com/>.

an agriculturally illiterate populace in the contemporary church, through a similar literary approach: a catechism that teaches us to be what we are designed to be.

In the letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul takes up the subject of the redeemed church operating in a world in need of redemption. He succinctly describes the relationship between pastors and congregants. Nowhere in that scripture does he describe what commonly takes place in churches across the Western world, where the shepherd does an imitation of a sheep while the sheep watch and applaud or criticize.

It is my hope that David's story will bring this error, and its corrective, to light for the average "pew-sitter." If this offering is to be of any value, it cannot become just another concept for the pastor to promote, but rather a truth that we the members in the Body of Christ can learn. I hope that each lover of the church will seek God's affirmation through the kind offices of the Holy Spirit alive and communicating in each of His children.

\* \* \*

"Scott Peck told me personally once that he felt most Western people were just spiritually lazy. And when we are lazy, we stay on the path we are already on, even if it is going nowhere. It is the spiritual equivalent of the second law of thermodynamics: everything winds down unless some outside force winds it back up."

~ Richard Rohr<sup>115</sup>

\* \* \*

---

<sup>115</sup> Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward: a Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), xix.

## CHAPTER 1

*Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord shall make myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream.* Numbers 12:6

May 4

*Screams. Piercing sirens filled with terror and agony are reverberating through my head as sweat runs in rivers down my spine. My muscles ache with the bunching and straining to action. Rage and fear clamor for dominance in my chest, battering and squeezing my heart, the only action in my frozen body other than my billowing lungs and furious mind. My eyes are glued to the floor as a slow expansion of blood, like an oil spill, creeps towards my shoes. My good shoes, reserved for weddings, funerals, and Sundays. As the spill seeps closer to my toes, the screams lessen in measure. Blood touches the toes of my best loafers, and the final scream pierces my eardrums. I feel the blood drip down my jaw as the gore submerges my toes. Another set of dress shoes square off with mine. Pristine and new, they are unsullied by the gore. Finally, my eyes rise to encounter the face of my father, the only evidence of his insanity the bloody blade dripping and raised above my chest. He smiles kindly as his arm quickly descends.*

May 5, Sunday

I'm so angry my chest is about to explode! "Try journaling. It will help you process your feelings." What a load of bullshit! That's some of that therapy crap Abby is always spouting. I wonder if I should write "Dear Diary" at the top. I might as well be a 12-year-old-girl, start reading *Twilight* novels and putting feathers in my hair. Dot my *i*'s with little hearts or something.

What in the world is wrong with him? Why would a pastor risk everything and endanger his family and his job? All the sanctimonious BS he's been telling me for the past five years. Talk about a hypocrite...is this where we "turn him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh?" Where is that in the Bible? I know it's in there somewhere. He



didn't even think of the rest of us. How selfish is that? Threw us right under the bus. I thought he was my friend. Friends don't do that to each other. What was all that nonsense about the "shepherd of your soul?" Hell of a shepherd he is. He doesn't know the first thing about being a shepherd.

I suppose right now I should be spending my energy praying or something. That's what he'd say, but look where all that praying got HIM. How can I pray when I'm this mad? God doesn't want to hear from me right now. I just have to get over it and get on with life.

But where does the church end up in this mess? What are we supposed to do now? Where's God in this fiasco? He gave us this pastor to take care of us, and look at us now. I think what pisses me off the most is that right there in the pulpit he blamed the whole thing on us! Like he didn't have a choice! "Overwork, and the stress of pastoring and a job." Yeah, right, like we're the ones that held him down and poured whiskey down his throat till he couldn't see straight and then handed him the car keys. Oh sure...it's my fault he was so stumbling drunk that he hit that little girl on her bike. He could have killed her! I can't blame her parents right now. I know what it's like to lose a child.

May 8, Wednesday

Still mad. This journaling deal was supposed to help, but all it does is remind me of what a disaster this whole mess is. I did feel better for a little while, but every time I think of how stupid I was to believe what that idiot told me...He prayed every week to speak the words God had given him...how are we supposed to even know what's true? His secrets blew a hole in everything he said. Was he drunk all the time? Had he been drinking from

the time he got here? How about when he convinced me that Jesus would get me past the loss of Stephen? Was that the truth? I don't know how to separate his crap from the truth. Did I believe in Jesus or Pastor Mark? WOW! Did I really just write that?

I really want to punch something, namely him! It was all so simple before. Love, peace, joy...it's all gone because he has no self-control. He convinced me that chewing tobacco was wrong. But drinking is right? Oh, I forgot. He did say it was wrong, but he did it anyway.

Poor Martha. I wonder how long this has been going on and what the wife of a drunk has had to put up with. God only knows what else he's doing. I just thought of something...he made sure that I had an "accountability partner" so that everything I do gets examined and judged, by him, but where was his? If he hadn't been arrested, would we ever know? Would he have just kept on acting like Mr. Perfect when all the time he was a drunk at home?

No wonder his business was suffering. We thought it was the bad economy but it was a drunk at the helm. Who's going to trust their taxes to somebody who can't stay out of the bar?

Goddamn-it! Look what he's done to us! He was my best friend. How many times did he leave our Monday-morning breakfast prayer meetings and slink home and down a fifth of whiskey! Maybe he doesn't drink whiskey; maybe he's a beer man. No wait, it would have to be wine...wonder if he makes his own out of tap water. There it is again...am I confusing him with Jesus? Crap! Why does it feel so bad to say that? I used to be able to make jokes like that. Can't anymore.

Just read what I wrote and there are 9 question marks in a page. I hate this. Except for losing Stephen, I've always been able to fix things when they go wrong. Here I have no clue. Who does?

May 10, Friday

Just ran into Pastor Mark, (why do I still call him that?) at the grocery store. AWKWARD! He dodged down another aisle...and I let him. In fact, if I had seen him first, I might have been the one to jump out of sight. I'm afraid if I run into him I'll just unload all the anger that's simmering under the surface and, who knows, I might get physical. I'm not so old I don't think with my fists on occasion.

It has been a long time since I completely lost my temper and everything went to black. The last time... I think it has been since I've been at Good Shepherd. Abby says it saved our marriage and my life. That church really put the skids on my temper. What happens now? Do I go back to being angry all the time? What about all those people who have loved me and my family? Are they going to stay together, or do we just close up shop and move on? Where else are we gonna go? We were like a family out there playing baseball on Sunday afternoons, taking communion, praying together. Sixty is a big family, but that's what we were and "Dad" has gone and deserted us for a bottle. Maybe I need to join Al Anon.

May 12, Sunday

Well, we went to church this morning. Jon took over the sermon and talked about what the future holds...nothing good that I can see. He talked a lot about forgiveness and the

need for prayer, especially for Pastor Mark and Martha. He didn't give us a chance to talk about it, just presented some possible alternatives. We are supposed to have a congregational meeting on Tuesday night to "hash out feelings, thoughts, and suggestions," his exact words. Right.

Seeing everyone this morning was good, I guess, but it hurt like a son-of-a-gun. They all looked like I must look, confused. Some of them have been at Good Shepherd since God made dirt, but a lot of us are there because of Mark. I didn't say a word. 'Course it helped that Abby had her hand on my arm the whole time. If anyone said anything, she just squeezed really hard.

I don't know if this journaling thing is working or if I'm just too tired to hang on to my mad, but I'm not as fired-up today. Maybe it has to do with all the praying. Abby never stops praying. I think she prays even more now than before. She was talking to Jo and Debbie and they had their heads together whispering this morning. I'm sure they have some 'prayer agenda' they are working on. She won't share it with me. Not after I lost my temper when she suggested I join them on Wednesday evening while the kids are in youth group. Just can't do it...not yet. Maybe she's right. Maybe I'm just hanging onto my anger because I don't want to deal with the hurt. Hurt—anger that's too tired to rant.

Timmy asked me this morning, "Daddy, where's Pastor Mark? He always comes in to tell us a story before church?" I wanted to shout, "The SOB cared more about drinking himself into a stupor than he did for you kids!" I can't do that to him...poor little guy. How do I tell him that his hero is a drunk?

What next? Where do we go from here? This church has become the center of our lives; how do we undo that? Should we? How could this have gone sideways when we

were doing everything right? Maybe we weren't doing everything right. We trusted Mark to do it right. We were following his lead. Did he lead us astray? I just have too many questions with no answers, and the one who always gave me the answers is sitting at home waiting to be arraigned for felony drunken driving. What a mess!

*Pain, pain, driving pain in my chest. Fear paralyzes me. I squirm. If I change position, it will ease. It increases. Every muscle tenses. I'm asleep. If I move, I will wake up and the pain will end. The harder I try to move the more intense the pain becomes. I try to cry out. No sound comes from my throat. Fear grows to panic as I strain to move just one finger...it's gone! The pain is gone! I am surrounded by a warmth and growing light that seems to be around me, but also within me. With it the fear dissolves into peace. Everything is light and warmth. I open my eyes and there he is. He is light! He smiles and everything is peace. NO! I don't want to wake up! Don't go...*

May 14, Tuesday

Today's the day for the big meeting. Abby and her buddies are meeting for prayer half an hour before the rest of us get there. Hope it works. I don't know if I should go. I don't have anything useful to add to the discussion. All I have is questions. And these dreams.

Drove past Mark (actually thought of him as Mark without the title Pastor) and Martha's house to make a delivery today. The grass hasn't been cut. They always kept it up. Now it just looks neglected. He's probably hiding out in his house. I heard his arraignment went off without a hitch and he's out on bail. The paper said that his blood-alcohol level was 0.17. I guess that determines how they define the violation, that and the fact that he hit a kid on a bike. I guess the combination of the two jacks it up to a felony. I don't understand all that legal stuff, but if it was my kid that'd been hit, I'd be holding out for the felony. Wonder who put up the bail money. I heard they were taking up a

collection to help with the legal fees. No way am I contributing to that. He made his bed, now he can sleep in it.

I do feel sorry for Martha. After 30+ years of marriage to find that your husband is a drunk and a hypocrite? ...what a blow! But maybe she knew all along and just helped him keep up the front. I guess he didn't trust us the way he was always telling us to trust him. There's my sweet, intelligent, Abby sitting right in front of him on the pew every Sunday. Don't you think he'd take advantage of having a therapist in the congregation? She would have done it for free, too, and not told a soul. Not even me.

I just keep going around in circles. Mad, confused, sad, mad...how long does this go on? Where are the answers? I guess I'll have to go to the meeting tonight. If nothing else, misery loves company. Maybe somebody else has wisdom and can answer these questions. If I just had something to stand on, some truth that isn't shaken by Mark's failure, that would be a place to start. Will write more after the meeting.

...You have got to be kidding me! What a bunch of morons! I went to that meeting because I thought someone would take the lead and give us some answers. Instead, we were surrounded by deniers and crucifiers. First, there was that bunch led by Jessie, the old fool, who wanted to take over and run the church like their own personal kingdom. But he's always been like that. Everything Mark did, even before this mess, was always wrong. Now Jessie's got all the proof he needs to take over and run the place the "way it should be run." Translate that: "the way Jessie wants it run."

Then there's Mabel and the quilters who don't believe that Mark was even drunk but that he had "some kind of seizure, because Pastor would never do anything so sinful."

Talk about sheep without a shepherd...everyone was talking at once and going off in all directions. Jon tried to lead the meeting. I guess being the treasurer gives him a little authority since he signs the checks. He kept asking what we should do in practical terms. Should we start the call process for a new pastor? Should we contact someone who could suggest an interim pastor while we wait to see what happens with Pastor Mark? Should we vote someone in from the congregation? We need someone with God-given authority. Someone gifted in the ways of preaching.

Jon even asked if anyone felt led to take over the pulpit... Abby didn't need to hold me down on that one. I never even considered any of those alternatives. Guess that goes to show how much I know about how the church should work. It's times like this that you see why there are denominations and hierarchies and such. Since we're independent, we don't have anywhere to go for help. We wanted to run our own show, so here we are, running our own show right into the ground.

In the end we just decided to continue to meet and Jon will find people to either lead prayer, worship, or teach some stuff on Sunday mornings and we'll keep the Sunday-School teachers for the kids on Sunday and Wednesday nights. At least I won't have to tell the kids they won't get to have fun with their friends. That is, if we stay.

I'm not sure how I feel about continuing to attend that place. Good Shepherd Fellowship...what happens when the sheep take over? What kind of sheep am I? What kind of shepherd is Mark, or is he just a sheep now? Is Jon a shepherd or just a talkative sheep?

Wish I knew more about how a church is supposed to work. Maybe we just need to find an expert. Where do we look for one of those who isn't just another Mark? Look

where he took us. It's all a gigantic puzzle to me. One without a picture to go by and so many pieces missing I wouldn't know where to start. Jesus help us!

*I'm looking down into a valley from the grassy knoll on which I lie. Someone is building a structure. The studding is up and the rafters are in place awaiting the roofing. I smell the aroma of freshly milled wood. The man sitting beside me in the grass offers me his hand as he pulls me to my feet and indicates that I should follow him. We walk through the new building with its clean unmarked decking and in the process I realize that there isn't a square corner to be seen. Rafters pull at the joists, straining to maintain their hold on the walls. The studding struggles for integrity. Amazed, I look at the roof expecting it to collapse on our heads. I look at my companion. Shaking his head, he looks at a table with blueprints scattered haphazardly across its surface. He digs through them and turns them around so that I can see them. Whoever constructed this shell has not adhered to these plans. To my surprise, the man walks on through the structure out onto what looks to be a porch. Like the rest of the building it has no stability. My fear begins to be palpable as I consider what may happen if we don't leave immediately. I see the trees begin to sway as the breeze freshens. I know that this building will fall. As I look to him for help, he smiles serenely, supremely confident. In what? I prepare for the worst. Wait! There's my little boy! He is playing in the structure! My son! I turn to rush to him but my legs won't move. They are stuck. The harder I try to move, the less control I have over my limbs. The wind becomes stronger as it hits the poorly placed beams so precariously supporting the rafters. It's falling! Tim! TIM!*

May 16, Thursday

I can't believe I'm sick. I can't remember the last time I felt this bad. I have never called in sick...no, wait. In 2001 when my appendix burst. Technically, I didn't call in sick. Abby did, from the hospital. I really don't remember much from that week.

This is crazy. Got out of bed this morning to go to work and fainted, like a girl. I fainted! Passed out sounds better, masculine, well, less Southern-belle anyway. But that wasn't the worst part. I couldn't stand up and every time I tried, I just landed back in a heap. Thought I'd just crawl into the bathroom where no one could see me, but Abby heard the crash and there she was. Gotta admit, she was hilarious. Her hair standing up,



eyes as big as soccer balls. A picture I will never forget, or let her forget. Where's the video camera when you need it?

The laughing didn't help me. Then I really couldn't stand up for a few minutes till the giggles passed. That's another thing: What full grown man giggles? Ah just chock it up to the illness. Embarrassing is not the word. Abby had to help me go to the bathroom. I had to sit down! For my dad that was the definition of a sissy; "D'ya see that guy? Bet he squats to pee."

The whole thing has removed me from the "he-man woman-hater's club." I write in a diary. I have 'feelings,' I faint. And now I squat to pee. What's next...I am not watching Oprah! I'd rather sit here in bed all day and write in this journal than go out on the couch and watch daytime TV. I'd have to crawl to get out there, anyway.

Abby talked to one of her doctor friends who told her something is going around. He was a little surprised that I got it though. He said it's mostly been old people and little kids. Now I'm not just a girl I'm an old one. 50 is just around the corner.

After I was helped into bed (Abby is stouter than she looks), I got the headache from hell. She gave me some of the stuff she takes when she has her woman days. Pretty good stuff, I must admit. Maybe that's why this ~~diary~~-journal thing doesn't seem so bad today. It's kinda fun. I can say whatever I want, no one can tell me I'm wrong or I shouldn't say that, and I probably won't remember that I wrote it when I wake up tomorrow. Kind of like when I was in college and would go on a bender. The difference is, I won't have a hangover in the morning. Already had that this morning.

Maybe I should have finished college. Maybe things would have been better for us if I'd been an academic instead of the UPS guy. Nah. I didn't have the brains for it.

Besides, the way I'm going with this, if UPS doesn't go out of business, I can retire in a couple more years and spend my time going to Dee Dee's concerts and Tim's ball games. Hey, that sounds like fun! Abby can just keep working and I'll have some fun! Kinda get even for the years she was in school and I worked to pay for it. My head feels really funny....need a nap.

*Standing on a hill, I gaze down into a green valley; the grass is almost neon and glowing, it's so vivid with health and color. It is peaceful, quiet and warm with chirping birds and buzzing bees, a lush valley with a fringe of oak trees along the opposite hill. A flock of sheep crawl over the landscape, as plentiful as ants over their hill. They are grazing along leisurely and relaxed, but soon I notice that as they go, they devour the emerald greenery down to the dirt, leaving nothing but skeletal fingers of roots and barren soil. The ground behind them is reduced to no more than naked cracked desolation. I notice a shepherd leading them, lazily strolling along as they decimate the land. Suddenly, I am the shepherd. As I walk, they begin to overtake me, pushing me ahead of them, their soft cotton-ball bodies jostling me with each step. I try to run to stay ahead, but the harder my legs pump, the slower I move until exhaustion overcomes me. They begin to nibble on my clothes and hair. Soon one of them takes a bite out of my foot. I watch as they consume it; absent of all pain, my feet cease to be. I pet the sheep and croon to them how beautiful they are and how proud I am of them. They work their way up my legs. Devouring them, they continue through my hips and begin on my fingers and abdomen. I am diminished, becoming less a person, merely a vacant smiling face. The disappearance of my anatomy fails to alarm me. As they work their way through my lungs, I lose my breath. The stillness is suffocating. Then my heart is consumed and all I love ceases to be of concern. The silence in my chest is deafening. Last to go are my smiling eyes and then there is only a numb abyss.*

May 17, Friday

Got up this morning and I'm fine. 24-hour bug, I guess. Woke up, went to the bathroom on my own, standing up, no headache, back to work. Abby kept asking me if I was sure I was fine and I could honestly tell her, yeah, feel great. Back to the real world.

Made a delivery to Jon's office and we got to talking. I saved it till my last stop so that I could ask him some questions about how things are going at church. I found out

something that really surprised me; he's just as confused as I am. He told me he spent the first week so mad that he couldn't even talk to Jan about it. I thought I was the one with the anger issues. He admitted that he went out to his workshop and was trying to work on a refinishing project. He got so mad that he took a hammer and completely demolished a chair.

I would never have believed it. Who thinks of a lawyer raging out of control? Now a UPS guy...not such a reach. Never really got to know Jon before except at church. We don't run in the same circles, successful lawyer and all. But I kind of like the guy. He told me he was raised in church and has seen more than his share of church "debacles" and this one is no different, except he's stuck with the responsibility for everyone left broken-hearted. I wouldn't have gone so far as to call myself "broken-hearted," but I guess it fits.

He had to go take an after-hours deposition, but he wants to get together and talk some more. He says he wants to get my perspective. He thinks I have some important insight that he doesn't and together we can help get the church back on track. I think he might be crazy, but I can't help but be curious about what he sees that I don't. We're going to have breakfast tomorrow morning.

May 18, Saturday

This journal thing is taking on a life of its own. I read back over what I've written and I'm really amazed at how things are changing in me. I'm not even talking about Mark anymore, just about me. What would Abby call that...narcissistic? (Had to look up how to spell that one) It's all about me, me, me.

Had breakfast with Jon today. Found out some interesting things. First of all, his name is Jonathan. His mom wanted to name him for her favorite Old Testament character. Kind of a coincidence that my name's David. Oops, getting a little "Twilight Zone" music playing in my head. Also learned that Jon is the next in authority according to church by-laws and so the responsibility falls on him for things that happen in the church. That'll frost Jessie. He thinks because he's the oldest that he has the say. Plus, he was there when the place was built, "with my own two hands" back at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or something.

I guess it's set up so that the pastor is the CEO, and the treasurer is next in line as the elected CFO and then the elders that are appointed by the pastor. The deacons are elected by the congregation, like the treasurer, but they only have a say over the running of the physical part of the church. So Jon is where the buck stops, now that Mark is out of the picture. And in agreement with the by-laws in a meeting of the elder board with Jon presiding, Mark has been removed from his position as pastor and CEO with cause, the cause being his "moral failure" as defined in the by-laws.

I couldn't believe it, but the church is set up to specifically deal with this kind of situation, just like a business. In fact, Jon said that his dad was on the original committee that helped draft the by-laws using corporate law as guidelines and making it a legal document. That's so that our donations can be tax-deductible. I had no idea it was such a complicated legal organization. I thought the pastor just got together a bunch of folks who loved the Lord and liked each other and started praying and worshipping and then people just came when the pastor got them saved. That's how it happened with Abby and me. Had to come home and google "non-profit" to find out what the criminy Jon meant. I

just sat there nodding my head while he talked. Jon believes that Good Shepherd has a future. One that God has mapped out, and it's our responsibility as leaders in the church to discover what that looks like and do our best to follow it. He said it just like that, too. Like I knew I was a leader in the church. Where did he get that idea?

I've never had anything to do with decision-making at church except to vote when I was told to. I don't want that responsibility. I told him so. He just looked at me kind of funny and smiled. Then he gave me a scripture, Ephesians 4:1-16, and suggested that I read it and pray about it and see what God had to say.

He got me there. I haven't prayed, except to bless the food, since Mark dropped his bombshell on the church. Besides that, I don't hear from God. That's the pastor's job. I mean, I hear God speak through the Bible and I've felt Him encourage and comfort me different times, but I don't hear His voice or anything spiritual like that. Hell, I'm a UPS driver, not some theologian. But I told him I'd read the scripture and pray about it.

We decided that we would meet every Saturday at 7 am at Vittles for breakfast. I don't see how I can help him with the church thing, but I enjoy visiting with him. He's the type of person that makes a guy feel relaxed around him. He has a confidence that kind of reminds me of the way Mark was when I first started going to church.

Uh, oh, better watch him. Maybe I should ask him if he likes a beer now and again. I don't know if I have gotten over Mark's betrayal or if I'm just filing it away where I don't have to look at it. That's what Abby would say. Then she'd add, "At some point, honey, you are going to have to deal with your emotional pain." My answer would be, "Yeah, well not today!"

May 19, Sunday

Went to church again today. After meeting with Jon yesterday I had a little different attitude. I almost looked forward to being there. Jon preached. He did a good job, for a lawyer. Sounds like it could be one of those lawyer jokes, but in all seriousness, he talked about that scripture he suggested I spend some time on, Eph. 4:1-16. I had to admit to him that I hadn't read it. Didn't pray over it either, but I didn't tell him that. I always kind of figured that Abby did the praying for our family. She spends so much time in prayer I just leaned on her doing my share too. It's dumb, but that's the way I thought. Guess that's not the way it goes. Jon prays every day and reads scripture. He says that he just gets up a half hour before the rest of his family and has his coffee by himself with his Bible. Not sure that's for me, but it couldn't hurt.

I don't remember too much of his sermon, but one thing hit me; the members of the church are supposed to do the work of the ministry, not the pastor. He or she is supposed to "equip" the members to do the work. I didn't know that. Why didn't Mark tell us that? He talked about Greek words, tenses, cases; I just went to grey on that stuff.

The word "equip" just stuck in my head. Not sure what that includes. I guess I'll have to look it up and pray about why it sticks. But if Jon thinks that one little word in the Bible is going to change how I think about Mark and what he did, he's WRONG!

After church I was talking to Abby, well...complaining about how betrayed I felt by Mark. She started to CRY! She got really mad and stomped around the kitchen with her arms swinging and throwing her Bible and her purse. I was so shocked, it took a minute to hear what she said. "You think you're the only one that hurts? You think you're the only one who's mad and feels betrayed? I was there when Stephen died too. I

was there when we came apart at the seams and Mark and the church was all that held us together. You think that just because I was in the church before that I wasn't in the same kind of pain. You are so selfish! I can't believe what a complaining, whining, baby you have been for the past couple weeks. We all hurt. It's not about you! Have you given one thought to what Mark must be going through? Have you thought about Martha? Have you even given one moment to consider how I must feel? Mark was there when you were ready to blow your brains out and there was nothing I could do to stop you. You don't think I put Mark up there on that pedestal too? He saved my life just as much as he saved yours and I'm hurting just as much as you are. We all are. Now grow a pair and stop your bloody whining!" (I think Abby's been watching too much BBC.)

I don't know if those were her exact words but close enough. I couldn't believe it. The all-tucked-up Abby...I have only seen her lose control of herself a couple times in the 15 years we've been married. Stephen...yeah, then she did. But giving birth and losing the baby so close together, there's so much going on in a woman, we don't really have a clue. At least that's what the doctor said. Maybe that's why I kept it inside then. I thought I was helping her. But like she said, it had to come out and it did. If Mark hadn't been there...I would have used that gun. She's right. I am a selfish bastard.

After we calmed down, she told me she was sorry for losing her temper. I told her she was right. That's the way our fights end. She apologizes for offending me and I say she's right. Then off we go and nothing really changes except the pressure is relieved. But this time was different. We talked about how the rest of the people in the church feel. Something I hadn't given much thought. She was wondering what we could do to help them. She has a grief recovery group that she leads once a month for folks who've lost

loved ones, like we attended after Stephen. She was thinking that maybe something like that might be helpful for the congregation.

But Mark's not dead! She said that didn't matter. Losing him was just the same as if he was, maybe worse since we have to deal with what to do with him next. If he was dead it would just be getting over the loss, but now we have the loss just down the street, in the newspaper, still doing our bookkeeping...

@#%\$& I forgot, he does Abby's bookkeeping. We still have to see him about that. If it was up to me we'd find someone else, but it's her business and she's not about to punish Martha for Mark's sins. He'll lose enough clients when the word gets out about this. Or maybe not; as long as the people aren't in the church, maybe they won't care if he drinks. Our mechanic has had a couple DUIs and I still take the car there. He's a good mechanic. But he doesn't tell other people not to drink; in fact he always offers me a beer when I go to pick up the car. He's not a hypocrite.

Abby's grief group...it couldn't hurt, I guess. I'll go to support her. That's the least I can do, but I really don't see it helping me. It won't change what Mark's done to all of us. But...maybe it will get me past the whining. The big question is, where do we go from here? Haven't thought about that much. Just been enjoying my pain, according to Abby. She's right.

Really, what do we do next? What if we did have something to do with Mark's drinking? That's no excuse, but what if we did do something that made it worse? You hear on TV all the time about pastors falling and getting caught doing all kinds of stuff that they preach against. I know that God doesn't want that. It's not His will that they go down and take so many people with them. Maybe we are missing something, like Jon



said. Maybe we have misunderstood something we are supposed to be doing. Or doing something we're not. But how could all those people who are supposed to know this stuff be wrong? Our church runs just about the same as every other church I know of. Who'd know? I guess I'd better look at Eph. 4 and that word *equip*.

*That ramshackle building again...the plans are still on the table. He pulls one out and lays it on the top. As I look at it he gently places his hand on my shoulder. This place isn't safe! I keep trying to panic but it doesn't work. He's not panicked. He is peace. But I don't understand. I don't know how to read blueprints! He's not worried. It's my responsibility. I HAVE TO FIX THIS! How do I do it? He smiles and walks away. I follow, arguing that we can't leave it this way. Someone is going to get hurt! I don't understand how he can be so calm! He moves out on to the porch and sits down in a rocker. Wait...we have work to do. We can't just relax and rock while this building is falling! He touches my hand and I look at him. The building fades. His eyes...they are full of love and peace. He laughs and my mind quiets. What was I worried about? I don't remember. He is all.*

May 20, Monday

I decided that today would be the first day of my prayer discipline. So here I am all alone in a quiet house with my journal and my Bible. I think the pages are still stuck together, haven't opened it much since my baptism when Mark gave it to me. Abby and the kids won't be up for another hour so we'll see if I can actually read this scripture and pray about it. Eph. 4...okay I read it. Now I pray...Dear Lord, please speak to me in this scripture. It doesn't say much to me, I don't think.

Abby says that I should use my journal when I'm studying the Bible and make notes on what I think God is saying to me. Looks to me like the pastor is not supposed to do all the work of the ministry but he's supposed to help us in the church to be able to do it. That's not the way Mark has always done it.

There are a few people in the church that teach Sunday School, do books, cook food for the sick ones and make quilts for the poor and missions, but otherwise he did everything else. What else is there? Are we supposed to be getting people saved? Don't think I'm up for that. I always thought that my job was to make sure that money went into the church to pay Mark to do that. I'm not trained for soul saving. He is. When new people come into the church, I'm always friendly. Try to greet visitors and encourage them to come back. I guess this is where the praying comes in.

God, what am I supposed to be doing? Has Mark had it wrong all this time? Isn't that the way other churches work? I need to hear you speak. Jon says that I can but I never have. If I'm supposed to hear you speak, how does that work? Do I hear your voice out loud? In my head? Lord, I really want to get this right, for me, Abby and the kids, and the church. If Jon is right, what do I do now?

According to Jon and Abby, I need to forgive Mark. I don't feel like forgiving him. What he has done has been terrible and I think he needs to suffer the way the rest of us have suffered because of his stupidity, hypocrisy, and dishonesty. Don't know what to do with that. I know he's suffering now. Can't drive, has to take an "alcohol diversion" (whatever that is), has to serve time in County Lockup, no one wants him around, and everything he has ever told us is up for grabs. I'm sure some of the stuff he said was right, just not sure what. Lord help me to do what you want me to do. AMEN

## Chapter 2

***Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Matt. 9:36***

*The breeze is cool on my cheeks as it competes with the warmth of the sun. I sit in the prow of the boat as the gentle slap, slap of the water laps against the wooden wall that protects me from the sea. I close my eyes again breathing in the peace. My eyes open as I become aware of a man fishing from the stern. I know him. I look down expecting to find my fishing gear in hand but my palms lie empty in my lap. I would like to try my luck. The man says there is only one rod and reel and he is using them. Enviously, I watch him get a bite, set the hook, begin to reel in his catch. His excitement is contagious as we stand and look over the side trying to catch a glimpse of the fish. It must be a monster. As he struggles to gain ground, it begins to tow the boat farther out to sea. I try to help him, but he pushes my hands away, afraid that I will cause him to lose his trophy. My stomach dances in tandem with the shaking of the boat as he loses more headway. Our eyes meet and I see my own anxiety mirrored as realization sets in. His rod bends in two, threatening to break under the pressure. Frantic now, he grabs the line and wraps it around his hands and hauls back with all his strength to get the fish landed all at once. The line bites into the flesh of his hands and they begin to bleed. Again I try to help and yet again he pushes me away, fixated. He struggles with the line as the boat dances crazily across the water scooping it in as it goes. I grip the sides as the gyrations threaten to throw me over and watch horrified as water fills the boat. The fisherman is oblivious to our peril as the blood drips from his injured hands. As he strains against the line blood continues to run and mix with the seawater rising around us. A cry of alarm bursts from my throat but he is oblivious. I chance a peek over the side of the boat and see the huge fish circling. If it breaks the surface, our little boat will split in two and we'll drown. I turn to shout again and I encounter his face set with pain and still he will not let go or ask for help. Too late he realizes our peril. We are going down. The warm blood cools as the sharp seawater dilutes it. His face reveals resignation to his fate as we sink beneath the pink foam.*

May 21, Tuesday

These dreams are getting crazier and crazier. That last one is staying with me.

Can't seem to shake it.

I need to read that scripture again. See if anything has changed and I understand it better today. I'm sure there's more to it than just that the pastor isn't supposed to do all

the work. I need to think on that a little longer. If the pastor isn't supposed to do all the work but he's supposed to equip the people to do the work, then Mark did have it wrong because he didn't equip me to do anything.

Equip, according to the dictionary means, "to provide somebody or something with what is needed for a particular activity or purpose, with the appropriate tools, supplies, parts, or clothing." When I went to work for UPS, they equipped me with a truck, a uniform, paperwork, and all the packages I needed to deliver. But first they trained me. Is training part of equipping? According to the definition, training to do a particular activity could be included. If that's true then Mark really fell down on the job because he didn't train me to do anything but sit and listen, and I learned that in kindergarten.

He did give me a Bible and teach us at Bible study. He did expect us to read it and pray, which I didn't do, at least not as much as I should have. So my training was limited, my equipping deficient, my response inadequate. Mark didn't do his job according to the Bible, but neither did I.

What did he do? I guess I need to find out what he spent his time doing. He complained that he was overworked, that he spent way too much time serving the church so that he neglected his business and his family. He said that when he needed help, there was no one to turn to because all we did was demand things from him. Did I do that; was I not available for him when he needed a friend? It never occurred to me that he needed anything. He never said anything to indicate that he did.

I think that he didn't want me to know that he was struggling, but instead wanted me and everyone else to think that he had it all together. He was Super Pastor. But really

we should have known that he couldn't have been that great; he is human after all. Still, I somehow believed that he had special strength from God so he wasn't susceptible to all the failings I have; maybe he believed it too. Looking at it like that makes it seem stupid. We really did get him mixed up with Jesus if we thought he could walk on water. But he didn't say anything to make us think otherwise. Did he think he could walk on water? It's beginning to look like we were all blind. Need to pray to ask for answers.

Lord, I don't know what our church is supposed to look like. Not like it does, that's for sure. If we are supposed to be trained and equipped to do work, we sure haven't been. At least I haven't been. What work am I supposed to be doing? Who can answer these questions but you?

Lord, help me to understand what you are asking of me. You saved me. It wasn't Mark. I know that even when I get it mixed up in my head. Jesus, you loved me when I was ready to selfishly end my life and leave Abby and the kids to take care of themselves. You loved me when I hated you and blamed you for the pain. I know that you love me now when I'm finally getting the hint that I have to grow up and think of other people for a change.

Lord, help me. Talk to me the way everyone says that you can. I want to hear your voice. I want to know you as a friend, not just as a Savior. I don't know how to get there from here, not sure if it's even possible. Lord Jesus, help me. AMEN.

May 22, Wednesday

Had to go in early today, so didn't pray this morning. I will have to make sure that on those kinds of mornings I plan ahead. I'm getting so I like the peaceful time. Thought

I would journal instead about what happened today. Had to make a delivery at Mark's office. If I'd known, I would have passed it off to Jerry. Oh well. I guess it was a God thing.

I haven't talked to him since right after his arrest. He doesn't look good. It wasn't a comfortable meeting. Who'd have thought that someone I enjoyed seeing so much would become such a burden. I asked how he was and he said okay. Didn't offer any other info and I didn't ask. Martha was there but she kept to the back of the office like she didn't want to see me. It has to be pretty bad for her. Funny thing, I didn't want to haul off and punch Mark like I thought I would. I just felt sorry for him. He's pretty much crapped in his Cheerios with me and most of the people in the church, we're not going to be forgetting this any time soon. That's got to be miserable. Does this mean I've forgiven him? I hope so. I would just as soon pretend that none of this happened. I know that's not possible, so we'd all be better off to move on. I wonder if he's getting counseling or going to AA or something like that. Abby hasn't said that she's heard anything. Course, if he was going to her office she wouldn't tell me.

Jon called me last night and reminded me about the congregational meeting scheduled for next Tuesday. He wants me to pray about talking to the members. Yikes! Made my hands sweat just thinking about it. I told him absolutely not! I am not a public speaker. He laughed. Said he didn't want to pressure me, but thought I might be just the guy to talk since I didn't want to so bad. I told him I'd pray about it. If I've learned one thing from hanging around Christians it's that when you say "I'll pray about it," people let you off the hook for just about anything.

Abby started her grief group tonight. I think it was helpful to a lot of the people there. About 20 folks showed up. They each got time to talk about what was hurting them after Abby laid down the guidelines. We are supposed to only speak positive things, but if we are mad we can say so. About half of the people there spoke about their feelings and even when they didn't say they were mad, you could tell that they really were. I admitted that I was mad as hell at first, but that it's kind of eased. To be honest, everyone acted a little shell-shocked. Looked like a bunch of deer in the headlights.

Jessie wasn't there. If he was and he had to be honest, he would have said he was excited and glad that his doubts had been confirmed. He'd said all along that Mark wasn't up to the task. I doubt if the Apostle Paul came to pastor at Good Shepherd that he would be acceptable to Jessie.

The last two Sundays there have been noticeably fewer people in church. There aren't enough of us to go on like that for very long. If we want Good Shepherd to survive, we have to stick together and look for a new pastor.

May 23, Thursday

Reading the passage in Eph. 4 again. I don't know if I'm reading it right, but when it says that Jesus gave gifts to the church, some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, it looks like *the person* is the gift that he gave. It doesn't read like he is giving the gift of pastor to someone who then acts as a pastor but instead, is giving a gift who is a pastor to the church. I just wonder if that could be right.

Wish I could just sit down with Jesus and ask him all these things face-to-face. Since that's not possible, I have to rely on other humans. I wonder if the Bible study group is still meeting. I'm getting more and more questions. I must not be the only one who doesn't know what should happen next. I thought this scripture was supposed to answer my questions, not give me more of them.

The praying part, now that's interesting. I'm starting to feel differently about a lot of things since I've been asking God to give me and the other folks at church peace. Not sure what else to ask for, maybe peace *and* wisdom.

May 24, Friday

When I took the kids to youth group, the other night I asked Diane if Bible study was still meeting. She said they had decided to take time off while the issues surrounding Mark's departure are sorted out. "Mark's departure." That's what we are calling it now. Sounds simple, less painful than what really happened.

I wonder, can he come back if he gets help and stays sober? I don't think I want him back even if he is sober. Not sure I can ever trust him again. I don't know about anyone else, but I'd be constantly waiting for him to blow it again.

I think we need to just move on and forget what happened in the past. When I say things like that to Abby, she scrunches up her face and I know what that means... she's thinking that I'm wrong but won't say anything to avoid an argument. Do I argue with her every time she disagrees with me? She isn't always right! Better get to praying for that peace. I'm getting mad at her and she isn't even out of bed yet. Peace and wisdom, Lord. That's what I need, peace and wisdom.



Read Eph. 4:1-16 again. I wonder how many times I have to read this thing before I understand it. I keep coming back to how the pastor, and all those other gifts, are supposed to equip the people in the church to do the work.

Maybe some others have been equipped. Looks like Jon has been equipped to do the bookwork. Abby and Jo have been equipped to pray. Jessie has been equipped to be a pain in the ass. I can't put the responsibility for that on Mark. Jessie has been a pain since his birth, 100 years ago. I'll never forget how mad he got when Mark suggested that Diane use a different Bible supply house for the Sunday-School curriculum. I guess that's not work in ministry. But it does take some ministry to get over the pain that he is. There are Sunday-School teachers that have been equipped to teach. So some things have been done right.

What about leading Bible Study, premarital and marriage counseling, like he did with Abs and me, or when Jay and Cindy's little guy was in the hospital, Mark was there every day? Who is going to take up that slack? I need to make a list of what Mark was doing.

- He taught the New Believers class on Wednesdays and
- the adult SS class on Sundays.
- He had a group of ex-cons that live in that Halfway house on Third Street that he met with once a week.
- He met with the kids at the youth authority prison on Tuesday afternoons
- He worked as volunteer chaplain at the hospital one week a month.
- He and Martha taught Good News Club at the kids' release time at the grade school one day a week.

Now that I start counting, he was pretty busy. He never asked anyone else to do any of those things with him. I think he enjoyed being the “go-to guy.”

I remember a young couple that moved into the congregation a couple years ago. Jed and Mary, I think. He wanted to get involved in the prison ministry that Mark started at the Youth Authority, but seems to me that Mark put the kibosh on that. Don't remember why. They left the church and worship over at First Assembly now. At the time I didn't even think about it. Maybe that was an example of someone who should have been equipped to do that work.

There have been other people who came for awhile and left; were they discouraged from ministry? Maybe I've been concentrating too much on the pastor side of the gifting. Verse 7 says to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Now I know that I am not one of those five gifts, but this says to each grace is given, so I have a gift. Now that's a laugh! I don't feel gifted. I guess that comes back to Jessie's pain-in-the ass gifting. I do know that I can work like a horse and not get sick or tired. I always thought of that as a curse. At least that's what the doctor says when I get a checkup and he says I need to take more time off to 'stop and smell the roses.' When I stop to smell them I just notice that they need to be trimmed and the lawn needs cutting and edging and garage needs cleaning and the cement needs hosing, and on and on. Is seeing what needs to be done and working myself into an early grave a gift?

Jon said he thought I was a leader, but I know I'm not because I can take orders so well. In fact, I like it best when someone else does all the bossing and I can just do the work. I like people to notice and appreciate my work but I don't need to be out in front giving the orders. Usually people who give the orders don't work very well anyway. I'd

rather they just leave me alone so I can do it right than try to help me and mess it up. I guess in the bee hive of life, I'm a drone.

So what has Mark equipped me to do? Nothing. But I guess he might not be the only one who has failed. Come to think of it, I have not worked at the church even though there are so many things that need to be done there. The yard is a mess. The toilet in the men's bathroom leaks and runs all the time. I've tinkered with it several times when I've been in there, but I haven't actually fixed it. Drives me nuts, but I haven't done anything about all the 'fix-it' jobs that are obvious. Huh. Why haven't I?

It might have to do with my being touchy...I asked if I could work on the linoleum in the kitchen, a year ago, but Mark said that he had plans for installing new stuff as soon as the budget was passed so he'd rather I didn't interfere with those plans. Kind of hurt my feelings and I haven't offered to do anything since. Maybe I should have talked to the deacon board about it, since they are responsible for the church building. I'm going to have to run all this past Jon on Saturday. Man, that list keeps getting longer and longer.

*What a beautiful day. The sun shines warm on my stomach as I lay stretched out in the warm, green grass, its blades tickling my skin. There are no dangers, no fears, no worries. My heart feels weightless in my chest. Drowsily I watch the marshmallow clouds float across the blue sky. We are of the same mind, those clouds and I. Sleep beckons; I need only surrender. My tranquility is shattered as a jangling bell and the baa of sheep clamor in my ears. My nose twitches as the warm smell of manure intrudes. I sit up and look out to see sheep surrounding me. They are everywhere! Stuck in the brambles of the tree-line; muddying the waters of the stream; pushing each other across the ravine, trampling the buttercups. Where is the shepherd? There is no one. I jump up trying to corral the flock against the creek. They ignore me. I shout but no words escape my throat. A hoarse bleating wrenches my vocal cords, refusing to form distinguishable words.*

May 25, Saturday, 3 a.m.

I can't avoid it any longer. I have to take a closer look at these dreams. They've got to have something to do with this mess at church. Sheep eating a shepherd; a building with no foundation and no plan; a fisherman who won't accept help that leads to the boat sinking; bleating like a sheep; worst of all being stabbed by Dad...

I can't decipher who was responsible for the failing in our church. Was it the dumb fisherman or the devouring sheep or both? I'm not sure I'm ready to take some of the blame for Mark's failings. I get the impression that I am somehow responsible for some of it, but I'm not sure he would have allowed me to change things for him.

I'm beginning to see that he was overworked. Now that I have actually numbered the things he was managing at church, and considering that we just ended the tax season when he is the busiest with his business, I guess his complaint that he was overwhelmed is not so far-fetched after all. It still doesn't excuse his drinking and driving, but maybe it is a little more understandable. There are things he should have been doing that he wasn't and there are things he shouldn't have been doing that he was. Maybe we can't point fingers. Maybe it wasn't either of us, but the building that didn't follow the architect's plans. That is no excuse; we had the plans right in the middle of the building and we failed to consult them. We are all to blame.

But we do need to make it right. There is so much that I don't know. Does this scripture have the answer? Read it again, Dave!

May 25, Saturday

Had breakfast with Jon this morning. Between bites of waffles dripping in syrup, he talked about how frustrated he has become with everything. I had to feel sorry for him. He can't seem to get any support. He has been trying to make connections for the ministries that Mark handled. "What do I know about prison ministry? I'm spending way too much time trying to get people to step up and do some work. You have to help me, Dave. I'm not equipped to do all this and take care of my practice and family. It's just too much for one person." He said that he talked to a couple people who are in the Bible study and that they are going to start meeting again. He hoped that I would meet with them and suggested talking about the Eph. 4 scripture that I have been "exploring." I sure don't feel equal to that task, but he was desperate for help.

I had three or four refills on coffee before I got the nerve up to talk to him about my dreams. He smiled when I said I thought they might mean something. Then he chuckled and said, "Do ya think?" Jon thinks that the Lord is answering my questions about how dysfunctional the church is and why it is that way. I get the building dream. We have built the church on ground that was available, not on the foundation that he designed. Not using the plans has given us a building that will go down in the first bad storm. I get that the inspector is Jesus. No one but Jesus could have such love in his eyes and want to sit with his kids on a porch they built, even if it is threatening to fall in on us.

That's the way my life was when He came into it. I had made such a mess of it that anyone who came to "visit" me was in danger of being destroyed. But He still loved me and was at peace in my mess. WOW! Writing this down is making it real to me. I have had all these feelings mixed up with those dreams, but they were all part of a fog.

Talking to Jon blows away the fog and clears up the truth of my life. Without Jesus I am just a building waiting to fall down. Maybe the church is in the same place.

I know God didn't take our little Steven, but that he used his passing to show me how much he loved me and how much I needed him. Is God trying to use Mark's failure to show Good Shepherd Church how much he loves us and how we have created a mess instead of a place where he can heal and empower our lives? What if we just called another pastor and went on the way we were before? We would just produce another failed pastor, another failed church. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

It's beginning to sound like all those pastors and ministers who have had such horrible failures have been the result of more than just their personal crap. What if God has allowed all these pastors to fall in order to teach us that doing things the way we have been doing them is not his design? In the dream he kept pointing to the plans on the table. That is simple...his plans are written in his word, the Bible.

God, help me not waste this crisis. Help me understand what you want us to do about the way our church works. If you are showing me these things, then I have to do something with them. I know I'm not a pastor. I know that we are supposed to have a pastor, but I also know that if we continue to do the same thing we are going to burn out another husband, father called to also do your work. The problem then, is not the pastor and not the people; the problem is the structure, if I read that building dream correctly.

I don't know who I am in the church. I wonder how many others don't either. What is it that Abby says, "Just changing how you act isn't enough. You have to change

what you believe. THEN your behavior will change on its own.” Can we change what we believe about church? We’ll never know unless we try.

So God heard all my questions. He has defined the problem; now I wonder when I will start getting answers. I can’t just spend all my time asleep hoping that God will talk to me in my dreams. He gave me the “plans”; now I need to work at understanding them. First of all, what is a pastor? We don’t use that word for anything else but the person in the pulpit at church. Jon was saying that we get our word pastor from the Greek word in Eph. 4 that means “shepherd.” I’ve always heard those terms referring to the church, the shepherd and the sheep and our fellowship’s name “Good Shepherd” comes from the scripture that calls Jesus that. But what do people in suburban United States know about sheep?

Maybe we should call ourselves something else, since we are not farmers or ranchers any more. I know that the New Testament is full of agricultural pictures, the shepherd/sheep, planting seeds, pruning, vineyards and all of that. Is there a way for us to understand everything that Jesus was saying if we don’t know anything about the examples that he used?

Jon asked me to do him a favor. He has to be out of town next Friday and he needs someone to meet Mark at the church so he can get some of his stuff out of the office. When he asked me, my stomach turned over like an old Model T Ford—with a groan. I prefer not seeing Mark. It’s all neat and simple when it’s just me and the family at church. I remember my dad talking about divorce when I was a kid. He said the worst part about divorce was that it was like a death in the family, except you keep having to

dig up the corpse and have conversations. That's how I feel about Mark right now. I'd like to leave him in the ground.



## CHAPTER 3

***And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, because it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’” Mark 13:27, 28***

May 27, Monday

Church yesterday was okay. Diane preached. She’s a good Sunday-School teacher; the kids really liked it. I left with a strange craving for graham crackers and Kool-Aid. But things changed when we took communion. She had us come to the front and take the elements and then go share them with someone else that we would like to know better. She said during the “examine your heart” part that we should pray and ask God who we should share the elements with. I have to hand it to her--that was effective.

I would have never thought it possible, and because of that I know it really was God showing me, but I took the elements and walked over to where Jessie was standing. “Hey Jess,” I said feeling foolish. “You know, I’ve never really gotten to know you and I think that has to change now if we are going to make it as a church family.” He was as surprised as I was. There was something powerful that happened there; both of us got choked up. I have never really wanted to talk to him. His aggressive attitude just turned me off; maybe it’s too much like my own. After communion he shook my hand and looked me right in the eye and thanked me. It’s going to be hard to think ornery things about him from now on. I don’t expect him to change but for the first time since I met him, I felt like we were in this thing together. I’ve never even wanted him for a friend and now I’m thinking ‘we’re family?’ That’s got to be God!

*I’m in my van loaded with packages. It must be Christmas. I whistle a tune under my breath, feeling like Santa. I arrive at the first house, cheerfully knock on the door and*

*it opens. I freeze when I am met by a snarling 150-pound pit bull. Bile rises in my throat with the pain as I feel his teeth sink into my leg. The owner of the house steps up and rudely asks what I want. The pain in my leg is excruciating as the searing fire spreads up my thigh. My shin bone begins to splinter in the vise grip of the dog's jaws. I want to scream but I know that I must remain calm and polite to the customer as she continues to stare at me. I hold out the package and ask if this is her name. She says, yes and I attempt to hand it to her. She refuses to take it and tries to shut the door. The dog continues to worry my calf and my vision begins to blur from the pain. It takes all my effort to shake my leg to dislodge the dog. I beg the lady to please help me. She sneers in reply and continues to push the package away from her. In disgust she reaches down, grasping the dog's collar she pulls him inside, his teeth tearing the muscle in my calf. She croons to him sweetly. I am left on the doorstep, package in hand, bits of my pant leg embedded in the punctures that appear like bullet holes in my flesh revealing the defiled bone beneath.*

May 28, Tuesday

I woke up jerking and crying out, grabbing for my leg.

“Dave, honey, what is the matter? Let me get you a drink of water,” Abby said, heading for the bathroom.

When she returned I took a shaky gulp, still caught between two realities. “I had another terrible dream, Abs.” She prayed with me while I asked God what this dream meant. Delivering a package that someone won't take while being bitten by a vicious dog; what could that have to do with the issues at church? Help me, Lord to understand what you are telling me.

Tonight's the congregational meeting. We need to talk about what happened with Mark so we don't repeat it. There needs to be some kind of help for pastors who get in trouble. Since we are independent, we need to find if there a resource for our pastors like they have in denominations. Jon said he would look into that and have some information on what might be available, but we need to step up instead of expecting him to do all this. Not sure what I can do, but I have to start somewhere.

Another thing I want to talk about is finding a new pastor. I wasn't here when they chose Mark; that was so long ago. I'm sure Jessie was. Where do we go to look for a pastor? I know that Mark went to seminary but I don't remember where and I'm not sure he finished. I know a couple churches here in town have pastors that have never been to Bible-School and they seem to be doing okay so maybe seminary is not necessary. Of course, we thought Mark was doing okay until he wasn't. Maybe schooling has nothing to do with it. Before the meeting I'm going to get online and see what I can find out about pastors being overworked.

There have to be other people in the church that wonder about these things. If God's speaking to me, then I know he's speaking to the others as well. If we put our heads together, we should be able to figure out what God wants us to do. If I read that scripture right, if we are each doing what God designed and gifted us to do, then "we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there." If ever someone were tossed, it's the congregation at Good Shepherd. I guess we've had our wakeup call. Time to grow up and stop depending on our pastor to do what we are supposed to be doing, whatever that is....

Just checked on Google and was amazed. (My kids would not believe that I know how to do that.) I started typing in pastors and it helped me with a list of different subjects about pastors. I chose "burnout." Thought that was the closest to what we're facing with Mark. It brought up nearly a million different sites! Even the most conservative statistics are mind boggling. One said as high as 43 percent of pastors' marriages end in divorce because of the pressure of the job. I had no idea. I'm going to print off some of this stuff for the meeting tonight. Seems to me after looking at this, if something doesn't change in the church we'll have a hard time finding someone who

wants to be a pastor. Come to think of it, who *would* want to be a pastor? If the statistics for UPS drivers looked like that, I sure wouldn't take it up as a career choice.

May 29, Wednesday

The weather this morning is beautiful. Feels like summer is here. Smells like it, too. I don't know what kind of flowers those are that Abby planted out back, but they sure smell good. Taking my Bible and my morning coffee out on to the deck for the first time. When I close my eyes I feel like I'm 12 again. No worries, no church, no family woes, just me and the sun and the smell of grass growing. I feel like getting my fishing rigging and going down to the creek. I can almost feel the mud squishing between my toes and hear the flies buzzing around my head. Now when I'm too old and too responsible to run away, I want those days back.

Last night's meeting was a nightmare. This is the kind of crap I want to run away from. I think God would definitely be more present out on the creek than in that sorry place. If that's the way Mark was feeling about all of us, it's no wonder he turned to drink. If I was a drinker I might consider it myself. I thought that I had stumbled on to something worthwhile. I say stumbled on because that's exactly what I did. I mean I didn't get into this church reorganization thing out of love for the operation. I did it because I couldn't avoid it. It was attacking me in the night when I was at its mercy. Maybe it isn't God at all. It's probably my 'fix-it' personality creating delusions.

Last night Jon asked me to share some of the things I thought I was learning from scripture. He told me I could share the dreams if I wanted to, but after they jumped down my throat for "misinterpreting" scripture, I wasn't about to tell them about the weird

dreams I've been having. Don stood up and asked just where I got my *interpretation*. Then he started yammering about how the King James Version is the only one that is right. All the other versions are of the devil. Where did that come from? Don't even want to remember, let alone record, all the arguments *that* started. Wasn't long before everyone was frustrated and angry. I didn't even get a chance to quote the statistics on pastoral burnout. I think I finally understand that "pearls before swine" scripture. There were a few who listened but there were several, about a dozen, that were not about to consider that Mark's failure had anything to do with how the church is run. I didn't say that it did, just that his personal issues weren't helped by being overworked and doing what seemed clear to me that the rest of us were supposed to be doing or at least helping with.

Jennifer Schultz stood up and said that she worked hard enough at her job and taking care of her kids she just wanted to come to church on Sunday and feel the presence of the Lord in worship so that the rest of week would go smoother. I really stepped in it there. I said I didn't see in scripture that that was what we were there for. If that happened it was because of God, but we have some responsibility to Him, too. She got so mad, she gave me the stink eye before stomping out of the meeting.

I'm not sure that I can go back to who I was before I started hearing from God in His word. Abby and I need to talk about this, but how can I continue to go to church with those people when they think I'm a religious fanatic? Not only that, but they refuse to even consider that God means something different than what we are doing. I remember watching "Fiddler on the Roof" when I was a kid with my mom. The church reminds me

of that song *Tradition!* They don't know why they do it, but they have always done it that way so it must be right.

On the way home Abby tried to make me feel better. She talked about giving people time to think about it and we just need to pray that they will hear from God like I did. Heck no! I'm not wasting any more of my time on them. That one guy, I don't even know his name (don't think I've seen him at church more than a half dozen times in the past year) saying that it's the pastor's job to do the work; that's what he gets paid for. Jon tried to tell him that Mark didn't get paid much at all. That's when it got really stupid. The guy said, "Well he shouldn't get paid much! God called him to be a pastor and so he shouldn't be doing it for the money anyway. He should do it because it's what God wants." Then Don got back in the mix with, "Humility! That's what pastors need. They should get what they need from the Lord, not from running around being social butterflies. If Mark had spent more time here and less running around doing work the County should be doing, we wouldn't be in this fix. He's supposed to be caring for our souls, not the people living on the dole!"

I wonder how much of that stuff Mark had to put up with all these years. I'm starting to feel sorry for him. Jon told everyone how much Mark was paid and I was shocked! I wouldn't have done what he did for all those years for that pittance, and he had just gotten a raise. Actually, they call it a housing allowance for tax purposes, but I doubt if it did much more than make his mortgage payment.

The consensus from the meeting is that we should try to find an interim pastor while we go through the call process for a replacement. Jon said that he had done some research and found an organization that puts retired pastors in touch with churches like

ours who need someone while in transition between leaders. He's going to find out if there's someone near us who would be willing to do that. I don't know how much it's going to cost, but it had better not be much because our offerings have fallen off since Mark left and it doesn't look like we are going to have a great influx of new members.

I don't know how Jon does it. He may not be doing it for long if they don't step up and help him. Those people are demanding, insulting, and selfish. After just one meeting of going out on that limb, I'm ready to quit. It's amazing to me that it took Mark all that time to implode. Instead of drinking out of the bottle, he should have just hit a couple of those jackasses over the head with it.

Maybe I don't need to go to church anymore. Abby and the kids and I can have church all by ourselves. Yeah, why not? If the church we were attending had it all wrong, then we couldn't be any worse than that.

Bible study tonight. Great. It's my fault they are meeting so I will show up, but I'm not saying anything. I offloaded everything I had last night and it didn't fly, so I'm done.

May 30, Thursday

Last night was interesting. I had decided to sit there and not say anything. We didn't have a leader. We were supposed to choose someone last night. Everyone just sat there and looked at each other. Proof of what I said. No one there has been equipped to do the work of the ministry. I think most of us would have welcomed Mark back with open arms, felony arrest and all. Jon was there, but he refused to lead. Said he was already doing more than he could justify to his partners and family. He can't afford to

spend any more on the church. He's right. I think we'd just make him into another Mark only without the measly paycheck.

If ever we had proof that we were out of God's order, it was last night. We sat there and stared at each other for about 15 minutes. Abby finally suggested that we pray. She led out and then others chimed in. There was a lot of "God have mercy," and "grant us wisdom." Georgia started off with, "God forgive..." and then came the list of all the people in the church who are "in sin" which included just about everyone who wasn't in attendance, most particularly Mark and Martha. Dear God, what do you do with someone like that? She finally ran out of steam in about 10 minutes. After a long awkward pause Abby gave me the 'elbow' of encouragement and I said, "Amen."

We finally decided that we would use Ephesians for our study and we would take turns leading it. Everyone piped in with rules of engagement. No talk about the past. Only positive input. No gossip. We are there to study the Bible, not past failings. We're going to meet in homes on Thursdays at 7 pm and end the study precisely at 8:30 so folks can get home and put kids to bed. Diane produced a sign-up sheet to host and lead. Abby put us down for next Thursday. Maybe by then I will be a little more enthusiastic. I doubt it.

I really thought I was hearing from God. Maybe I wasn't. Maybe it was just a combination of the hurt feelings and anger and not wanting to let go of something that should die. I have always thought being the church was easy. Now I'm not so sure. This is like when I got my driver's permit and dad said that I was now responsible and had to grow up. I remember he would quiz me about the streets we had to take. If he was driving on a trip, once we got there, I would have to tell him how to get home. "Pay attention," he would say. "You need to be able to navigate around town."



Phone... Well, I'll be...that was Jessie. He apologized for calling me so early but he remembered that I said I had been getting up early to read the Bible and pray. (I didn't say that I was writing in a journal. They don't need to know everything.) He wants to talk to me sometime before the next congregational meeting. You could have knocked me over with a feather. He liked what I had to say at the last meeting. I thought that because he didn't say anything, he was just disgusted with me. Just the opposite.

He says that what I was talking about he had encountered years ago, before Mark came. He wants to compare notes. If someone were to suggest that I would have a heart-to-heart about God's design for the church with Jessie, I would have laughed them out of town. I guess we will see what it's about Saturday afternoon.

*I follow his gaze into the valley where the sheep are grazing and the lambs are playing. He notices one sheep unable to stand. Her back is downhill and she is unable to get her feet under her weight and rise. She has struggled for so long that the earth around her is plowed up and the sod displaced, creating an even greater depression for her to overcome. She lies panting in fatigue and discouragement. Jesus calmly walks to her and gently places his foot beneath her back and lifts. He exerts only the slightest pressure, but it is enough for her to brace against and she quickly jumps to her feet, runs a short distance and returns to eating as if nothing had interfered with her meal. He looks at me and smiles, indicating that I should join him. Joyfully, I walk toward him, proud to be noticed and excited to hear him speak. There are several sheep in the same predicament scattered along the hillside. He shrugs his shoulders and spreads his hands as if to invite me to assist him in the rescue. Copying what he did, I put my foot beneath the first one. I push too hard and send the sheep staggering across the grass. It's not as easy as he makes it look. I hesitate and turn to him, unsure and needing his approval. He smiles and demonstrates a second time. I make adjustments and try again, anxious to please, this time with better results but as I look at Him I see that He has returned to the first sheep that has again lain down with her back downhill. He gently repeats his actions. She rises and walks away. I go to him and we continue to rescue the sheep across the hill. I enjoy working with Him, but I really want to return to our leisure time on the grass. I turn to go back, and behind us there are all the sheep we just rescued back in the same position, plus another dozen that have lain down and are trapped, unable to right themselves. I'm frustrated. I shake my head in disgust and turn to commiserate with Him about the dumb sheep, only to see Him grinning. He rights the original ewe for the third time. His demeanor has not changed, even though he has rescued her from her own*

*stupidity three times in as many minutes. Stunned, I approach the sheep, hoping to see some excuse for her inability to keep from getting into trouble. She turns and looking over her shoulder I am shocked to see in her eye a reflection of my own face.*

May 31, Friday

God help me with Mark today. I don't want to see him, but I know that since it has to happen sometime, might as well be now. If I can share communion with Jessie when he's always been so obnoxious, I should be able to meet Mark. I guess I have been feeling like a disappointed kid whose hero turns out to have feet of clay. I wonder if I have learned anything since all this happened. God, have I changed? Can I let Mark fail? The most important thing in my life happened when I failed, miserably. Maybe this is Mark's moment and his failure can be the best thing that has happened to him. God, you seem to show up when we are at our worst and need you the most. Seems like Mark needs you more now than ever before. I don't want to get in the way of that. God, be for Mark what you were for me five years ago. Mark was there with you, God. He held you out to me. Are you asking me to return the favor?

Dear God, what have I done? It all seemed so simple. Abby and I showed up at the church and let Mark into the office. He said, "Are you watching me to make sure I don't take anything of value?" If only I had kept my mouth shut. Instead, I snapped back, "You've already taken the only thing of value in here. Our respect for you." His response, "Seems it wasn't that long ago you were sniveling in that chair wanting to put a bullet in your own head, Dave."

Then the world stopped. Everything went to slow motion. The pumping of my heart beat slowly against my chest and I could feel its thump...thump...thump as my

breath expanded my lungs with no exhaling of relief. The pent-up rage suspended me in the air for an eternity until it focused on his sneering face. Uncontrollable hatred closed the door on reason.

I am no better than Mark. I have failed Abby, my children, and God. Maybe He shouldn't have stopped my hand five years ago. I am done.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "About Duke Divinity School." Duke Divinity School Be Transformed By The Renewing Of Your Minds. <http://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/clergy-health-initiative/about> (accessed August 09, 2011).
- "About Alban." Alban - Building Up Congregations and Their Leaders. <http://www.alban.org/> (accessed July 19, 2011).
- Anderson, Ray Sherman. *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- "Barna Examines Trends in 14 Religious Factors over 20 Years (1991 to 2011)." The Barna Group. July 26, 2011. <http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/504-barna-examines-trends-in-14-religious-factors-over-20-years-1991-to-2011?q=volunteerism> (accessed March 17, 2012).
- "Barna Reviews Top Religious Trends of 2005." The Barna Group. December 20, 2005. <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/166-barna-reviews-top-religious-trends-of-2005?q=church+attendance/> (accessed February 22, 2012).
- Barth, Markus. *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by Markus Barth*. Garden-City, NY: Doubleday, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Traditions in Ephesians." *New Testament Studies* 30, no. 01 (1984): 3-25.
- Best, Ernest. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998.
- Bruce, F. F., and E. K. Simpson. *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians: the English Text*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1965.
- "Clergy Development Home Page." Clergy Development, Counseling for Nazarene Clergy. 2011. <http://www.nazarenepastor.org/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=228> (accessed September 2, 2011).
- Corsini, Raymond J., and Danny Wedding, eds. *Current Psychotherapies*. 5th ed. Itasca: F. E. Peacock, Illinois.
- "Courses." A.W. Tozer Theological Seminary. 2010. <http://tozer.simpsonu.edu/Pages/Academics/Courses.htm> (accessed July 11, 2011).
- Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, and William Arndt. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

- Dawn, Marva J., and H. Eugene Peterson. *The Unnecessary Pastor: Rediscovering the Call*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999.
- DeSilva, David Arthur. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- "ECC Vocational Ministry Constancy: Retreats." Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) . Accessed August 23, 2011. <http://www.covchurch.org/vocational-ministry/spe/retreats/> (accessed September 2, 2011).
- Elwell, Walter A. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Erdman, Chris W. "Entering the Wreckage: Grief and Hope in Jeremiah, and the Prescribing of the Pastoral Vocation in a Time of Geopolitical Crisis." *International Review of Mission* April 2003 (April 1, 2003): 169-77.
- Evans, Craig A., and Stanley E. Porter. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Francis, Leslie J., Peter Hills, and Peter Kaldor. "The Oswald Clergy Burnout Scale: Reliability, Factor Structure and Preliminary Application Among Australian Clergy." *Pastoral Psychology* 57, no. 5-6 (January 2009): 243-52.
- Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. New York: Guilford Press, 1985.
- Hart, Archibald D. *Coping with Depression in the Ministry and Other Helping Professions*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984.
- Hoehner, Harold W. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002.
- Hoge, David R., and Jacqueline E. Wenger. "Experiences of Protestant Ministers Who Left Local Ministry." Report presented to the Religious Research Association, Norfolk, VA. October 25, 2003.
- "How Faith Varies by Church Size." The Barna Group. 2009  
<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/289-how-faith-varies-by-church-size?q=church+attendance> (accessed February 22, 2012).
- Kelly, Mark. "Pastors' Work Hours Tallied in New Survey." Baptist Press. January 6, 2010. <http://bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=31993> (accessed February 27, 2012).

- Krejcir, Richard J. "Statistics on Pastors, What's Going on with Pastors in America." Into Thy Word Ministries. 2007. [http://www.intothyword.org/articles\\_view.asp? - articleid=36562&columnid=id=53513](http://www.intothyword.org/articles_view.asp?articleid=36562&columnid=id=53513) (accessed February 27, 2012).
- Lilly Endowment Inc. - 2011 National Clergy Renewal Program. <http://www.clergyrenewal.org/> (accessed August 23, 2011).
- Lincoln, Andrew T. *Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 42. Ephesians. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990.
- Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *Christian Unity: an Exposition of Ephesians 4:1 to 16*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- London, H. B., and Neil B. Wiseman. *Pastors at Greater Risk*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Pastors at Risk: Help for Pastors, Hope for the Church*. Wheaton, Ill., USA: Victor Books, 1993.
- Marlowe, Michael D. "The Westminster Confession of Faith." Bible Research by Michael Marlowe. 1996. <http://bible-researcher.com/> (accessed November 25, 2011).
- Meek, Katheryn R., Mark R. McMinn, and Craig M. Brower. "Maintaining Personal Resiliency: Lessons Learned from Evangelical Protestant Clergy." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* Winter, no. 2003 (January 1, 2003): 339-47.
- Mitton, C. Leslie. *Ephesians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981.
- Moehler, R. Albert. "The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It's Our Problem." AlbertMoehler.com. October 14, 2005 <http://www.albertmoehler.com/2005/10/14/the-scandal-of-biblical-illiteracy-its-our-problem/> (Accessed March 08, 2012).
- Morris, Leon. *Expository Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994.
- Murphy, Rich. "Statistics about Pastors." Maranatha Life. 2002. <http://maranathalife.com/lifeline/stats.htm> (accessed June 12, 2011).
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Bread for the Journey: a Daybook of Wisdom and Faith*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006.
- Olsen, David C., and William N. Grosch. "Clergy Burnout: A Self Psychology and Systems Perspective." *The Journal of Pastoral Care* XLV, no. 3 (1991): 297-304.

- Oswald, Roy M. *Clergy Self-care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry*. Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1991.
- Rohr, Richard. *Falling Upward: a Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.
- Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2008.
- Scheib, Karen D. "Why Do Clergy Experience Burnout?" *Quarterly Review, A Journal of Theological Resources for Ministry*, Spring 2003, 23, no. 1, 78-84.
- Schnackenburg, Rudolf. *Ephesians: A Commentary*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991.
- Simpson, E. K., and F. F. Bruce. *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians: the English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*. Grand Rapids, MI, 1975.
- Smith, Jr., Henry B. "Biblical Illiteracy." *Bible and Spade*, 22, no. 1 (September 9, 2008).
- Smith, Patricia. "What Is Compassion Fatigue?" Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project. 2010. <http://compassionfatigue.org/pages/compassionfatigue.html> (accessed July 11, 2011).
- Snodgrass, Klyne. *Ephesians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.
- Stewart, Carlyle F. III. "Why Do Clergy Experience Burnout?" *Quarterly Review, A Journal of Theological Resources for Ministry*, Spring 2003, 23, no. 1, 78-81.
- Stone, Randy. "Ten Trends Impacting American Churches (Part 2)." SBC Today. October 3, 2011. <http://sbctoday.com/2011/10/13/ten-trends-impacting-american-churches-part-2/> (accessed March 16, 2012).
- Stott, John R. W. *The Message Of Ephesians*. I. V. P., 1984.
- The Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1997.
- Tozer, A. W. *Man, the Dwelling Place of God*. Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1966.
- Tubbs, Brian. "What Most Congregations Want From Their Pastor and Church And Why It's Not Biblical!" Truth-Based Living. December 15, 2011. <http://pastortubbs.com/what-most-congregations-want-from-their-pastor-and-church-and-why-its-not-biblical.html> (accessed March 16, 2012).
- "UCME - Clergy Development - Soul Care." UCME, Clergy Development, Soul Care.

2011. <http://www.nazarenepastor.org/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=228> (accessed September 2, 2011).

Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002.

Wright, Vinita Hampton. *The Soul Tells a Story: Engaging Creativity with Spirituality in the Writing Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.