THE PASTOR'S EXIT

by

Menno H. Epp

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The Dynamics of Involuntary Termination

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Cover design: *Gerald Loewen, Winnipeg*

FOREWORD

As Mennonite congregations have moved toward a professional model of pastoral ministry in recent decades, they have faced new challenges in selecting, supporting, evaluating, and terminating pastoral leaders. In a tradition which fiercely defends congregational autonomy, there has been an unfortunate absence of uniform guidelines, procedures, and standards for assisting congregations in these matters. As a result pastoral transitions in congregations have frequently been clouded by misunderstanding, pain, and guilt.

In this book Dr. Menno Epp draws on his careful analyses of the dynamics involved in the involuntary terminations of pastors to suggest ways that pastor-congregation relationships can be nurtured and evaluations of pastors handled in a redemptive way. Epp believes that conflict and anger in a congregation's relationship with its pastor is to be expected. His intention is to provide both congregation and pastor with help for making peace and reconciliation a reality in congregational life.

While this book will find its most eager audience in denominations with a congregational polity, it speaks to leadership issues of concern to those in synodal and episcopal polities as well. Theology students, pastors, pastoral educators, pastoral search committees, congregational boards, conference and denominational personnel officers and committees, and bishops will all find here both sobering and promising reading. The book contains agenda for congregations, denominations, schools of theology, and pastors. The recommendations which are included indicate the direction to be taken in dealing with some of the identified agenda. While these recommendations apply most immediately to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, they have the potential to stimulate useful discussion in other denominations in Canada and beyond.

Throughout the centuries pastors have been charged with the responsibility of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling those entrusted to their care. Recently there has been a new awareness that the one who gives care also needs care. This book strengthens this awareness and challenges congregations and pastors to nurture each other when it is most difficult.

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May, 1984

This Project-Dissertation was submitted to the Doctor of Ministry Committee of St. Stephen's College in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Ministry.

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INTRODUCTION

A. The Origin of this Project

The initial compelling motive for my choice of this topic emerged while serving a number of churches in the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta as part-time Conference pastor. Conflict, involving pastors in each situation, threatened the unity in these communities. The topic grew on me as I became aware that nine of the fourteen churches in the constituency had experienced the involuntary termination of their pastors, a few as many as two or three times.

With the help of provincial Conference ministers, I looked beyond Alberta to find at least forty more pastors who had been terminated since my graduation from college twenty-five years earlier. In the course of defining the scope and limitations of this project I was pushed by the Committee, Director and Supervisor of the ecumenical Doctor of Ministry Program, based in Edmonton, to explore my own (intra and interpersonal),and family history in conflict, as an exercise in greater self-understanding. I came to accept that I was also a potential candidate for involuntary termination, as are all pastors, particularly in the mono-pastoral system.

In being in touch with conflict in my own life, in my own family, and in my church as pastor, I felt I would perhaps better understand and empathize with those persons in our Conference constituency who had suffered involuntary termination.

The vision of a church being "without spot or wrinkle," love for fellow pastors and the Church, the need to explore in my own spirit the dynamics in my own leadership ministries, the calling of the Chief Shepherd to feed the flock of God, represented the driving forces in the project. I could not look back, although the temptations were many.

In moving on I was affirmed and encouraged by many pastors, particularly those who had been hurt. A few pastors cautioned, "You (too) will get hurt." In the caution I sensed not only the loving protection of other pastors, but the more subtle and persistent temptation in the ministry toward the avoidance of pain and conflict.

One brother, upon hearing of my intentions, disappointingly said, "Menno, why choose such a negative topic?" I reflected on that query and it dawned on me that not to address these concerns was "negative." To sweep the issues, that involve so many of us and affect the ministry and the healthful growth of the church, under the rug, seemed "negative" to me. Also, the fear of facing this phenomenon in the constituency of our commitment, seemed "negative." With those additional insights, I pressed on.

B. The Definition of Involuntary Termination

The involuntary termination of pastors covers a wide spectrum of experiences. The term defines a dismissal as well as any termination which happens under perceived duress. This latter form appears in subtle as well as not so subtle configurations. Sometimes the pressure placed upon the pastor is informal, that is a person or group of persons not linked to the official structures, requests the pastor to resign with a hint that "if you don't, other action will follow." At other times the pressure comes from the church board or committee like, "We decided against making a recommendation to the congregation regarding the continuing service of our pastor." The pastor may interpret this as non-confidence and resign. Involuntary termination may also include situations where the conditions in the congregation are such that make it difficult, perhaps unintentionally, for the pastor to work productively. The pastor resigns without anyone asking him to.

This project therefore focuses on situations where the pastor feels pressured to make a choice, or where the choice is made for him by others. All the variations between these points are included in the term involuntary termination.

Involuntary termination, hereafter also abbreviated as I—T, is not only an event but also a process. There is a history of issues, personalities and decisions which become intertwined. The ripples from the conflict that precipitate I—T, move out in ever-widening circles sometimes affecting many persons, families, churches, communities and conferences. I—T is not an isolated event. In some cases the after-shocks jar the lives of people, particularly the children of the pastor, into the next generation. Conflict of this kind is therefore taken seriously in this project.

C. The Purpose of this Study

While the intent of this paper is to meet the requirements of a five-year study program, its larger purpose is to create awareness in the churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada of a hurtful practice in that community. Other purposes, emerging naturally from this basic objective, are:

1) to provide a stimulus to a necessary and ongoing discussion regarding pastor-congregation relationships and the nature of leadership in our churches;

2) to ensure that the story of the hurting pastor, his family and the church, are heard (it is hoped that the story alone will effect greater sensitivity to those whom we have called to lead us);

3) to alert the pastor and the congregation to the tension between what we perceive to be the biblical ideal and what we experience as the real;

4) to encourage, by means of this study, steady and healthful growth of the body of Christ, here defined as a partnership of ministers;

5) to raise our awareness of the productive potential of conflict and anger; and beyond this,

6) to ask the question of the viability of the mono-pastoral pattern of ministry for an Anabaptist/Mennonite congregation.

D. The Scope of this Project

Following World War II many Mennonite young women and men, individuals and families left the rural community to pursue other than the traditional agriculture-oriented vocations. Many entered the universities and other institutions. Refugees from Europe and the USSR joined the pilgrimage to the city. Subsequently, churches were organized and mission workers, now called pastors, were called to give pastoral leadership. The need for trained leadership emerged. The mono-pastoral pattern for the city churches was a foregone conclusion. The rural communities followed suit.

The transition for the Mennonite Church has not been easy. Pastor-congregation relationships have been difficult, resulting in numerous I—T's.

In this study unless otherwise mentioned, "Mennonite Church" means, the churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. These five churches, approximately one hundred and fifty in the five western provinces, are of European Mennonite background, Dutch-German in their ethnicity, Russian/Soviet in their citizenship. Most of these churches are also affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church, embracing approximately three hundred and fifty churches in Canada, United States of America and South

America.

Chapter I gives personal, biblical, theological, and historical background to this project, specifically in the areas of leadership and conflict. It offers the orientation and context of the project.

Chapter II represents the cumulative evidence of the experience of thirty-five pastors and representing thirty churches in I—T. This material was accumulated through personal interviews of both pastors and church representatives.

Chapter III focuses on the agenda that is derived from the material that was accumulated from pastors and churches alike. This chapter is not so presumptuous as to offer solutions to the malady of I--T, but offers direction and agenda items for our mutual pilgrimage in ministry.

Chapter IV lists specific recommendations which emerge out of the agenda of Chapter III.

Chapter V represents the response of numerous persons in Conference leadership positions to the foregoing recommendations. This chapter includes also my response to the various submissions.

This project cannot be an all-inclusive commentary on the well-being of the Mennonite Church. It focuses, instead, on the issue of pastor-congregation relationships as experienced in I—T. While it points a finger at some crucial inadequacies, the project is limited to telling one part of the story. No attempt is made here to recount all the caring ministries and relationships that characterize so much of the congregational landscape, but it speaks to an area of ministry where caring is insufficiently applied. Moreover, this account does not report on all the loving and responsible relationships that pervade within the church community, but again, it deliberately focuses on some relationships where love is withheld. In the midst of all the reconciling ministries that are happening this study is basically directed toward pastor-congregation relationships where anger and conflict are left unresolved, where healing cannot take place, and where as a result, a ministry is suffering.

I am writing this project for the churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, but the concern extends also to other Mennonite Churches and to the broader ecumenical community. The dynamics present in the Conference of Mennonites in Canada has significance far beyond the Mennonite Church.

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CHAPTER I

PERSONAL, BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL,

AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

In the church, ministry describes a way of relating to persons. It is something caring people do for others. Ministering may be described in the sharing of a helpful word or the doing of a kind deed. Jesus was regarded by his followers as the model minister. During his three and one-half years of ministry Jesus prepared a group of followers who would continue this work on his behalf. Upon his leaving them he promised them a helper, known to the church as the Holy Spirit. This helper would come to them in the form of power. When this power descended upon them a whole new movement in ministry was born. This was the church, a close-knit body of caring persons, committed to Jesus, to each other and to ministry. In their concern for leadership they would remember Jesus as their servant-leader. In their struggle to be the church they would experience disagreements and conflict. In being misunderstood they were to experience rejection and suffering.

The task of this chapter is to discover for myself, although certainly not exhaustively, the nature of ministry, specifically in the areas of leadership and conflict. I am guided in this pursuit by two existential questions: "How do I lead?" and, "How do I deal with conflict?"

A. How do I Lead?

Following studies at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, I was called to give pastoral leadership to a visible [1]community of disciples -- the Foothills Mennonite Church.

In the early exercise of that pastoral function it became important to understand, at least in part, the history of expectations and assumptions of the leadership role in the context of that community.

The expectations of a new pastor are often based upon the strengths and weaknesses of previous pastors and may be influenced also by leadership models dominant in the surrounding community. These models, which rather subtly inform our expectations, can be described generally as pyramidical, hierarchical, authoritarian, and success and power-oriented. A biblical tradition is generally assumed and not questioned.

Thus, when I was installed as pastor (I had been ordained as a lay minister earlier in life), I was affirmed as "the coach of the team." It was understood, the church was the team. I was reminded that as coach I was also a member of the team. The coach is a servant, I was told. He/she serves the whole team. His/her concern stretches to the playing and non-playing members alike. He/she will be hurt by a critical and insensitive team when his/her weaknesses show and sometimes affirmed when his/her strengths and successes are observed. The coach engages the team members on the basis of their devotion, giftedness, and competencies. This leadership model, I felt initially, came closest to what I understood the servant model to be. So, I agreed with Henry J. Schmidt, who says, the coach type of leadership "most closely approximates the biblical concept of leadership and is most consistent with our emphasis on brotherhood, discipleship, and consensus." [2]

This imagery, taken from professional sports, is useful in describing also what such a model permits when identifying with it too closely. We have observed that a coach's job is dependent upon his/her performance and the performance of the playing team. The power of the non-playing but paying spectators is obvious. When the coach and the playing team perform well, measured by attendance, economic factors, wins, and favorable media coverage, and perhaps by innumerable subjective considerations, the coach and the players are lauded. But when the fortunes of the team are reversed, perhaps not served well by both objective and subjective criteria, the coach is "cooled out" or fired. The crowd must be appeased. In the language of Scripture, a scapegoat must be found. The lamb must be slain. This analogy finds its parallel in the experience of the prophets, Jesus, and now many pastors.

As I observed it in the history of the Foothills Church, the pastor was, like a coach, a dependent, not an interdependent member of the team. The difference is crucial. As a dependent person the pastor has not been fully accepted into membership. At the least the acceptance is conditional to his/her performance. The performance in turn is measured by innumerable subjective criteria applied by a voluntary membership. Where the church is individualistically oriented and the sense of interdependence and partnership is weak the

position of a single pastor is highly vulnerable and hazardous. The pastor's place among the membership is therefore tentative and insecure.

While it is hazardous and insecure, there is hardly a ministry more challenging than to be in partnership with God and the people as earthen vessels, participating in the formation of the covenant community where the whole body is "joined and knit together. . . working properly. . .and upbuilds itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).[3] It is fulfilling to experience the church as more than the periodic gathering together of numerous loosely related individuals. Let there be no mistake, the *koinonia*[4] of the New Testament is more than the comraderie felt among friends, it is more than transient association, it is certainly more than the bonds of an ethnic group with its own commonalities like culture or historical background; it is more than group activities, although all of these associations and activities may contribute towards bonds of loyalty within the church. The church envisioned by Jesus is based upon a common experience and identification with the Christ and it lives that experience in a common commitment in obedience, expressed in mutual regard and in a partnership ministry. The authenticity of such a church is known and tested by the quality of its interdependent relationships, its sense of partnership and fellowship.

In the experience of the Foothills Church the "coach" model has come up short. During its initial fifteen-year history all three pastors terminated involuntarily. A pattern once confirmed is not easily changed. I asked, can "brotherhood, discipleship, and consensus" be present in the trauma and tragedy of terminating the ministry of a "servant of God's servants"?[5] Hardly! The power and politics of a christian community are keenly felt by a pastor and easily immobilize the servant and the whole team in ministry. The "coach" model in some of its parts represents a power model, only the power flow is reversed. The congregation, or parts of it, exercise lordship over the pastor.

The servant model of Jesus stands over-against contemporary power models. In the mediation of a dispute among the disciples at the Last Supper (Luke 22:25-26), and already earlier on the way to Jerusalem (Matthew 20: 25-28; Mark 10:35-45), Jesus said, Gentile rulers "lord it over" and "great" persons "exercise authority." Our natural tendency to rule others and the temptation to revert to Gentile models is ever present in the church.

As Gary Harder has observed, "Most organizations use a hierarchical model of leadership." In this model "authority and power increase as you move to the top."[6] Jesus, as we have noted, rejects this model with the stern, "but not so among you." Paul, in follow-

ing the servanthood model of Jesus, presents what Harder calls the congregational model. "In this model, "he says, "power, status and authority are replaced with gifts, functions and responsibility."[7] While emphasis is right, one can agree with this statement only in part. Authority was given to Paul and the church, "for building. . . up and not for destroying. . ." (II Corinthians 10: 8; cf II Corinthians 13:10). Paul recognizes here both the positive and negative use of authority. The same is true for power. Both words are occasionally used side by side as in Ephesians 1:21. The subtle difference between the two is described by Ralph Lebold: "Authority. . .is the right to act or function within a certain framework with a given mandate. Power is the energizing force in one's functioning."[8] Authority and power are both gifts of God to be exercised responsibly within the church. The authority given to the new community proceeds not from exaltation but humility, not from a need to control but from an attitude of servanthood.

When I was installed as pastor at Foothills, a brother, speaking on behalf of the congregation, authorized me to function in the capacity of pastor as defined in that church. The powers that God planted into my person -- voice, sensitivity, self-discipline, assertiveness, etc., were energies to be used in exercising the authority given.

Authority and power are actually positive qualities in ministry that cannot be divorced from servant leadership. But it is *how* these are exercised that makes the difference. When the body is edified authority and power have been exercised appropriately. When mutuality is lost and persons in the church feel a sense of an over/under relationship, a Gentile model has emerged among us.

In my experience the mono-pastor pattern is easily prone to a violation of the servant role. His/her serving "among" the people of God is made difficult in at least two ways: The church sets him/her apart through ordination and installation, and the pastor may set himself/herself apart because of it.

When I was ordained as a lay minister, the deacons from that moment on altered their attitude and conduct towards me. As though I had achieved a status not accorded to me earlier! In the history of the Mennonite Church the possibility of repeated ordinations (up to three times: deacon, minister, elder/bishop), altered the status and authority.[9] In the perception of the people the ordained become "great" ones in their midst. In the words of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, he/she becomes the "prima donna"[10] of the church.

Theoretically, Mennonites agree that ordination does not confer special status upon a believer. Bernard Cooke reports that the Reformers, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli also agreed that "ordination causes no sacramental character in the minister."[11] Yet, we observe

that such imposition is made by the general public and within the church as well.

Mennonites, says Paul M. Miller, have not been immune to clericalism. 'Clericalism," he says, "carries the explicit assumption that ordination has conferred indelible grace upon the soul and has lifted the ordained person to a separate order of believers."[12] The priesthood of believers, so dear in our theology, is denied in clericalism. As an alternative he, as well as John H. Neufeld, suggest that "a brotherhood which observes believers'[13] baptism may well consider baptism as the preliminary ordination of all laity."[14] That seems right, for in the life of Jesus public ministry followed immediately upon his baptism and the temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22).[15]

The expectations of the church as well as the role models in our personal history· confirm for a pastor that he/she is "someone other." Whether there is a change in his/her self-identity through ordination and/or installation cannot always be ascertained. One pastor claimed that his leadership was not to be contested because he was the "anointed of the Lord." Of another it was said, "He is two different persons -- his pastoral and personal identity do not agree." Having been tainted by pyramidical models it is all too easily assumed that a pastor is hired to single-handedly provide ministry to saintly recipients and to control the direction of that ministry, no matter what the size of the congregation. If he/she does well there is considerable appreciation and glory. If he/she is insecure, as I was in earlier years, he/she may be threatened when challenged, or when he/she is not consulted or invited to every committee meeting. In any case, a distancing takes place.

I have been contemplating whether a theology of discipleship and self-denial has constrained pastors to appear pure and shining examples of what the flock should be like: nice, smiling, never angry, active, punctual, consistent, never frustrated, tough, caring and loving. These, to be sure, are desirable qualities for any member including the pastor, but they may also be self-inflicted expectations and represent less than the truth. In our need to be needed, or in our fear of being defrocked, pastors also overcompensate through long days of work. Eventually our inadequacies appear in the cracks. Expectations increase with performance and growth. Keeping busy makes one less vulnerable to criticism, we think. Pastors distance themselves through fear. I was recently compelled to examine myself when a fellow member accusingly pointed out, "You pastors think you are gods." We do not believe it, but perhaps we make it appear as though we do. The perspective of Paul on our status as "earthen vessels" is, therefore, comforting (II Corinthians 4:7). Only, pastors need to

accept themselves as such, and secretly they wish to be accepted as such by fellow members.

Clergy/laity distinctions and distance are created by pastor and people alike. This dichotomy was a gradual development in the history of the church as well, and, according to Bernard Cooke, present in an "identifiable form by the beginning of the fourth century."[16] Markus Barth agrees, this dichotomy "does not belong to the church. Rather, the whole church, the whole community of all saints together, is the clergy appointed by God for the ministry to and for the world."[17] Somehow it is an issue which must be examined in every generation.

That is the intent. The church is the people of God in ministry. All members are priests and ministers.[18] The pastors among them are gifts to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4). It is in reference to this point that a radical reorientation of expectations takes place in the church. The pastor cannot be gifted, through training or otherwise, to function in all the capacities expected of him/her by the contemporary church. The gift of shepherding is only one of many gifts distributed to the church for healthful functioning (I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; Romans 12).[19]

Therefore, when the church calls a pastor the call needs to come in this form: "Come and help us do ministry," instead of the call as it is currently experienced by many pastors, "Come and do ministry for us." The latter is not negated, however, in the former. This approach places the responsibility of ministry clearly in the lap of the partnership instead of in the pastor. When this basic issue is addressed, adjustments in the expectations and structures will take place. This reorientation may result in a return to the multiple lay ministry as the Mennonite Church has known it in parts of its history. Although it presumably was a lay movement, it not only helpfully set persons apart for certain functions, we acknowledge over/under relationships developed, none the less. This propensity toward position and status, as with the disciples, deserves constant re-examination. John C. Harris, speaking from the context of another tradition, says, "The pastor's authority evolves not from canonical law or religious belief, as it did fifty years ago, but much more from a reciprocal understanding with the laity about the task of the church and the framework of expectations in which both will work together."[20]

Supportive of the concept of partnership but speaking specifically to a multiple ministry system, Richards and Hoeldtke say, "When the New Testament speaks of leadership, it usually speaks in the plural. . .our contemporary approach that tends to exalt a single 'pastor' to a lonely place atop the organizational chart is without biblical precedent. Instead, the Bible seems to indicate a multiple, local,

lay leadership team."[21]   This multiple lay leadership pattern practised by most Mennonite churches in Prussia, Russia and North and South America, was largely abandoned with the gradual introduction of the mono-pastoral system, following World War II.   The introduction came because of changing social conditions, not because of theological reflection.   Now Mennonite voices[22] are being heard affirming that, more than any other pattern, the New Testament leans toward a team ministry.   Still, what is perhaps more important than the pattern, whether team or single, is the sense of partnership that the pastor feels in ministry with the rest of the congregation.

A servanthood ministry model is also an integrated model. That is, ministry cannot be isolated from the minister. In this regard, Jesus was a superb example.   Speaking of him, James Smart says, "What Jesus said, what he was, what he did are all aspects of a single reality."[23]   As Jesus, so have others been known. Francis of Assissi (1182-1226), inspired by the love of Christ, abandoned a life of wealth and revelry, in order to proclaim the kingdom of God, living a life of poverty as he went. Francis is known in history by this legacy of devotion.[24]   Menno Simons (1496-1561), a priest in the Netherlands, renounced his professional position in the established church "that I might preach His exalted and adorable name and Holy Word unadulterated and make manifest His truth to His Praise."[25] Simons is known in the church for his faithful teaching of Scripture under severe testing. Church history and family histories are dotted with illustrations of beautiful people ministering effectively. My pastor-father was such a man. Long after his death, people spoke of him as through the experience of ministry. He was known in the community as a caring, loving, sacrificial and supportive person.

It is in the quality of the ministry that a person is characterized. In Jesus, person and ministry came together most persuasively. The stress is therefore placed on the quality of the person in ministry rather than in the skills or competencies that a person brings to ministry.   The latter, however, find their greater importance and empowerment in the quality of the person. Paul clearly placed gifts for ministry in that perspective. He suggested strongly that the gift or function of ministry, like speaking, was of no avail unless that ministry was shared in love (I Corinthians 13). Humbly the pastor acknowledges that God uses an "earthen vessel" (II Corinthians 4:7) through whom and in whom ministry may proceed. In this there is encouragement not only for pastors but for all servants in the church. God empowers, what appears by human standards to be incompetent, inadequate "crock-pots" to be couriers of ministry!

In the christian church the minister and the message become the ministry. As with Jesus, an incarnational ministry is a ministry

of both word and deed. They are inextricably linked and seldom separable. Such ministry proceeds from a person who himself/herself is congruent in faith and life. And service, whether in the proclamation of the Word, or in the act of a menial service, is seen as a ministry to Christ (Matthew 25). As we shall see, a ministry in the name of Christ and on behalf of Christ is not without conflict, for leadership and conflict are inevitable and generally uncomfortable companions in ministry.

B. How Do I Deal With Conflict in Ministry?

In an editorial, Paul D. Robbins says, ". . .the price of ministry is high. Few Christian leaders escape at least one devastating, crunching experience during their lifetimes."[26] The record in the Mennonite Church would certainly support this contention. Recent articles in the Mennonite press have focused on the conflict of a board of directors with the principal, with the subsequent dismissal of this prominant administrator in a private Christian educational institution.[27] Another article told of the release of two pastors through the infamous practice of the non-confidence vote.[28]

The context of my life, as well as the total human experience, is a documentary on conflict. An incident in my childhood serves as an illustration and definition of the concept.

The scene took place in the school yard during recess. We were playing "prisoners' base," our favorite game. A member of the opposing team and I both claimed to be "fresh." To be "fresh" in the game meant that a person in either end who left his home territory last had the prerogative and right of tagging his opponent who in turn was taken prisoner. The team with the most prisoners at the end of the recess was the winner. In the course of the game, both my opponent and I claimed the other as prisoner. We argued. He, as I, refused defeat. Our teacher saw the affair from afar and joined the fray. After listening to his argument she ordered me to serve as prisoner, thereby identifying with the position of my opponent. Resentfully, I talked back, "No, I won't," and left the game. Promptly she marched me into the one-room school, where, with a leather strap, she delivered painful lashes to my bare hands. I had been wronged, I felt. Conflict as well as anger were present in both relationships.

The definition of Kittlaus and Leas fits the above experience, "Conflict happens when two pieces of matter try to occupy the same space at the same time."[29] While this definition is useful, an additional concern to this essay is the issue of conflict in the context of the christian faith and as it pertains to the life of the church.

The New Testament writers see the human race in conflict

with God and alienated from him because of sin. Our sinful condition not only alienates us from God but also from our "true self,"[30] and subsequently also from fellow human beings. Thus conflict and alienation have a three-dimensional character: spiritual, intrapersonal, and social. These are inextricably linked. They cannot be kept separate. Sin destroys relationships in all directions. Because of sin, conflict becomes natural to the human condition. Richard C. Richard and Del Olsen, however, distinguish between conflict as the "result of man's sinful condition" and the "consequences of the basic limitations of being human." In explaining the relationship they suggest that "to the extent that our perceptions have been distorted and our basic needs thwarted by selfishness, egocentricity, and prejudice of the human situation, we may say that a person's sinful condition does play a part in conflict situations." Much of conflict, they say, can be explained by differing personal histories which in turn give rise to differing values and life styles which can hardly be regarded as sinful.[31]

In the same manner, David W. Augsburger says, "Differences and disputes between persons are a natural part of humanness, not a disorder. Conflict and competition are normal human passions, not a disability."[32] And, in an earlier monograph, Augsburger writes, "Conflict is natural, normal, neutral, and sometimes even delightful. . . Conflict is neither good nor bad, right or wrong. Conflict simply is."[33]

Speaking to the Richard and Olsen position, and the same must be said for the Augsburger point of view, Lewis argues that conflict is inadequately "explained sociologically as a difference in background and personal characteristics," and does not take "sin seriously enough."[34] Even if we regard conflict as natural to the limitations of being human, that human condition is still, to put it mildly, tainted by sin, and "under the power of sin" (Romans 3:9f). Therefore, conflict has its roots in human nature, and human nature is touched by sin. But it is thereby necessary, however, to regard every conflict, whatever degree, as sinful in and of itself.

It is clear, while the debate about the nature and the roots of conflict goes on, the incarnation itself, the message of the gospel, instructions in Scripture regarding forgiveness and reconciliation, indeed experiences of strife around us and in us, all boldly proclaim the reality of conflict in human experience. From where I stand now, denial and suppression of it are not healthful options. The church, with its message of reconciliation, and particularly the Anabaptist/ Mennonite church with its emphasis on peace and harmony in human relations, has for the most part seen conflict as diametrically opposed to the gospel. An idealistic theology has difficulty accepting the in-

evitable reality. In fact, in its need to appear pure and without spot or wrinkle, the church is easily prone to distort the truth about conflict, deny it, or to suppress it altogether. As one Mennonite leader said to one of another Mennonite Conference, "You open your garbage cans for all to see, we keep ours closed."

John L. Hoff is right, we have only two alternatives, we "must either choose to use conflict creatively or to be mastered by it."[35] Scripture and experience provide illustrations for both. In regards to its negative aspect we are aware with Lewis that "under the conditions of our finite existence, our sinful nature makes conflict destructive and debilitating."[36]

The confrontation of Jesus with the religious establishment, although always "aimed at reconciliation,"[37] aroused conflict between them -- a conflict which J. Stanley Glen calls, "the religious versus the irreligious" that saw its climax in the death of Jesus on the cross.[38] To silence his shame, guilt, and inner turmoil forever, Judas destroyed himself (Matthew 27). The resolve to "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), brought the apostles into a conflictive stance with the religious/political alliance. In most of the churches and to a number of pastors, Paul speaks of conflictive elements in the church in words like: quarreling, rivalry, strife, factiousness, selfishness, dissension, discord, fighting and schism. In their context they are described as disruptive of ministry and destructive of fellowship. Paul saw these qualities as a violence to christian community[39] (Galatians 5; Romans 12).

If one takes a broad sweep at the history of the church, the record is no different. The conflict between the sixteenth century Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church, and in turn, the strife between the Anabaptists and the Reformed tradition aroused these same destructive elements.

The church of my orientation was born in conflict. Mennonite history knows conflict and schism. Because of their experience with controversy and strife, Mennonites could be experts! Because of their sensitivity to the teachings of Jesus, they could be the peacemakers of the world! Theologically, we understand peace to be the will of God, Jesus as the Prince of Peace, and the church as the agent of reconciliation.

While this insight was applied to international conflict, the church has not been as successful in applying the same basic principle to conflict situations within the church. In my own experience the two most obvious conflicts that "mastered" us in the last fifty years, were issues surrounding language and leadership.

The transition from the German language to the English in the worship service was understandably painful. In some cases, it divided

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the church. Ministry and growth were hampered. Many, who had assimilated into Canadian life and culture and could not understand the conflict or wait for its resolution, left to find involvement elsewhere.

While the language question has largely resolved itself, another issue took its place. During this same period of time, the church moved from a multiple lay leadership model to the mono-pastoral model. Generally speaking, the new model emerged with the new city congregations referred to initially as *Mission Churches*. Unlike their counterparts in the traditional model, pastors were trained in the colleges and seminaries, and salaried. Most of these were youthful and inexperienced in ministry. The expectations of the congregations were undefined, yet overwhelming. A match between the expectations of the church and the delivery of ministry by the pastor was virtually impossible. Disappointments and dissatisfactions were felt by the congregations, disillusionment by the young pastor. More often than not, those who were called to pastoral leadership were expected to be trained, competent and experienced -- without having had experience. Many pastors and their families have been hurt by inconsiderate involuntary terminations.

As a result of my experience with three churches, all involving the congregation versus the pastor, I drew up this collective summary statement of what it means to be mastered by conflict. Dissatisfaction easily disrupts interpersonal relationships. Left unmanaged to run its natural course, conflict moves progressively toward estrangement, hostility, polarization, and opposition; it unites the factions, roots stubbornness, and hooks persons into repulsive behavior. Left unresolved, conflict results in alienation and eventual schism, if not organizationally, at least relationally. Unchecked, conflict causes gossip to find its way along the grapevine, gathering the facts and the fables as it meanders along relentlessly, mixing them into new stories sometimes quite unrelated to the earlier presenting issues. A people caught in conflict, all too easily slip from the legitimate substantive issues to personality differences. Controversy left dangling among a people of God narrows the perspectives, limits vision and mission, prioritizes the strife, and minimizes the needed resolution. Conflict immobilizes. Trust is replaced with fear. Conflict hurts and destroys.

In contrast to conflict's potentially destructive character is its growth-producing potential. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a redeeming gospel. Conflict is always the opportunity for the gospel to prove itself. Under its influence and application, unhealthy situations and relationships may be improved. Illustrations of conflict's potential for good are present in the biblical record as in contemporary experience.

The dispute among the disciples at the Last Supper became the

occasion for a significant lesson in leadership (Luke 22:24), as did a conflictive experience with my pastor when I was a young upstart. His unbending authoritarian style, with its lack of affirmation for emerging leadership, represented what I did not wish to become.

The intrapersonal conflict, of which Peter's denial serves as an illustration, once resolved, affected a new and deeper commitment. An inner crisis brought on, perhaps by doubt, or disappointment, or need for personal survival, is an occasion for yet deeper insight about oneself and subsequent greater commitment to ministry.

Alleged inequities in the food distribution program in Jerusalem prompted the church to update its ministry and structures (Acts 6:1-6). Their example serves to remind us that structures in themselves are not sacred but vehicles to promote and enhance ministry. There is a new liberty in ministry when the structures are adjusted to meet changing needs.

The controversy between the advocates of circumcision and Paul and Barnabas, which aroused "no small dissension and debate," necessitated the first church council meeting with its stabilizing and direction-giving decisions (Acts 15). Undoubtedly, this approach to problem solving in the community has been duplicated many times in the history of Christendom. Viewed positively, much of the teaching in the epistles was occasioned by conflict in the church (cf. 1 Corinthians). The biblical materials have therefore become a guide to faith and life for the church in conflict. For us at Foothills an amiable discussion of the conflictive issues of divorce and remarriage was creative and growth-producing.

Again, in reflecting upon my experience with the three churches referred to earlier, one observes that the wheat and the tares grow together (Matthew 13:24-30). One may easily overlook the wheat because of the ugliness of the tares. Yet, in the early stages of conflict, controversy may emerge as a result of authentic concern and caring. Jesus' concern for the greater good of people certainly aroused opposition. The authors, McSwain and Treadwell have observed correctly, that "conflict occurs most often in congregations in which there is a deep commitment to the church."[40] The more believers are committed to the church as community and interdependent relationships, with structures allowing for a partnership ministry, the greater will be the probability of conflict. Where the church is concerned to be the church, where purity of doctrine and life are emphasized; where congruency of word and deed are promoted, in such churches disagreement will be obvious, conflict a certain possibility. The maturing Christian community cannot be without questionings. A conflict-free church is perhaps an indication of lack of vitality, and instead, the presence of apathy. To grow, it must flex its mental and

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spiritual muscles. To avoid careless decision-making, it needs the gift of inquisitiveness. Conflict provokes members into quality decision-making. Differences of opinion challenged in caring confrontation[41] as in the Jerusalem council meeting, can strengthen the community of faith. Conflict tests the strength of the covenant relationship; it proves the virility of the partnership. Discord handled in a spirit of submission, has potential for greater understanding; stronger and more intimate relationships and renewed motivation for ministry are the result.

In fact, conflict and ministry are companions. An inevitable component of the ministry of leadership is conflict. Conflict is the occasion and opportunity for further ministry as was demonstrated by Paul. By its very nature, Christian ministry invites conflict. Jesus made it clear that the message of the gospel would arouse strife, the presence of conflict in the Christian community necessitates a ministry of reconciliation.

In the management[42] of conflict in the Christian community, the goal is always reconciliation. If, as a result of sin, persons are alienated from God, from their "true self" as well as from fellow human beings, then reconciliation must, in the words of Bernard Cooke, "consist in healing each of these three cleavages."[43] However, as Paul clearly points out in II Corinthians 5:18, reconciliation with God is "the basis of the most comprehensive renewal possible for man,"[44] namely, he has become a new creature, his "true self" is being restored and he becomes a minister of reconciliation. This new person related to other persons in a new way for reconciliation means restored fellowship. Therefore, leaving any one of these "cleavages" untouched by reconciliation renders the other dimensions of our relationships unhealthy. That is why John could say that a person who does not love his brother, could hardly claim to love God (I John). The reconciliation of persons to God broke down the social barriers that separated Jew and Gentile. The person who is not at peace with himself/herself projects his/her feelings upon others thereby alienating them from himself/herself and himself/herself from them. This is particularly true in the intimate and interdependent relationship of a "brotherhood" church. When fellowship is broken among some, the whole body is affected (I Corinthians 12:26). While reconciliation is the ultimate goal in human relationships, striving for "pen-ultimate" goals may enhance that process.[45] Pen-ultimate goals are those which may contribute significantly to understanding and improved relationships, and may in turn prepare the way to complete reconciliation. While nowhere stated explicitly, the teaching of the apostles regarding conduct among the members of the body served that function.

Basic to all reconciliation is the word and act of forgiveness. Always pointing back to the forgiveness accomplished by Christ in his death on the cross, Paul tells the people to forgive each other, "as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13). The word for forgiveness, namely, *aphiemi*, is used elsewhere of God forgiving our sins by accepting the guilt and paying the penalty. The word used by Paul for the two churches in question is *charizomai*, which means, "to do favor to, to show oneself gracious, to forgive in the sense of treating the offending party graciously."[46]   In both cases, however, the initiative is taken by the offended. By worldly estimation such behavior seems odd.

Forgiveness in the Christian community may be seen as an affirmation of both death and life. In offering forgiveness, death to pride and selfwill, and perhaps other elements that serve as hindrances to restored relationships, is implied. It is life affirming since forgiveness is an act of faith that a relationship and fellowship can be restored. For forgiveness to be made complete, it needs to be offered by the innocent and accepted by the guilty. The crowning glory of the gospel is restored fellowship among those that were at enmity one with another.[47]

"Forgiving one another; as God in Christ forgave you" has practical implications for the church, specifically also in pastor-congregational relationships. Knowing my own reluctance and the hesitations of others, it is not difficult to agree with William Klassen that "humans generally are. . .timid about forgiving others."[48] In forgiving we often see the mandate in reverse to the injunction. While the hurt lick their wounds they wait for the guilty to acknowledge their sin and to apologize. In this kind of forgiveness the innocent maintains a subtle power over the guilty, waiting for him/her to bend his/her knee. Jesus' example is otherwise. The gospel of Christ permits my brother/sister in the pew to forgive my mistake in the pulpit without exercising his/her need to put me through the shredder. At the same time, this same gospel encourages me not to avoid the critical brother/sister and to forgive him/her for his/her weakness. This gospel asks both to accept the forgiveness and to restore the fellowship without conditions attached. Conflicts resulting in broken relationships deserve the ministry of forgiveness leading to reconciliation.

The biblical materials offer yet another perspective on conflict. The ministry of proclamation and reconciliation itself represents a conflict. The word translated "conflict" is *agōn*, and actually speaks of a positive experience in the exercise of christian ministry. This dimension is so vital that a brief survey of the biblical record is helpful in gaining perspective and providing the context for all the negative and positive experience of conflict discussed earlier.

In the appeal to the Philippians, Paul speaks of the conflict as an intense expenditure of energy on behalf of the gospel in the face of external opposition (Philippians 1:29-30). To the Colossians, Paul identifies what is also true for the contemporary pastor. The word, "For I want you to know how greatly I *agōna* (strive for you . . ." (2:1) is related to the earlier *agōnizomai* (1:29). It speaks of an intense inner struggle, perhaps in thought and prayer as suggested by Lightfoot.[49] It represents an agony on behalf of the church, sacrificing oneself for the health of the people of God.

This agony on behalf of the gospel experienced internally but practised externally in the preaching of the gospel, is carried on in "the face of great opposition" (I Thessalonians 2:2). The record in Acts does not refer to any overt act against Paul (Acts 17:5-9), but the context seems to point to "some strenuous or energetic opposition" as John W. Bailey claims.[50] The context here too implies attendant suffering (Acts 16:11-40).

To one pastor, Paul wrote (and we apply it to all pastors, all ministers), "Fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12). The verb *agōnizo* "implies a disciplined struggle and the tense shows that the striving is a continuous process."[51] The *agōna* refers to the Christian faith. The reward is eternal life. In anticipating his own "departure" Paul speaks as though he had already successfully contended (II Timothy 2:7). Reflecting on the context of that affirmation, Ethelbert Stauffer says, "the sharpest form of *agōn* which the man who is faithful to God must undergo on earth is the battle of suffering fulfilled in martyrdom."[52]

Summarizing all of Paul's conflicts in contending for the faith, Hendriksen comments:

> It had been a fight against Satan; against the principalities and powers, the world-rulers of this darkness in the heavenlies; against Jewish and pagan vice and violence; against Judaism among the Galatians; against fanaticism among the Thessalonians; against contention, fornication and litigation among the Corinthians; against incipient Gnosticism among the Ephesians and Colossians, against fightings without and fears within; and last but not least, against the law of sin and death operating within his own heart.[53]

The pilgrimage of faith for all Christian people may not resemble Paul's, but it is still a *agōna*, translated "race," as described by the writer to the Hebrews (12:1). The imagery suggests the possibility of obstacles which block the way in this experience.

The survey of the word *agōn* summarized, implies a strenuous but positive exercise of the Christian life. It represents an intense concern for the proclamation of the gospel. It speaks of inevitable opposition in that pursuit and it anticipates suffering in that endea-

vor. In the foregoing, I have distinguished between conflict which has its roots in human nature, with both negative and positive potential, and the conflict which has its roots and motivation in the ministry and example of Christ. In the ministry these intersect. In the church the *agōn* provides the context for conflict that has its rootage in human nature. In contending for the faith, in agonizing over the salvation and health of the church, we have the framework within which all the negative, and potentially positive, conflict experiences must be understood. In the faithful proclamation of the gospel, differences of opinion, disagreement, controversy and opposition are aroused. But these inevitable and common realities in the Christian life and ministry provide the proving ground for the gospel. At the same time, these natural experiences in congregational life, particularly if they persist, can be so hurtful so as to discourage the *agōn*. Against this the church must be on guard. Whatever its rootage, conflict brings about hurt and suffering. The Christian pastor as well as the whole church should not be surprised at external opposition, but to be maligned from within the faith community itself is disappointing and disheartening. But this experience too, so common to the pastor, is not outside the range of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER II

THE EXPERIENCE OF PASTORS AND CHURCH
IN INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

A. Introduction

This chapter represents the cumulative evidence of the experience of thirty-five pastors, all male, representing thirty churches. The sample represents one-fifth of the churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. I personally knew of ten more pastors and as many churches that suffered the trauma of involuntary termination. The material was gathered through interviews, most of them taped. The names used in the account are fictitious throughout so as to protect the anonymity of the participating persons and churches. Confidentiality as to identification was agreed to prior to the interviews, so the tapes are not being retained.

The main focus of this chapter is on the experiences of the pastors. The secondary emphasis is on the church. Incidental to this study is the effect of "the crunch" upon the children of the pastor's family. I was encouraged often to contact the children, to hear their cry and to enter into their pain. As material was gathered from the pastor and his spouse, a ministry happened.

In doing this study it was not my concern to match the story of the church against the story of the pastor. The intent was not to prove one party or another wrong and guilty, or right and innocent. Curiously though, that was one of the suspicions numerous of the church representatives had. It was also a practical impossibility to choose case studies on the basis of that criterion alone. Considering the purpose of this project it was also not regarded as vital to select the case subjects in pairs.

This project cannot be exhaustive. In first place, it may not represent the story of all hurting pastors or churches. Secondly, the interviews happened some time ater the event; in one case up to twenty-five years ago; a few up to fifteen years ago, but most took

place within the last ten years, some as recent as one year ago. Thirdly, this study is based upon lead questions (See Appendix I and II). The questions, of course, determined direction. Perhaps more questions could have been added. Generally speaking the interviews followed very naturally after the introduction of the beginning question, "What happened?"

I am indebted and grateful to the hurting but brave pastors, their spouses, and a few children, who shared their story. I would like to honor them by publishing their names in this place, but their request for confidentiality is respected. They know who they are and will find themselves in this document. Appreciatively, I acknowledge the contribution of many individuals, representing the churches, where the event of involuntary termination left its wounds and scars. They would rather forget that part of their history, but for the sake of a better future in pastor-church relationships, graciously participated. They too know who they are and may find themselves in this writing.

B. Reasons for Involuntary Termination (I—T)

In the sampling of pastors and churches there was no one well-defined reason given for termination that was common to all situations. There was greater unanimity in the ambiguity of reasons, instead. Also, there were few situations in which there was only one clearly identifiable reason. With his permission, the categories I am using are those suggested by Speed B. Leas, in the Alban Institute research project, "Should the Pastor Be Fired?"[1]

1. Length of Tenure

Both the pastor and the church are inflicted with the termination syndrome. It is characterized by statements such as, "He's been here long enough," or, "It's time," or, "His time has elapsed." Regarding eventual termination most pastors expect to move and most congregations expect the pastor to move. Some pastors have their own rule of thumb and so do churches. Few have a policy on the term of the pastor. But the question of longevity itself represents a stress on the relationship. The general recommendation to pastors is, "Leave while the going is good." The perception of what is good, however, cannot always be ascertained. Of one terminating pastor who had given five years to the church, it was said after his departure, "He should have left two years ago." Among the pastors polled, there was no rule about what was "too long at one place." In all cases the termination syndrome is the most ill-defined and ambiguously frustrating reason given for I—T.

2. Professional Incompetence

It comes somewhat as a surprise to mention professional incompetence as a contributing factor at all. It is for reasons of greater competence in leadership that many churches moved from the multiple lay ministry to the mono-pastoral system. Both the Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the Mennonite Biblical Seminary were regarded by the supporting constituency as training institutions for pastoral leadership. It is assumed, by and large, that persons graduating from such institutions, and making themselves available for the pastoral role, are subsequently competent and capable for that role. A definition of the pastoral function was assumed in most cases, the job description being very sketchy and limited. The disappointments were not surprising when the expectations of the congregation did not match the contribution of the pastor. The pastor was expected to have experience without having had it. Furthermore, it was taken for granted that the definitions of competency would be the same for school, candidate and church. In the process of termination, questions of possible discrepancy in definitions are not even asked. Instead, if a person who makes himself available as pastor, and his contribution in communicating, counselling, calling, planning and coordinating, and administering, do not match the expectations of the congregation, or more correctly, individuals within the congregation, he is described as incompetent. In most situations the declaration of incompetence is not determined by the congregation but by individuals or coalitions. Only in two cases was the whole congregation involved in the decision to terminate a pastor and that happened with the intervening help of Conference personnel. In all other cases, the congregation was either forced to a vote by a dissatisfied minority or the pastor "smelled a rat" and resigned.

In nearly all of the interviews of congregational representatives there was some complaint of professional incompetency, but never was it the overriding reason for termination. The inability to communicate clearly in preaching was cited in only two cases. The inability to counsel persons in crisis was mentioned in a few. The single most nagging complaint was the lack of administrative competence, specifically in the area of conflict management and mediation. In one case, the church complained that their pastor was too involved in administrative concerns, like committee meetings and the coordination of the program, that personal shepherding was neglected.

3. Interpersonal Incompetence

Significantly more of a factor in involuntary termination is the issue of interpersonal incompetence. In the Leas study clergy were terminated because they were seen to be "passive, withdrawn, aloof,

seemingly not caring, distant, or cold." Others were terminated because they were "viewed as contentious, authoritarian, or dictatorial."[2]

According to the interviews of congregational representatives, Mennonite pastors, not unlike the Leas findings, were terminated because they were either too passive or too aggressive in their relationship to the members of the church. It is not a deliberate passivity or aggressiveness but the personal characteristic and style of the pastor. "That's the way I am," is the defense. Given certain situations these "just as I am" qualities, arouse criticism. The criticism once lodged in the pastor easily accentuates, through defensiveness, the undesirable qualities in the pastor in question.

A rather natural tendency as well as frequent complaint is the one of distancing oneself from the critical person and from the scene of dissatisfaction. Such distancing is not only physical but emotional in that the pastor withdraws his spirit as well. But the withdrawal from these persons easily communicates what pastors care not to be accused of, namely, lack of caring, abandonment and coldness. The critics claim the pastor is not doing his job. Certainly with such persons he may not. But the withdrawal is both a survival technique and a theological orientation.

The pastor withdraws because he is hurting. His self-confidence has been injured. He withdraws to lick his wounds. Then too it represents a punitive attitude. Withdrawal is a form of punishment. The pastor withdraws because in his experience the critic does not appreciate the service. Withholding the caring is a message to the antagonist, "You don't deserve my help or attention." Also, fear of further alienation keeps a pastor from engaging the critic, but the avoidance constitutes a handicap to further ministry. In fact, to the critic, it adds proof of the pastor's incompetency.

The theological component of withdrawal is this: Mennonite pastors attach a high degree of importance to purity and peace. Both are seen as God's will for humankind. The pastor is called to model these in the congregation. Purity cannot allow for anger, and peace cannot allow for conflict. But anger which is present in withdrawal is denied. Conflict, which historically was understood as the absence of peace, is suppressed. Pastors have testified again and again that their pacifistic stance cannot allow for anger or conflict. The best the pastor can do to maintain a semblance of purity and peace is to remove himself from the scene. The pastor is then in a flight pattern, within himself he is fighting. His inner life is in conflict. He is not pure in himself, nor at peace with himself or others.

Pastors are implicated by their members as being too sensitive or not sensitive enough. In the perception of some, pastors take

their job too seriously, internalize too much the hurts of other persons as their own, as well as assume the responsibility for that hurt. Congregational expectations readily make a pastor sensitive about his ministry. On the other hand, some pastors are not sensitive enough in their listening capacities. Pastors have been faulted for not listening. They "hear but do not hear." They "listen but do not listen." Their need to be heard is greater to them than the need of some members, some feel. One pastor was blamed "for not being sensitive enough to understand that the opposition was against" him.

The pastor's aggressive qualities have also contributed to his termination. The inability to work in partnership, the need to control, interpreting leadership as domineering, the need to be present at every committee meeting, the need to have the last word, unwilling to bend and a tendency towards defensiveness, were all factors that contributed toward a pastor's I—T.

In his research, Speed Leas established lack of interpersonal competence in clergy by certain criteria. Because of the importance of interpersonal incompetence in the termination of Mennonite pastors and because most of these criteria were corroborated in my own study they are mentioned here, with commentary, in their entirety.[3]
a) "The pastor does not understand the situation, especially what he/she does to make it worse." In many cases a pastor does not know the history of the church he serves. Pastor Pankratz blamed himself for not "having read the people where they were at." Speaking about his pastor, a member observed, "Pastors don't care enough to understand what's happening between them and the congregation."
b) "The pastor places blame entirely on other persons or groups." In self-protective ways both pastors and people blame the other for what is or is not happening. In the sampling all but a few pastors consider the church responsible for their I—T. They do concede, however, that their weaknesses or incompetencies perhaps provided occasion for dissatisfaction. But in their estimation these were insufficient reasons for the termination. While they did not defend the actions of fellow members or groups in placing pressure upon the pastor, congregational representatives did hold the pastors accountable for their participation in the I—T. In looking back the experience has not been without its learnings for the pastor.
c) "The pastor is unable to delegate appropriately, either abdicating responsibility, or not allowing others to take responsibility." The congregations in our sampling generally have high expectations of their pastor. He is hired to do a job. Delegating responsibility is seen by some pastors and members as shirking responsibility. Some pastors are also possessive of their tasks and hesitant to share the responsibilities with others. Mennonite pastors tend to over-extend

themselves. They will faithfully attempt to match their ministry with the expectations of the congregation. In one situation previous pastors had helped the congregation towards greater participation and responsibility. With the new pastor participation in leadership ministries was thwarted. A number of pastors feel threatened in sharing leadership.

d) "The pastor is unable to develop common commitments and loyalties within the congregation, tending to be divisive, using separating tactics, rather than using integrative, pull-together tactics." Ironically, the enthusiasm of a new pastor in a new situation can easily become a liability toward continued unity. The independent introduction of new ideas or programs in line with the pastor's vision proved to be divisive in a number of situations. Neglecting well established traditions or bypassing the formal channels of authority tends to weaken loyalties and arouses criticism instead. The inclination to seek one's support group to challenge the non-support group is present among pastors. In some cases pastors agitate among supporting members to isolate themselves from the non-supporting group.

e) "The pastor is unable to make clear, direct statements and behave in a way consistent with those statements." This complaint was not leveled at Mennonite pastors. Instead, it was a condition represented in some church boards. In its official capacity the board took one position, in their movement among the members they were found to be vascillating. It left the pastor confused and respect for the board withered.

f) "The pastor does not support others emotionally when disagreeing with them intellectually." The insecure pastor sees the disagreement as a threat and withdraws. The relationship is easily strained. Evidence for this in the sampling of pastors is widespread. But it is true for church members as well and a more significant contributing factor to growing alienation between pastor and people.

g) "The pastor needs emotional support and approval all the time from everybody to feel comfortable about himself/herself." This criterion was not borne up in my study. That pastors need support is not contested. There is evidence in the interviews, however, that pastors long for acceptance and affirmation, and perhaps lack sufficient appreciation. There is evidence that they suffer in the absence of affirmation and appreciation during times of crisis particularly. But no pastor in the sampling expected one hundred per cent support.

h) "The pastor is not able to interpret what is happening in the present based upon reality." Pastors have been faulted for not being able to read the "signs of the times." Perhaps they desire not to be-

cause of the implications for them and the family. Pastors, in my sampling, live in hope that situations may not be as bad as they appear to others. At least he wrestles with the realities hoping for the best, perhaps ducking the worst. In some cases, it was also not a concern, since their position was validated and defended by their sense of divine calling, which was supported and corroborated by the call of the church. It therefore comes as a surprise to the pastor that a people would deliberately short-circuit that call. There is a sense of shock and disbelief among pastors when it happens.

i) "The pastor treats differentness as a threat or signal to conflict rather than as an opportunity to learn." No specific evidence was gleaned from the interviews to substantiate this inclination. The interviews do reveal pastors' aversion to conflict. Also, few pastors make learning a priority. A greater agenda among pastors is survival of self-confidence through the crisis.

j) "The pastor does not accept responsibility for what he/she feels, thinks, hears, or sees but rather denies responsibility for what is happening and attributes it to others." The tendency is true from our experience in the interviews. He can attribute responsibility to the history and leadership of the past. He blames the policies and sometimes the structures. He can place responsibility for decisions upon the board for not following his suggestions. As fellow members in the body, pastors do not readily admit their participation and complicity in the developments. The pastor's pattern is an "I" - "They" stance. Perhaps in a developing conflict where he is pushed by the "They" he has no where to go but to protect the "I."

One further identifiable contributing factor relating to interpersonal incompetencies is the matter of projection. Projection is the process of attributing one's own attitude and inadequacies to others. Accordingly, personal and congregational ills are thrust upon a pastor by members. He is accused of the inadequacies, not dealing with the inadequacies, and faulted for the presence of continued inadequacies in the church. "If we had a different pastor" we would not have these ills, is the implication.

Projection is a survival mechanism and an implicit attempt to escape self-judgment. Such a person deceives himself into believing that the problem with which he cannot cope is really elsewhere. In many cases it is a camouflaged admission of need and inadequacy. Accusing the pastor also represents a cry, "It is not well with my soul."

The pastor is easily angered by such accusations, and, immobilized, withdraws in his own hurt. In an attempt to defend himself against what he considers unwarranted assaults, abandons the troubled person, thereby compounding the problem. It is precisely at this point in the cycle that the critic finds further justification for expos-

ing the inadequacies of the pastor. The critic or antagonist thus finds further reason for the church to take action. It is my conclusion from the research that many I—T's have their beginnings in projection.

The pastor who does not allow himself to be immobilized by such accusations is able to engage himself productively. For one, he will ask the question, "Are these perhaps areas in my life and ministry that require attention?" The pastor will learn and perhaps make some adjustments. Secondly, he will appropriately confront the hurting person, admit his own anger and hurt to him, and declare his willingness to explore further the possibility of a continuing relationship. Finally, while projection is to be taken seriously by the pastor, defensiveness, quite prevalent in the sampling of pastors, is self-defeating.

4. Congregational Factions

If the previous category referred mainly to inadequacy in the pastor, although interpersonal incompetencies are not limited to him, coalitions and factions represent inadequacy within the congregation. Factions and coalitions, particularly those related to the pastor's tenure, I found, destroyed pastor-congregation relationships and effectively immobilized ministry. The energies of the congregation were mobilized instead toward or against the pastor.

These factions were described in the interviews as follows: "the gossip group," "the political group," "the cell group," a "minority group," and, "the group." The presence of a "supporting group" implies also the presence of a "non-supporting group." Two groups in one congregation between whom the pastor found himself sandwiched, were related to former pastors -- "the Fast group" and "the Schroeder group." Known by the other as the group with a liberal orientation, the latter group nurtured itself through book reviews and discussions. The former, of a more fundamentalistic orientation, placed considerable pressure upon the pastor to deal with the liberal group. In a few cases the board was seen as a group in opposition to the pastor.

In addition to the factions are the coalitions. The coalitions could be factions too but here they refer to the one purpose, ridding the church of its pastor. Once they have served that purpose they quickly disband, because they have no further unifying cause.

In some cases the I—T of the pastor had its origin in a person dissatisfied with the pastor. It then became the cause of a faction, or coalition, at least a minority group, who could request a non-confidence or confidence vote at the annual meeting. Since most Mennonite Church constitutions, as do pastors, ask for a high percentage of

majority vote (in my survey it ranged from 66% - 90%), it is no great feat to request a non-confidence vote and to be successful.

The other main way that groups or churches terminate their pastor involuntarily, but without bringing it to a vote, is to maintain the pressure. That is, there are ways for persons or coalitions to send messages of dissatisfaction to the pastor: avoidance, calculated irregularity in attendance, non-availability in committee work or service projects, withholding financial support and outright suggestions to resign. An added leverage to these messages often is, "And there are many others who feel the same way." In most cases of I—T the majority group is found to be powerless, perhaps to "maintain the peace." The power of the minority in the Mennonite Church is not to be underestimated. In regards to I—T it is seldom challenged. In I—T pastors are made the scapegoat of congregational ills as interpreted by a minority.

From the interviews, one gathers that it is either the pastor's fault or the congregation's fault. The congregational representatives were somewhat more objective and agreed that no one party, either pastor or congregation, were singularly responsible for the I—T. No one was considered exclusively right nor exclusively wrong. Both somehow contributed to an unhealthy relationship. The pastor in his status as an earthen vessel, particularly in the area of interpersonal incompetencies, elicits a response or reaction from those other earthen vessels to whom he seeks to minister.

Ultimately it is not helpful to establish who is at fault for I—T. Such an approach only arouses defensiveness and the perpetuation of the conflict, much of which the pastor has inherited from the history of the congregation. The issues of blame quickly deserve to be transcended by the greater needs, those being the restoration of relationships through forgiveness and reconciliation, the unhindered proclamation of the Word, and a vigorous participation in the ministry to a hurting world.

Speed B. Leas is right, "When troubles arise between some members and the pastor, the first question is, 'Can we find a way to work things out so that a productive and interpersonally rewarding relationship can be restored?' Every effort should be made to do this."[4]

5. Value/Goal Conflict Between Pastor and Congregation

Unlike the Leas survey, value conflicts were present only in a few cases and these were not the only reasons for the termination. Theological-ethical issues involving abortion and participation in community/school politics were the offending issues. In one situation conflict emerged in a perceived discrepancy between the theol-

ogy of the congregation and the actual belief of the pastor. In another church the presenting issues were allegedly doctrinal differences, but upon reflection the congregational representatives conceded that the greater problem related to interpersonal dynamics and poor communication which blocked understanding of those doctrines. The emphasis on social issues and community involvement were occasional nagging issues between pastor and people in a few cases.

Value conflicts were present in some congregations over ethical and theological issues but these were not centered in the pastor, but the increased pressure upon the ministry of the pastor was so intense so as to immobilize him.

6. Loss of Trust and Respect For the Leader

Loss of trust and respect were never given as the sole contributing factor in I—T. Trust and respect gradually dwindled as alleged and real incompetencies became unnecessary but nagging obstacles to a continuing congregation-pastor relationship. But this loss of trust and respect were never total in any one church.

C. The Dynamics of Involuntary Termination

The question being addressed here is, "What happens in the process, preceding, during and following I—T?" More specifically, what happens to people, the church, the pastor, the spouse, the family? What are the dynamics that find their subtle presence in the trauma of I—T? Again, we turn to the interviews and conversations for the answer.

1. The Pastor's Self-Image and Feelings

A pastor's self-perception and self-authentication undergo severe testing when accosted and accused. An involuntary termination experience implies rejection of both person and ministry.

One young man was called to be assistant pastor with responsibilities in the area of youth ministries. In the early attempts to find himself in this role he discovered that the secretary was in touch with all the mothers of the young people. Karl was threatened by this surveillance and scrutiny of his work. He felt "deceived and castrated." That is, he felt disabled and disqualified in ministry. Feelings of failure and thoughts of vacating haunted him. He became angry and immobilized. He became less assertive. In becoming preoccupied with himself, he became conscious of his upbringing in a less cultural environment and thus felt inferior to the people of the church. Before long he terminated.

Feelings of insecurity and suspicion tend to be accentuated or aroused through I--T. A pastor who routinely attended the church

board meetings was surprised by a request from the board chairman to resign. A year later, and in a new pastorate, Pastor Funk went to the board meetings with some apprehension, "wondering what the unexpected agenda items might be."

Due to various experiences and happenings in his life, Pastor Ernie was hurting. In his hurt he remained silent but his ministry was affected. As the weaknesses of his service appeared in the cracks he was criticized. Being vulnerable emotionally, he was unable to analyze his own responses and reactions. He confessed, "I had insufficient strength to deal with it from the start. I am always ready to accept the wrongs, not confront. I carry the burden myself." His deep hurts had made him feel useless, insecure and incompetent; his self-worth was shattered. He came to the conclusion, "churches wouldn't want me anymore." His self-confessed incompetency in conflict and lack of self-understanding nearly drove him to despair. This pastor joins others who cry for greater understanding of their pain, yet unable to admit their pain to a people whom they seek to ministry in their pain. In talking of his self-perception, Pastor Dennis is echoing the sentiments of many others. "I can present a double image, confident and strong on the outside, crying and bleeding on the inside." On the one hand, they project an image of being nice, strong, unruffled and righteous. But love toward the flock is blocked by anger, disappointment and pain.

The expectations of a congregation place considerable stress upon the pastor. Where a congregation is individualistically oriented, the expectations are multiplied. When a pastor is criticized he will try to do a better job, improve his skill, work harder and harder to please people. Burn-out and wanting to start again elsewhere occur at such a time. Congregational expectations and disappointments weigh heavy on pastors, because it is also the opportunity for the critic to discredit the pastor. The confession of this pastor is familiar, "I was working my heart out, and still not pleasing anybody." And when the congregation says you do not care enough when the pastor thinks that he cares very much, the pain deepens.

The tendency toward withdrawal and avoidance is to be noted again. In the sampling of pastors I found this common dynamic at work as well. In this respect they are little different from other persons in the congregation who respond in like manner. But it becomes all the more critical for pastors. Through experience, pastors know that they become scape-goats for both the real and perceived ills of the congregation. The servant-leader knows that he may become the dumping ground for problems felt by fellow members. To survive, he withdraws and avoids those who hurt him. In losing touch with reality out there he misses the opportunity for ministry,

for the "No"[5] in congregational life and relationships often represents a cry for help and the beginning of a new ministry. In the interviews I sensed a growing awareness of lack of confidence and incompetence in dealing with antagonists and also with conflict situations in the church. The acceptance of conflict as a reality in human experience, also in "peace" churches, is present in a growing measure. But suppression, and denial are present as well.

Pastors have strong feelings about how they were treated, prior to and during involuntary termination. I will touch on these in subsequent dynamics. Here I record the feelings of one: When I asked Pastor Pankratz how he would describe his feelings following the non-confidence vote, he said, with a note of satisfaction in his voice, "If I would ever meet one (those of the opposition) in the dark I would give him one in the kisser." Upon further solicitation, he used these words to characterize the malcontents: "Dirty, opportunist, underhanded, sinful, demonic, dishonest." He deplored his inability to express his anger. "I am a pacifist, and you don't get angry. That is not Christ," he deplored. "I couldn't own my anger. I gave this person too much authority and power." At the same time, the resignation gave him new freedom to preach "like a house on fire" even in the midst of feelings of inability and nothingness. Although the imagery is suggestive of other dynamics, he felt a liberation and vibrancy in his preaching.

Mutilated pastors confess the temptation to use the sermon-pulpit to lash out against those who malign them and to punish those from whom he has withdrawn. In the safety of the pulpit he can jab those who have jabbed him. Some do.

Crisis experiences can be growth experiences in the life of pastors and some capitalize on the learning. Along with the learning there is blaming of self. Pastor Pankratz blamed himself for not "having read the people where they were at." He now realized the importance of knowing the history and profile of the church. In regards to his experience of termination, he realized that it was a church not interested in his new ideas, ideas which he had stubbornly defended. Pastors also learn not to lose vision. In the power of Christ they transcend their own inadequacies and the weaknesses of the church.

Pastors live with the tension of living with weaknesses but without receiving the permission to be weak. "You pastors think you are gods," said one member to his pastor. The fact that the pastor could not be his savior was also not to the pastor's credit. Trying to be God for other people is a sure way to self-destruction. That is how Adam and Eve were involuntarily terminated from the garden! The pastor's calling and survival in the profession lead him on to accept

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call after call, commitment after commitment, and in the process, losing concern for self, family and peer relationships. Led on by the power to help people to greater spiritual reality and self-actualization, he permits dependence to grow. He thrives on the affirmation of the people and in turn is spurred on still more, to work still harder. The fear of being defrocked if he does not produce, haunts him. The temptation to please, not to rock the boat in order to secure his record, is ever with him. He is an earthen vessel, but he has difficulty accepting himself as such and the congregation makes it more difficult still by setting the parameters of what constitutes an acceptable earthen vessel in the pastoral ministry. The biblical perspective affirms that the church too is an earthen vessel, perhaps cracked in places, at times misshapen. Still the glory of the gospel is that it works in and through earthen vessels!

2. The Hurting Family

"It was a black day in the life of our family. It was sad to see my father rejected. I didn't want to be there to hear the results."

Pastors and their families are agreed that I—T leaves the family shattered. The family is left with confusion, anger, lack of trust and hurt. As one child put it, "The church is a painful place to be." Turning their backs upon the church is not unusual for pastor's children. They say, "We don't want to have anything to do with the church, if that's what its about." Thinking of his own future, the son of a pastor said, "I'd rather choose a vocation where I wouldn't feel so responsible for every move and action I make." Commenting specifically on the pastorate, he said, "You are put on a pedestal and then shot down." This young man clearly observed what many pastors experience. Urban T. Holmes III writes, it is a "general feeling among many clergy that they are 'put on a pedestal' and dehumanized in order to render them an ineffective ideal."[6] Children are, as a result, reluctant to go into the pastoral ministry. The reluctance is not only expressed by pastor's children.

Many pastors and spouses encouraged me to interview also their children, for as one mother put it, "the children would give you an ear full." But some were not encouraging the interviews for that reason, but for the therapeutic value these discussions might have for their children. The request was easily interpreted as a cry of hurting parents for the spiritual and emotional health of their angry, floundering, and disillusioned children.

It was also noted that the church, at least those who inflict the injury, is blinded by a narrow goal, and not cognizant of the hurt they are meting out upon a whole family system. At that point the goal of a minority is the eventual elimination of a pastor out of their

life. In a close-knit rural community the action of the church is felt deeply. One hurting pastor said, "The children in the community talked to our children in a condescending manner." The pastor couple is often at a loss to explain the circumstances to their children. How much can they say to sensitive little ones? One mother explained to her children, "some people don't agree with what daddy is doing." The feeling of "being shelved" as a whole family is very real. Also, the hurting family begins to perceive others acting differently toward them. "We don't know who they were. We couldn't trust our friends."

The marriage relationship is also tested. In the experience of the interviewees the marriage is strengthened, and in some cases, tested severely, even to the point of being ripped apart. It is never left static. The testimonials include the following: "We were very hurt, but our marriage relationship strengthened." We were "drawn closer to each other." "He understood my hurt." "She supported me." One pastor reported his experience in more graphic terms, "It helped to get some flack and crap out of our relationship. Family wise, the experience was good. We began to enjoy our children. Christa suffered with me." The pastor, already reflecting constructively about I—T, said, "When things go well my marriage suffers."

Denise was both angry and supportive, but she could not share her anger until ten years later. She admitted, "I was angry at Allen -- 'How can you be so dumb and not see some of these things,' I said to myself. But when people attacked him, I came to his defense. I felt as hurt as he did about the whole thing. I took my anger out on the people that hurt Allen." In hurt she withdrew from them.

One pastor and his spouse had lived with tension all their married life, but the pressures of ministry made the tensions worse. They withdrew from each other. She confessed, "I took it out on my husband. I withdrew from him sexually." The children too felt the tension in the home and a son became noticeably rebellious and dysfunctional.

One family was so happy to be back in their home community and province. They had been looking forward to being close to the parents and grandparents. Then came I—T. "We felt cheated," they said.

Following the trauma of I—T another pastor and his family went to Seminary and there, in the supportive community, found renewal in their marriage and ministry. Said the wife, "I'm scared at the changes that are coming upon us."

In another relationship Betty offered strong support to her pastor-husband. She tried to feel emotionally what Joe was experiencing. She was very hurt and angry with the people. She expressed

also her inability to share her frustrations, so she repressed them. She went so far as to say, "It is unchristian to share anger and frustration."

3. The Role of the Spouse

Closely linked to the hurting family is the role of the spouse. Her position is made very difficult. Except in a few instances in the sampling, she is usually not the main issue in I—T but inextricably related.

One wife had come to believe the gossip of the people regarding her pastor-husband. Perhaps he was as incompetent as they were making him out to be. She was shattered when she realized that she had been sucked into malicious gossip.

Clearly, congregations have expectations of the pastor's wife. Those expectations have to do with clothing styles, vocation, hospitality and involvement in the ministry. Erica confessed, "Our marriage relationship was rough as a result of the expectations." Both the husband and the congregation wanted her to be more involved. Referring to Ladies Aid, "and such," she said, "I didn't have time for that kind of nonsense." Furthermore, "I was denied the freedom to be myself." The meagre salary forced her to "pinch pennies twice before she spent them." Even after ten years she admitted covering her anger and resentment toward two churches where her husband was involuntarily terminated. Pastors' spouses find it incredible that they are not to find employment but are expected to function on less than average wages.

Pastors' spouses, like their husbands, have difficulty expressing anger and living with conflict. For some, conflict, confrontation and the experience of anger are sinful, therefore as Denise confessed, she did "the nice, safe, friendly and affirming things." To keep the peace both pastors and their spouses cover their feelings. In making that admission, one confessed, "after fifteen years of that, I'm not sure how much longer." Besides anger the general response of the women is, let's "get away from the situation as soon as possible."

Pastor Daniel needed someone to talk to. So he shared his anger with his wife. She in turn splattered her anger on the congregation. The congregation in turn became passive toward her. She experienced isolation, neglect and abandonment. It drove the marriage apart. The overshadowing cloud of what was once a friendly relationship had settled not only over a marriage but also over the congregational-spouse relationship. And so they say in the midst of isolation, "I don't have a person with whom I am close and can talk to."

Some feel that they are being used by critical members to communicate their concerns to the pastor. It was a bitter pill in the life of one couple. "I couldn't handle the tensions coming from the people and couldn't handle Pete's denial of it. People didn't understand us and Pete didn't understand me. It was painful to our marriage, we realized only later."

Sadly, some of these women admit, "the church people whom we serve are people with whom we cannot share our innermost feelings," yet they are convinced at the same time "that the church needed to hear our struggles."

4. Roles and Expectations

The issue of role definition can best be illustrated by a pastor's experience: A member became critical of his pastor because he did not visit his home on an annual basis. After all, his former pastor in his home town had accomplished that feat in a larger church! What the member had not considered were the factors in role definition, prioritization of those roles, and the altogether different context of the deployment of those roles. Yet, on the basis of his perception the pastor was accused of neglect of duty and therefore incompetent. A familiar attitude is expressed by another church representative as follows: "We pay too much for what we get out of him." At the same time, church representatives admit that they do not understand the expectations they have of their pastor. They do not know what is too much or reasonable.

In situations of involuntary termination both pastors and churches lamented lack of clarity in the expectations of the pastor. The expectations defined by individuals within congregations sometimes do not match the pastor's understanding of his responsibility.

Few congregations have extensive job descriptions for their hired minister, some have no description at all except to be pastor. It is assumed that pastors and churches know what that is. In some cases, the roles are defined by the ministry of former pastors whose services apparently were acceptable. One pastor described his job description in just those terms, "Step into the shoes of Schellenberg."

As a result of repeated dissatisfaction with successive pastors, some church boards explored writing job descriptions for their new minister, but always putting them aside when the new pastor arrived. They finally concluded that it was not the job description whether "long or short" that was going to "make or break" the ministry, "but our relationship to each other and how we perceived each other."

This mature approach to working at roles, expectations and job descriptions is the opposite of what Urban T. Holmes describes as pastor's fulfilling "the congregation's image of the pastor."[7] This

crucial dimension of ministry has been a trap to numerous pastors.

If a pastor does not measure up to congregational expectations, ambiguously stated or individualistically interpreted, or in his estimation stretches beyond them, or makes some trade-offs in ministry, he may be accused of neglect of duty.

The point is illustrated in the accounts of a number of pastors who involved themselves in ministries to the larger community: the local school board, ministry to young people beyond the immediate confines of the church, the politics of the community in relation to the school, or "he spends too much time with problem people outside the church." Or it is also illustrated by those experiences where pastors, by their estimation, are conscious of the mandate, but are not successful in single-handedly revitalizing the youth program or winning that son or daughter to Christ and the church. Other common disappointments are: "he has his priorities wrong," or, "he does not do enough visitation."

Such an attitude dampens enthusiasm, stifles creativity, suppresses innovativeness, discourages vision and restrains ministry perhaps all at the expense of maintaining the relationship.[8]

While maintaining that healthful pastoral realtionships are important, our sampling of Mennonite pastors suggest that those aspirations may not serve as a straight-jacket to ministry. Financial remuneration, being linked to congregational expectations, adds a further critical dimension to the pastor's functioning. To the consternation of his countrymen, Jesus, we note, stretched himself constantly beyond the images and expectations of the institutions of his day.

5. *Congregational Attitudes and Feelings/Behavior*

The expression of one servant in the church summarizes many situations, "We Mennonites are ruthless with our pastors." That congregations have been brutal is attested to by pastors and by congregational representatives alike. The dynamics discussed here centre around the general theme on how congregations experience and behave during I T.

The pastoral system has promoted heightened dependency upon the pastor. Easily people will attribute insight, ability, savior complex and wisdom to him. When, however, he cannot fulfill all of the expectations, "he's a failure, inadequate and guilty of neglect of duties." "Perhaps another pastor will fill my needs" is the growing thought. As allegations of incompetency increase, so hope for a new leader emerges, only to repeat the same cycle all over again. The congregation hopes that someone better than the current pastor will meet their dependency needs. A congregation lives in hope that the opposites under the "old" pastor will pull together under a new

"messiah." The trade-offs that are made in an affluent society apply to our attitude toward pastors -- the new is better. Pastors know they are expendable. Speaking disappointedly of his congregation, one representative said, "No matter who our leader will be, we will get rid of him." One church representative put it this way, "We're tough on pastors -- not nearly as tough on ourselves. We expect a superman." Speaking of superman, this brother suggested that a pastor, "should be able to read the congregation." He was implying that pastors have special insight and knowledge, and thus sensing the problems, would resign, get out, and thereby "solve a lot of problems" for the church.

The expectations a congregation has of its pastor are manifold, some determined by the ministry of previous pastors, varying conceptions of ministry, concepts of leadership, individual needs, and programming expectations. But always, whatever the congregational expectations are and include, the church expects competence. To this, Pastor Janzen said, "My seminary degree left the impression that I was a finished product. I thought of myself as 'becoming' one instead." Churches, however, generally feel that a pastor is already a finished product -- "he has it made." The church has bought into the "professional" model. The professional model assumes competency in any of the skills that any congregation expects of its pastor. The expectation is overwhelming to pastors. Pastors do not deny the need to become competent, but they deplore that they are not given the tolerance and the time to develop their competencies through experience.

We noted in our interviews that in almost all churches where I—T took place, members would use that occasion of disruption in the fellowship to exit. A general survey reveals various classifications of responses.

In a few cases those who had formed a coalition to seek the pastor's release, scattered to join other churches. These did not necessarily join the same church. Perhaps guilt, discomfort, feelings of shame prompted their exit. My assumptions are that while they participated in the conflict, achieved their goal, they still were caught in a web of intrapersonal conflict from which they were not able to extricate themselves. Neither were these persons helped by those who were angry at their deed. Physical distancing is one way to live with pain of intra and interpersonal sin.

Another group could not identify with the pastor's release, but saw conflict in the church, in this case between pastor and people, as a sign of lack of spirituality. These chose that moment in the disruption of the church as sufficient excuse and rationalization for their exit. "The church is dead," some say. They also know avoidance as

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the solution.

A third group of persons does not exit, but uses the presence of conflict to avoid commitment and to maintain fringe status. These say, "If that's what they do to the pastor. . .why should I get involved?" Interestingly, there is considerable support of the pastor in this category. The children of pastors are frequently found in this frame of mind.

A fourth group, also involved in the termination of their pastor, remained in the church of their commitment, but live in hope that the new pastor will prove more competent than the former. If the pastor shows promise of meeting their needs, they may gradually ease back into a more positive ministry. But as our research and experience reveals there is no promise that this group of persons will again place pressure upon their new pastor once the honeymoon is over.

The silent majority represents those, who, in I—T, did not and could not participate in turning against the pastor. Their vote of affirmation did not count and they are sad and angry. They suffer silently for themselves and their pastor. They feel ashamed. They were actively supportive, but in conflict become passive and accepting. This group too was unable to relate helpfully in the conflict. They live in hope that life under the new pastor, a symbol of new life, will indeed be instrumental toward new life and unity.

That growth of the church is retarded and ministry hampered is evident. The treatment of a pastor by a congregation "leaves its mark upon a whole generation of young people," said one pastor. "This event will set our youth work back for years to come." In his estimation the congregation with tunnel vision focused on an inadequate pastor, is unaware of this dynamic.

What perhaps frustrates pastors most is the ambiguity of reasons and pressures which mount against them. A few pastors were not able to give precise reasons for their termination. What they do know of is the impotence of the supportive part of the church. Some "didn't want to get involved." Congregations are easily immobilized into silence and inaction by disgruntled members, as though evil disarms the righteous. A law seems to be at work. Congregational pressure and immobilization are related. As pressure upon the pastor increases so does immobility. Pastors are dismayed by the lack of determined support by the board and the majority of its members.

Yet, pastors also report that crisis moments brought supporters out of the woodwork, and letters of support usually follow long after. One pastor recalled an unforgetable scene: "A group of teenagers, dismayed at the action of the church, came to our door, stayed at the house all day, talked, cried, empathized, and entered into our

suffering."

When dissatisfactions surface, people become judgmental. That judgment is communicated in messages of withdrawal. It is not a withdrawal of membership, as noted earlier, but a withdrawal from participation in program, tasks and committees. In some cases, the budget will be affected. Money is used as pressure tactic. "We are paying you" has become a level in pastor-congregation relationships. And, when there is cause for dissatisfaction in one area of ministry, there is a tendency to look for support and justification of the grievances in still other areas of ministry.

In passing, I mention again the contribution of power groups in a congregation. One pastor publicly encouraged the small group movement because of its potential for developing relationships and growth, only to realize later that the group was mustering its forces to "cut him down." Another congregation confessed its apprehension of small group activity because of their negative experience in pastor-congregation relationships.

In some situations terminated pastors are regarded as though they were tainted by some kind of contagion. Not only are such pastors shunned, representatives reported that "persons in the congregation who associated too much with the pastor were shunned" as well. Such persons thought to be "on Pastor Fred's side" are looked upon with suspicion.

Numerous congregational representatives agreed that the church's maliciousness with pastors and other authority figures represents a projection of "our own sin, and inadequacy." In my own experience, a church member who dumped his disappointments and litany of alleged weaknesses on his pastor, framed his tirade at the end of the conversation, "I am currently feeling very negative." This admission colored his attitude but became the beginning of ministry. Through confrontation the anger receded, the brother withdrew his criticism and agreed to meet again. The interviewees agreed that the words of Jesus on the Mount specifically those about "the speck that is in your brother's eye. . ." (Matthew 7:1-5) needed renewed application in pastor-church relationships.

In conflict, members lose a sense of what is appropriate also in regards to the use of Scripture. Perhaps it is not widespread, but a number of representatives reported persons using Scripture (e.g. I Timothy 3:2-4; cf. Titus 1:6-9), as "support to condemn" their pastor. In their estimation their pastor was not able to manage his children and household well, therefore, they found justification in Scripture to "kick him out."

Upon reflection on their conduct during the crisis, one representative confessed, "I was shocked to find ourselves behaving the

way we did -- not behaving like saints." Following such insight, it is not suprising that some members and churches as a whole add to the self-infliction with feelings of failure, disappointment, and trapped introspection.

How quickly the church forgets what actually happened! Since incidents like I--T are usually not detailed in church board or congregational minutes, once the incident is distant past, people are not able to identify precisely what happened. The issues and concerns of the moment did not become the ownership of the church, but the agenda of the few. Those interested enough would ask, others who decided not to take sides, or were not attached to the gossip vine, wondered what it was all about.

However, upon looking back upon a former era of service, pastors consistently grew in popularity after their departure. Suddenly, when compared to their new pastor the strengths of the former pastor stood out among his alleged and known weaknesses.

Perhaps a conversation with the representatives of Hope Mennonite Church may conclude this discussion:

Rep. 1 — Pastor Froese said his parting-farewell speech: Some of the things he had experienced here and learned here, he would never forget. He had some strong lessons here.

Interviewer: (somewhat facetiously) Hope Church graciously supplied those lessons?

Rep. 2 — (laughter) Free of charge. (laughter)

Rep. 3 — We visited our former pastor and he told us the same thing. He thanked God for those experiences even though they were very tough ones.

Interviewer: Could those same lessons be learned in other ways?

Rep's. — I hope so.

Rep. 4 -- If I had to learn the lessons like that I wouldn't want to be a pastor.

Rep's. — I wouldn't either.

Rep's. — I wouldn't either.

Rep. 2 — Probably the reason why we don't have enough pastors anymore.

The above conversation concluded with the Hope Church confessing their shortcomings with the previous pastor, admitting their own learnings and reporting that they were more sensitive in the current pastoral relationship.

6. Leadership - Power - Authority

There is substantial evidence in the testimonies that leaders are critical of leaders. Ex-pastors, ministers, and others in leadership responsibilities exercise considerable power in mobilizing the forces,

creating an atmosphere of questioning and resistance, and in some cases, directly undercutting the pastor's positive efforts. Leaders are easily prone to focus on the alleged inadequacies of other leaders. Persons with gifts of leadership are themselves at the beginning of unrest. As one congregational observer put it, "The attitude appears to be, the sooner we get rid of the thorn the sooner healing and growth can take place." The justification for such opposition and action is regarded as righteous, "for it has possibilities of saving us all from further deterioration." Rationalizations are not absent from the process of I—T. Ministers who have experienced I—T are themselves not immune to inflict the same hurt upon others. In one church a former pastor, who himself had experienced two I—T's, was regarded as a threat to the current pastor.

Servant leadership is also not understood by some leaders. As one pastor expressed it, he had not yet learned to work in a team context. He saw leadership as independent from servanthood and partnership. Another on whom there was pressure to resign, said to the board in a moment of challenge, "I'm not your servant, I'm your leader." This angered and frustrated the members who saw themselves as leaders in a partnership. Unwilling to serve as leader in a partnership, the pastor was ushered on to his resignation.

Pastors set the stage for their own demise by not sharing leadership and power. When someone suggested that the church institute a pastor relations committee, the pastor responded, "That's when I quit." To curb power in the congregation, he threatened with an abuse of power.

In hierarchical structures the flow of authority and power is easily understood. In systems, like congregational polity among the Mennonites, the flow is confused. In the lay ministry structures of a generation ago there was a semblance of order. The authority structures were well in place -- elder, minister, deacon, congregation, in that order. While the congregation made the decisions about many matters, in crisis situations, the elder(s) had the last word. Since the introduction of the pastoral system, vestiges of the other remained in many places but not in the formal structures. As a result, the authority and power flow within the congregation are confounded. The church could not share authority and power with incoming pastors. While pastors are given authority to fulfill the office of elder, they are not given the authority and power traditionally claimed by that office. There is evidence in the research that boards, deacons, ordained ministers and also others cannot abandon or share authority and power to pastors who have little knowledge of the history and character of the congregation. To do so requires considerably more trust and confidence. That is why pastors appear to

have considerable power when things are going well, but when pastors cannot meet congregational expectations their authority and power have eroded.

In the I—T the power flow has suddenly reversed. In the earlier pattern the ministers and deacons were all interdependent members of the team, in the current pattern, the pastor is made quite dependent. The resultant confusion is obvious. To protect the church and its traditions, local home-grown leadership has difficulty abandoning itself to an incoming stranger-pastor. In the lay ministry of our past, elders had considerable authority, and power, but these were distributed in the ordained leadership. In the current transition to the mono-pastoral system, it seems incredibly naive to invest that much authority and power in an unknown incoming pastor. A congregationally oriented policy has difficulty abandoning such responsibility! It would require a great deal of tolerance and charity for a congregation to turn to new game rules with the entrance of a new pastor.

Also, former pastors who remain in or return to their home community, as well as other ordained ministers, are a threat to many pastors. Strong personalities in a congregation, ordained or unordained are those to whom pastors abandon their power. "In a moment of weakness," said a pastor, "I gave my power away." To keep the peace pastors are hesitant to expose inadequacies, they retreat instead.

Another dynamic which pastors face is the power of grief in the departure of a former pastor. People are unable to invest the same authority and power in a new pastor when they are still grieving at the loss of a pastor they loved dearly. One person expressed it this way, "I didn't vote for the new pastor's coming, because of how they wronged our previous pastor." The converse is true as well, if a church is delighted at their pastor's departure they will, at least initially, give the new pastor more authority and power.

Pastors report that their own ministry and gifts were constantly measured by the effectiveness of the former pastor. One can hardly fault the congregation on their grief, but it is a handicap of the mono-pastoral system. Pastors who follow strong pastors are at a disadvantage.

What is also clear in the study is that in times of crisis and conflict, churches are charged with power and energy, most of it, however, misdirected. One of these manifest powers has to do with communication. Networks of information come alive. What is disseminated may be truth, conjecture, perceptions, speculations, interpretations, or also rumor. For that reason, a congregation in crisis is hardly in a position to be objective. It deserves the ministries of interven-

tion from another source.

7. Intervention and Support

Pastors are both critical and appreciative of intervention and offers of help. While all pastors affirmed the role of a third party, like the conference pastor (also known as conference minister), many expressed some disappointment in the way their situation was managed.

Pastor Wiens was confused when the congregation affirmed his continuing ministry through the vote, but at a board meeting the conference pastor counselled him to resign. He resigned. In another situation the assistant pastor asked for the intervention of the conference pastor. The senior pastor subsequently made the appointment. The assistant was dismayed when the conference pastor met with the senior pastor and the secretary and "I was the subject of conversation. This approach to my request for help did not prevent the crisis, it helped in the termination."

Pastor Wheeler became distrustful of conference pastors. He admitted that one had come to hear his story. He listened, but could not listen with understanding and guidance. Pastor Wheeler noted particularly the letter from the office, asking what they should do with his pension. "Is this all they are concerned about?"

Some pastors feel strongly that if the larger conference assumes responsibility in the placing of ministers, they should also participate in the ongoing agendas of congregation-pastor relationships. In the termination "they (the conference personnel) should not wait to be asked, but be expected to help." It is assumed that pastors rightly assume some authority, but pastors in trouble may be as critical of the incompetence of the conference pastor as churches are of pastors.

With the exception of the conference pastor, Pastor Neufeld felt abandoned by "all our friends" in the conference. "I don't think the conference as a whole cares about pastors in conflict," he said critically.

Although the entrance of a conference pastor did not reverse the decision to terminate, both pastor and congregation spoke appreciatively of that intervention. The pastor felt it most important that the conference pastor model how antagonists may listen to each other non-judgmentally. The congregational representatives reported that the interaction helped them to regroup and it prevented the fledgling community from being "blown apart."

When pastors find themselves disavowed by a substantial part of the membership, they also feel themselves abandoned by fellow pastors. Projecting herself to what pastors were thinking, one pastor's wife said, "It's your problem. If you're no good then you're

no good. Not one minister came to offer support. They don't know what to say. Perhaps they're afraid that they will make it worse, or they don't want to hurt us even more." Many pastors who have experienced I—T bemoan the fact that other pastors shun them. Pastors avoid the hurting pastors very much like pastors avoid members who are difficult.

One pastor who was hurting for a number of reasons lamented that the pastors in town gossiped about his moral indiscretion. He applauded, however, the action of one young pastor friend, saying, "He cared, he stood with me in my hurt. It's a pity that not more ministers can do that."

In their sensitivity, hurting pastors may feel abandoned but they are not entirely without help. Most admit that they were affirmed by many in the congregation. Here and there a fellow pastor entered their life. One found support in the local ministerial. In the experience of mutual pain the spouse too was everywhere an important source of support in the relationship. Although some marriage relationships were severely tested, no Mennonite pastor was abandoned by his spouse. One pastor admitted that he was now not in the pastoral ministry because he lacked the support and encouragement from his wife.

Church members, as was reported, tend to see intervention as support for "one side or the other." They do not wish for an "interventionist to prove the church wrong in its decisions and actions. The church does not desire such possible exposure." To accept the possibility that intermediaries are desirous of being on "both sides," that is, interested in the health of the whole, is a difficult concept for the church.

8. The Vote

"The vote of confidence, the kiss of death - sometimes it is difficult to tell the two apart,"[9] were words spoken about the termination of a hockey coach, but apply equally well to practices within Mennonite congregations.

The confidence vote, the secret ballot, Roberts Rules of Order, are useful mechanisms of the democratic system, but they represent a violation of the spirit of mutuality and peoplehood. The vote is exercised at the point of hiring, at the end of a contract, and it is implemented when the congregation no longer wants the pastor. It may be initiated by the board by way of a recommendation or also by an individual request by any member of the congregation. It may be anticipated, or it also comes as a surprise. An illustration of its usage is in order: At one membership meeting the board had recommended that their current pastor be given a vote of affirmation. A request

was made that this be an open vote. When, however, another person requested the secret ballot, Roberts Rules of Order prevailed. The chairman made the decision: "Let's respect the secret ballot; when we mature, we can respect a new approach." The congregational parliamentarian agreed, "According to Robert Rules of Order we are obligated to follow the request for a secret ballot."

A servant of the church found that "voting time. . .is about the most gruelling experience for the minister and family."[10] This observation is confirmed in my research. It is devastating when it comes as a complete surprise at the annual congregational meeting.

Pastors report varying experiences with the vote. After giving his report to the annual meeting, the pastor was asked to leave the meeting -- a practice well known. A request for a vote of non-confidence followed. Pastors report that during their absence they were able to hear the proceedings from another room or via the live public address system. Another reported counting the ballots the next morning which had been carelessly left by the balloting committee. Pastor Loewen recounted that the voting pattern had reversed itself after two years. Those who had earlier affirmed his coming, later reversed their position and lobbied for his leaving.

There are reports of inconsistency in the application of constitutional provisions in regards to the voting procedure from one pastor to another. To determine the level of support of its pastor one church board departed from its constitutional provisions and conducted an unprecedented mail-in vote without the members knowing of its implications. Later when the same church voted for another pastor the rules were changed. When the person in question did not get the constitutionally provided percentage affirmation, he still continued his service, although it was not possible for a previous pastor to serve with a stronger affirmation. Pastor Loewen tells of someone suggesting a non-confidence vote for him. However, another member made an appeal to be more positive and to call it a confidence vote instead. To which Pastor Loewen responded, ". . .same thing, only it looks better." Pastors are unanimously negative on the vote of confidence, because it leaves the pastor to interpret the results. Those are also the findings of Leland Harder in his study of the Central District Conference Churches.[11] In that study, Harder says, "The main reason given by both pastors and members for opposing the use of the vote was its short-circuiting the larger process necessary for congregational discussion to lead to discernment and consensus."[12]

Closely allied to the practice of voting is lobbying. This practice is also prevalent as reported by a number of pastors. Lobbying is the act of encouraging persons of an opinion and coalition to at-

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tend a specific meeting where an intended action not known to the general membership, is to be taken. One pastor reported that "the group" was present in "full force" on a "cold" winter night. A non-confidence vote was conducted and passed. Later, other members of the congregation who were not present at the session sadly remarked, "had we known, we would have been there."

The call for the resignation or the offer by the pastor to resign is a calculated decision to avoid the humility and pain of a possible non-confidence vote. There is evidence that members in the congregation encourage resignation for differing motives. Out of self-interest some encourage it of their pastor under the guise of friendship and support to avoid the embarrassment and label of having taken more drastic and hurtful measures. Others are truly supportive and desire to shield their pastor from the humility of the vote.

9. Anonymous Materials

Of the fifteen taped interviews of pastors, three reported receiving anonymous materials. Such materials are disconcerting to pastors and malicious in intent. Pastors who are asked to evidence a high degree of accountability regard letters which assume no accountability whatsoever, as insult.

In one situation the unsigned materials were sent to the church board concerning their pastor. When asked how he felt about such activity, he responded vigorously, "Those people are back stabbers. They rip me off to this day. They do not know what they are doing. They were not helpful." When I continued to push him for his strongest feeling, he said, with a grin, and perhaps facetiously, "The devil trouble their souls in hell."

The second pastor vented his anger to a nasty unsigned letter in the presence of his spouse by ripping it to shreds. Still another received his delivered by an ordained minister, minutes before he was to lead the worship service. According to the interviews, this person had, together with the "political group" undermined the pastor and lobbied behind the scenes to procure his termination.

Pastors deplore such activity with sadness and disdain. If such letters are designed to inflict pain through "keeping the pastor guessing," haunting them with questions and anxiety, they are successful. How gleeful evil must be to find such irresponsibility and maliciousness in the Christian church!

10. Autonomy

Autonomy is congregational independence. That is, in congregational policy each congregation decides its own structures, policies and objectives. Each congregation in the Mennonite constituency decides on its own whether to employ a pastor or not. Autonomy im-

plies self-government. Churches act independently without responsibility to other bodies. In the context of conference commitment, autonomy is congregational individualism.

Pastors and churches view autonomy differently, particularly in times of conflict. Congregations displayed an attitude of distance to the larger conference. In times of conflict the conference becomes more an informal arena in which a church, whether it likes it or not, defends and explains itself to the larger constituency. Pastors, on the other hand, seek a closer relationship and dependence upon the conference. Whereas congregations see intervention as intrusion, pastors see intervention as support. Unfortunately that support is not always available.

The claim to autonomy is heard particularly in times of crisis, perhaps as a self-protective measure against possible challenge or against probable exposure of inadequacy, irresponsibility and injustice. A claim to autonomy is perhaps intended to cover indefensible conduct on the part of the church.

In the perception of some pastors, conference pastors and executives justified their reluctance to enter into scenes of conflict because of congregational autonomy. Pastors feel that at a time they need the support of the conference most conference pastors lack the authority and power to enter into the situation.

Autonomy, cherished as an idol in congregational polity, is hardly an asset in times of crisis. When pastors and congregations are experiencing growing alienation and are left isolated by intransigency and powerlessness, they need help most.

11. Resignation

Nothing is as close to I–T as pain and resignation. Resignation has come to be the only option to resolving conflict while it leaves the real issues unaddressed. Too often resignation assumes that the problem and the pastor are the same. Resignation in the Mennonite Church experience is used to prevent a possible split, arouse support, avoid a possible negative vote; it may represent a protest, a protective measure and a silencing technique. A survey of approximately forty resignations revealed these six motivating factors. The ones most common in I–T experience were the ones, which precede a possible vote to avoid the humility of the vote, or the one which follows the non-confidence vote. Pastors interpret the negative vote, however small in many cases, as a hint. If a pastor's self-image and self-confidence has been tarnished, he may opt for the easiest way out -- resign.

There is evidence that members in congregations, as I pointed out under "Vote," will encourage resignation from differing motives.

They may be friend or enemy and the enemy often comes in sheep's clothing.

One pastor's resignation was not linked to the vote but to his illness. He reported that upon his hospitalization a member of the congregational board had asked whether he intended to resign. His illness, the sick pastor observed, was regarded as a liability to the church, and therefore he "had to be eliminated." Malicious gossip and false accusation "the same that were used to crucify Jesus" prompted his resignation, he said.

The time served following resignation is a painful one for pastors. Said one, "I could have cheerfully strangled them for having asked me to stay on as interim pastor until they found another." Some report speaking and ministering with great assertiveness and freedom while others give notice of sadness and heaviness. Ironically, some are asked to minister to a people with whom they have lost a ministry.

The explanation for this anomaly is inconclusive. In some situations it seemed to be an arrangement of convenience for the church as it began its search for a new pastor. The pastor is provided, at least temporarily, with a financial accommodation. Perhaps the church feels itself appeased in making this concession or request to have their pastor continue to work in their midst. In one such situation, the conference pastor counselled the pastor to use that trying time to rebuild relationships.

12. Installation and Termination

The experience of installation is for the pastor and the church a sacred event, for it comes as the climax of prayers, discussions and conclusions that both are acting in agreement with God's call. At least so it seems. Both representatives of churches and pastor, with the exception of one, spoke freely and lovingly about the practice, yet few were able to remember details about it. Yet, installation is an event freighted with anticipation for both pastor and congregation. Usually the conference pastor is brought in to initiate the pastor in his new responsibilities. In content the practice is little different from ordination.

On the contrary, termination, of the involuntary kind, is anything but holy. The issue of calling is hardly present and of little consequence. A few congregations reported that individual members, sometimes in the context of coalitions, see it as their duty to pressure for the pastor's termination, thus "saving us all from further deterioration." One brother reported someone suggesting with great seriousness that we "keep on praying until we have him out of the church." But in all cases the termination process, whether defended

"for the good of the congregation" or not, was exceedingly sinful. Congregational representatives found themselves silenced and shamed by the obvious discrepancy in these contradictory practices. Pastors are left confused by questions related to calling, although they recognize that God allows good to emerge also from such failings. Having hired them, congregations see pastors as expendable. It appears that while installation services recognize the theological component called "calling," it is only a practice, no longer a belief. If it is belief, the issue of "calling" is certainly not of serious consideration in the process of I—T.

13. Suffering

While the materials thus far are punctuated with pain and suffering, it is appropriate that separate attention be given to this theme.

Along with Paul, every pastor would have enough experience to write his own litany of affliction. They are the scapegoats of congregational apathy, irresponsibility and misunderstanding. They suffer the indignity of abuse, unsigned notes, harassing phone calls, the threat of non-confidence votes, and disabled and unfaithful people. They suffer lack of trust, confusion, anger, and loss of many relationships. He suffers with a carnality that manifests itself in lobbying, underground resistance, secret balloting, dishonesty and rejection.

There is suffering in the abandonment. He was called to ministry. He was installed and affirmed. The congregation agreed to be supportive. In many cases the members stood and openly declared their commitment to pastor and pastoral ministry. It is not surprising that pastors will question their vocational choice. Their self-confidence has been shattered. Their self-worth is in doubt.

The vision the pastor had for the church and his personal participation in it becomes tentative. He is aware that unmanaged conflict and unresolved conflict leaves its mark upon the ministry for many years, perhaps generations. Growth is retarded. It hampers recruitment to the pastoral ministry. All this hurts deeply.

It is all the more personal when that vision falters in the experience of his own family. The pastor and his wife hurt when the children excuse their attitude toward the faith and the church on the basis of the church's behavior.

The suffering is keen because pastors have a lofty idealistic theology, a theology not unrelated to life but not always integrated. The discrepancy between the real and the ideal in his own life and in congregational life is known and is particularly acute in crisis situations. While idealistic, pastors also find it difficult to apply their theology to life -- the life of suffering. He knows that ministry implies suffering, yet "why me, Lord?" Pastors understand that

there is relief in sharing one's pain, yet themselves are hesitant to risk sharing that pain with the people they serve. Because of the pastor's hesitancy to share, congregations are only minimally aware of the suffering of a minister who is "unceremoniously dumped." On the surface the words of Jesus, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," seem incongruous to them. Still their capacity to suffer with those who are inflicting hurt is enormous. In a commendable sort of way they carry the burden of the congregations that also grieve along with them in the unfaithfulness and unscrupulous practices that dot congregational life. Perhaps as someone suggested, pastors suffer too much because they suffer the absence of grace in their life. Pastors need to be reminded that sustaining grace is not dependent upon affirmation from the congregation alone.

The whole process of involuntary termination exposes a kind of suffering that the pastor had not reckoned with, but they are better able to understand suffering as the result of the I—T. Here is their testimony:

Pastor Bartel admitted, "till now I had a victory message instead of suffering."

Pastor Joe Toews said, "Service implies suffering, but sometimes I felt that I was asked to suffer beyond the tolerance of my own strength. I was made the scapegoat in the situation. I'm broken. Out of brokenness comes new life, a new self-perception, a new tolerance level -- an understanding who God is -- who people are -- who Joe is. I have come to greater self-understanding through pain and suffering."

After speaking hesitatingly about his own need to suffer, Pastor Penner concluded, "Conflict and misunderstanding are part of the servant's life. But through it all, God is good. In suffering I clung to that -- Jesus' life style was such too."

After exploring the place of suffering in the christian's life, most pastors agree, "new life emerges from pain" and "growth is thwarted in the avoidance of pain."

While pastors do not deny the place of suffering, they evidence surprise that it comes from people from whom they had least expected it. Frequently it emerges among those who initially were friendly and supportive. They expect hardship but do not expect to be "stabbed in the back by a people who played the leading roles in the church."

Appropriately, the dynamic of suffering among pastors concludes with a testimony of a pastor who was hesitant to share his story. When I appealed for his participation he declined, but said, "I'm afraid it will create more hurt." Then he volunteered a Psalm that represented his experience. Because it echoes the experience of

others, the verses he offered are printed:

Psalm 55

12. It is not an enemy who taunts me —
     then I could bear it;
     It is not an adversary who deals insolently
     with me —
     then I could hide from him.
13. But it is you, my equal,
     my companion, my familiar friend.
14. We used to hold sweet converse together;
     within God's house we walked in fellowship.
15. Let death come upon them
     let them go down to Sheol alive,
     let them go away in terror into their
     graves.

Later, even before I had acquainted myself with these verses, he returned and smilingly said, "Verse 15 doesn't quite fit, include verse 16 instead."

16. But I call upon God;
     and the Lord will save me.

But the church also suffers. "When one member suffers all suffer together," says Paul. Some congregations were oblivious to the suffering of their pastors, so could not share the suffering. Those, however, who knew of the suffering, and were not party to the I—T, suffer guilt and shame. One congregational representative confessed, "They crucified our pastor and we couldn't stop it." Congregations "live with the guilt" of unjustly terminating a call. Perhaps some need to live with the pain of being shunned for the malicious treatment of their pastor! Understandably, retaliatory attitudes were not absent from the expressions of the pastor and his spouse.

In times of conflict churches generally suffer alone, "because we don't want other churches to know that we have a problem." So they suffer in silence and shame, seeking to cover and to deny, trusting that "time will quickly heal."

14. Unfinished Business

One of the saddest realities of I—T is that of unfinished business. It is present in one way or another in every I—T event. The pastor leaves unforgiven for his mistakes or incompetencies. He leaves with feelings of bitterness and anger as well as loss of self-confidence. The congregation is left with guilt for its lack of support, its passivity, and its incompetency in averting the conflict or mis-managing the conflict. "How could we allow this to happen to our pastor," I hear them say.

The unfinished business pertains not only to congregation-

pastor relationships. Tensions here usually serve to surface tensions or strife between members as well. Inadequacies projected on to the pastor may well represent congregational weaknesses. Many members know that the departure of the pastor does not automatically eliminate "the disease" from the church. Self-deluded, some believe the problem to be that isolated. While the members continue to live in close proximity to the unfinished business, the pastor takes his with him.

The following is a conversation with a pastor couple ten years after I—T. "I try to forget about it," but "my feelings come up again. It affects me more than I think it does. The responses we received in Terrace are also the one's we have in Rosetown. Does it have to repeat? Do they have to have the power to shove you out of their life? Make you avoid them? I (try to) shove them out of my life." When I asked, "What would you like to have done to those people?", the pastor responded sheepishly, but spontaneously, "crucify them." The wife continued: "I was happy when they left the church. They got what they deserved. They had what was coming to them because they did it to us. Their children pretty well also left the church. See what you have done to your kids?"

These feelings tell volumes. They tell of anger and power, but they also tell how difficult forgiveness is and how deep the unfinished business is in the human spirit.

A well respected elderly lay person suggested to a pastor, following his I--T, how to leave the community: "Prepare a nice supper for these persons and after supper lay it (your feelings and forgiveness) before them, then dismiss and leave in peace." The pastor found this good biblical sense "but I couldn't, I didn't have the guts to, I couldn't face it."

Pastors and their spouses wrestle with the need for forgiveness and reconciliation. For some there is hesitation, because "I don't want to antagonize." "We have tried" some say, and hope for eventual and full reconciliation. They deserve a word of apology and forgiveness from the church too. A number of pastors declared their willingness to return to speak a word of forgiveness. As one put it, "I would be prepred to go back and share my feelings and hurt, not merely pontificate." Forgiveness and reconciliation wait to be actualized in many pastor-church relationships. Pastors, for one, do not wish to live their lives leaving trails of shattered relationships. Neither should the church.

The pastor troubled particularly by the anonymous letters which were sent to the board regarding "his activities" shared this prayer for his accusers: "Lord, those people who wrote those anonymous letters, convict them of their sins and would you lead them to

write me a letter and confess to me so that I could write to them, so that we could have reconciliation, because, Lord, I confess, I still have anger and hatred toward those people." At the time of the interview this prayer had not yet been answered.

Pastors also have unfinished business that is not only interpersonal, but intrapersonal. One pastor attributed a great deal of his termination to his inability to relate to strong women. His unfinished business was within himself. Others deal with the loss of self-confidence. Others with anger. Still others will calling. One couple was using their time away from formal duties within the church to rebuild their marriage. Some have entered Clinical Pastoral Education programs to deliberately reflect on the events which have touched them so deeply. Not one within the range of this survey has completely abandoned the church or ministry, even though not all are in pastoral roles. The health of the church as a whole will be improved if the terminating and the terminated got together for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. The Lord of the church would be honored!

The story of one such happening could be told here: Following his I—T, the congregation asked the pastor to continue the ministry for a further six months. He felt insulted. Therefore, reluctantly, but in desperate need of work and income, he accepted. The feelings about his continuation were mixed within himself and the congregation. The conference pastor then encouraged him to use that time to attempt to work at rebuilding relationships between himself and some members and attempt to facilitate reconciliation among members. Although it proved to be a frustrating time for the pastor, not feeling the weight of the congregational expectations, the time, from the congregational point of view, proved to be useful. When the pastor left, as the representatives reported, much reconciliation had taken place. The congregation and the pastor both felt there was little unfinished business between them, although a few pockets of alienation remained in the church. Although this may not be a model to follow, one member commented, "reconciliation -- a beautiful thing!"

C H A P T E R   I I I

AN AGENDA FOR THE CHURCH

The agenda that grows out of our understandings of the church, the mandate for ministry and the experience of many pastors is extensive. Here I wish to reflect on those items that are of current and paramount importance.

A. The Church as Ministers in Partnership

The ministry belongs to Christ who entrusts it to the church. The church serves on behalf of Christ. The local body of believers assumes the responsibility of ministry in and through that body. In this congregational concept of the church all members are also ministers. As has been stated by John H. Yoder, "no one is not a minister."[1]   The church, including the pastor, is therefore a community of ministers, all gifted to function in ministry. Using the body analogy, the church is in essence a partnership in ministry.

In the traditional Protestant pattern the assumption is easily made that the pastor has all the gifts, the deacons have some and the laity have none. While this represents an exaggeration of the situation, a hierarchy of offices or giftedness cannot be substantiated from the New Testament. In fact, there is no New Testament pattern of ministry,[2] neither is there a "fixed form of leadership" represented in the early church.[3] We need not conclude thereby that existing patterns in usage, whether congregational, presbyterian, or episcopal are not biblical. No, the New Testament does not prescribe a single sacred structure. Instead, and more importantly, it distinctly affirms the function of ministry and the principles which must guide it.[4]

The principle to be affirmed here is that leadership ministries are to be shared rather than invested in one person as it tends to be in the mono-pastoral pattern. The experience of the Jerusalem, Antioch and Ephesian churches serve as examples where persons share the same function in one congregation (cf. I Corinthians 12:4-11; 27-31; Galatians 2:9; Acts 6; 13:1; 20:17). In fact, according to the

authors of "Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church," the terms "elders," "overseers" or "bishops," and "shepherds" or "pastors," refer to the same ministry. The term "elders" was taken from the language of the Jewish synagogue. The word translated as "overseers" or "bishops" describes the same ministry in a functional way. The word translated as "shepherds" or "pastors" describes the same ministry in a figurative way.[5] On this basis we may affirm a collegial leadership pattern in the local congregation. Such evidence and support encourages us to be less defensive about the current models, exercising greater flexibility in seeking out leadership gifts and adjusting the structures, thus expanding the ministry of the church.

The place of the pastor is thereby not made obsolete. He/she is still a minister with leadership gifts in the partnership. Within the "divinely coordinated multiple ministry"[6] as Paul suggests in Ephesians 4:11-16, the pastor joins other leaders in coordinating and facilitating ministry in the community.

If we take this vision seriously the professional pastor becomes one in the team of pastors. He/she is called into the midst of the congregation because he/she has received gifts and training that may otherwise be absent, latent or weak in the church. He/she is called not to replace the gifts already present, but to facilitate giftedness among members and to enhance the ministry of the whole. It is possible and quite probable as George Webber suggests, that there are persons in the church "who by their sensitivity and compassion have clearly been singled out by Almighty God to be the pastors of the congregation, with potential pastor capacities far exceeding those of the clergyman, in spite of all his courses and summer clinical training."[7]

In 1955, as the mono-pastoral pattern was taking hold in the Mennonite churches in Canada, I.I. Friesen, pastor, theologian and college president, spoke to the Believers' Church Conference strongly encouraging a retention of the multiple lay ministry pattern.[8]

What is being advocated here is a partnership ministry that merges the historic multiple lay ministry with the current mono-pattern. In this model the professional pastor gives leadership in the teaching and equipping roles. The intent is to build up, and to provide mutual accountability, direction and continuity. In the mono-pastoral system much continuity in ministry is lost when the professional leaves.

This paper is a call to the church to develop a partnership ministry in which the basic ministries of the church are well promoted and shared. These are: the preaching of the Word, teaching and equipping, evangelizing and pastoral care, administering and coordin-

ating the program. All the persons thus gifted give leadership and oversight to the community to which they are committed. It is in the context of partnership that authority is exercised, service is rendered and mutual submission is offered. The professional pastor offers servant leadership to the partnership. In the team he/she offers his/her gifts according to which he/she was called. The congregation learns to recognize that their pastor is in their midst not to do ministry for them only, but with them; not to replace the gifts of others, but to enhance them.

There are also other positive implications of the doctrine and practice of partnership. The shift of responsibility for ministry from pastor to people, frees the pastor to serve more freely, the areas of responsibility having been prioritized. The accountability factor among the people increases as the church assumes greater responsibility for ministry. For any one member to withdraw because "they" (the board perhaps) or "the pastor" are inadequate, as has been observed in the mono-pastoral system, becomes all the more obvious and odious.

An attitude of partnership which allows equal membership status to the professional pastor would help reduce the number of painful I—T's now present in the mono-pastoral system.[9] It is my guess that the chronic shortage of pastors which the mono-pastoral system encourages in the church, will become history. With the multiplicity of gifts encouraged in the congregation, a partnership concept has the potential for increasing considerably the ministry and resources of the church. For our institutions it implies that the training program be adjusted to equip potential pastors not only to minister to a consuming public, but also to equip potential leaders to equip a gifted people for ministry.

While it is not the intention here to offer a precise structure for such a partnership ministry, some things may be said. Keeping the function of ministry in mind such a structure could include: (a) a body of pastors/teachers who nurture through preaching, teaching and visitation; (b) a body of overseers, charged with giving oversight, perhaps through small groups, to the needs of the congregation; (c) a body of deacons who give attention to the program and administration of the church. The sharing of ministry, authority and power, will not only honor God, it will edify the church, and hopefully it will reduce the incidence of involuntary termination, although conflict itself is not rendered obsolete thereby.

B. An Appreciation for Conflict

The Mennonite Church was born in conflict. Through much

of its pilgrimage it has paraded its pacifism, but the practices in its community have been strangely incongruent with the peace position. The church has promoted programs of peace; it has defended a theology of peace. Jesus, we say, is the "Prince of Peace." But in its understanding of conflict and strife the church is weak. The behavior of the Mennonite Church is to withdraw from strife, violence and war. While that is commendable in some respects, to deny, repress and withdraw from conflict within the community has left us a schismatic people.

In the history of community conflict, we tend to maintain a shallow coexistence. When conflict erupts it is hoped that time will do the healing. Generally speaking, at the "community of believers" level, as reported by the interviewees, confrontation and a hammering out of the issues have been minimal.

Perhaps peace was defined too much in terms of the absence of conflict and war, and not sufficiently as *shalom*, defined as wholeness.[10] While wholeness is the goal of our pilgrimage, the way along is riddled with conflict. We desire peace but our discomfort with conflict subverts it.

Not only is conflict "wrong" in traditional Mennonite theology, pastors and churches who experienced I—T are also tainted with an image of "wrongfulness." What must be regarded wrong, we are suggesting, is, rather, denial, repression and withdrawal. Churches whose conflict becomes known to the larger constituency are characterized as spiritually sick, while those where conflict is not so obvious to the community are regarded as prosperous, healthy churches. This characterization too has not been helpful to us. Pastors fear going to churches where conflict is present. Pastors who terminate because of conflict find too that their chances for placement have decreased. Some feel they have been shelved. Some come to believe that there is a conspiracy "out there," a network of communication that denies them a new opportunity.

On the other hand, pastors who, together with their congregation, have conspired to maintain a semblance of peace are regarded with less suspicion, and as being more healthful and successful; no one realizes that a subsequent pastor in the congregation will reap the results of concealed hostility.

The agenda pertaining to this dimension of our corporate experience includes acceptance of conflict as reality. To be in touch with one's own alienation: our alienation from God, from others and from ourselves, is the point of departure. Our Christian faith teaches us that there is no reconciliation where there is no acknowledgment of estrangement. God voluntarily reaches down to us in Christ precisely because of our conflict. Our conflict with God per-

sists even after acknowledging our need of God. Life with its human-ness and sinful propensities is so often in a conflictive stance with God.

The biblical as well as historical record, to say nothing of our own personal experience, proclaim the inevitability of conflict. The patriarchs knew it. Jesus knew it and accepted it. Paul lived with it too. Where there are people there will be conflict. To accept it im-plies that we stand on the threshold of both danger and opportunity. To deny it or avoid it, is to live only with danger. C.L. Dick, an or-dained minister in the Mennonite Church, speaking at a provincial convention said, "Conflict makes churches alive."[11] That is the opportunity!

In a partnership church it takes everyone to create harmony, it takes one to effect conflict. Chances for conflict are therefore high. Conflict is more likely than harmony. Making adjustments in the structures and affirming the multiplicity of ministry, will not eliminate controversy or conflict, however. In fact, where commit-ment is deep, and the authority is shared, there conflict is all the more possible.

Conflict appears in as mild a form as disagreement, but may build up to critical stages of verbal abuse and physical threat. It emerges where people lose power; it surfaces as projection; it pre-sents itself in anger. It is evidence of commitment or the lack of it. On the one hand it may be the result of loyalty, on the other a loss of allegiance.

The importance of placing conflict on our agenda is clear, be-cause on the negative side, conflict unresolved goes underground where it eats away at the spirit of the person, becoming evident in passive withdrawal, loss of fellowship and schism.[12] Sometimes the concealed hostility erupts in bursts of anger or emotional rage. The retrieved and unresolved "stuff" of human experience, once tucked away, requires considerable energy, so that, controlled, it may appear, on the surface at least, not to be disruptive. Involuntary termination is evidence of tucked away anger, a deliberate avoidance of the issues.

On the positive side, conflict managed with reconciliation as the goal is what the gospel is all about. There is little understanding of reconciliation without understanding conflict. The celebration and joy of reconciliation escapes us if we deny, repress or avoid con-flict in us, and among us. And the route through conflict manage-ment toward reconciliation has the potential of insight, growth and maturity in interpersonal relationships. The denial of conflict and also the denial of its usefulness in the church keeps the church weak.

It is the church's unskillfulness with conflict that results, as we have researched it, in unnecessary I—T's. Both pastors and congre-

gational representatives confess this incompetency. Our agenda therefore has to do with our own preparation toward a more intentional and confronting approach with both people and issues which hinder *shalom*. Withdrawal, distancing, denial and rationalizations do not make for peace.

Our agenda will include weighing the options. Conflict can be functional as well as dysfunctional, a blessing or a curse. Which it will be depends on our understanding of its potential for good. The church, of all institutions, may become a listening post where disagreements and conflict may be aired and appreciated. It is in the self-interest of the church to expose the sin of avoidance and release that energy for positive ministry. The church is the context for groups and individuals to share their need and to ventilate their grievances. In an atmosphere of trust differences may be heard and new directions may be implemented.

Unfortunately, in our report of I—T's, few pastors or church representatives spoke of a healthy process. Happily, no one was proud of the experience. The model of conflict resolution known in Anabaptist literature as "The rule of Christ" (Matthew 18:15-20) was not employed in the conflict surrounding I—T.

C. The Rule of Christ (Matthew 18:15-20)

One sampling of interviews indicates that minimal effort, if any, had been made by churches or pastors to reestablish relationship between pastor and people, or to seek reconciliation prior to or following the event.

In its attempt at reconstructing relationships one church board suggested a process of goal setting, but the pastor soon realized that at that point in the deterioration of relationships, goal-setting was a band-aid attempt that would prove fruitless.

In some cases, as representatives reported, the farewell service was intended also to serve as a healing exercise without addressing the issues. Most pastors left the community of their calling with unfinished business. One pastor who had resigned following an indiscretion returned to the community and asked for forgiveness. They forgave him. But, as a gesture of good will the church could have also said, "We're sorry that our expectations of you as a young pastor were unrealistic so as to place you under considerable stress and inner turmoil. You felt alone. We forgive you but please forgive us for our insensitivity and lovelessness."

The "rule of Christ" suggests a three-step process in confronting an accuser or obstreperous person. Since we are dealing with pastor-congregation relationships, the steps can be assumed to relate

to such a context.

In step one, the pastor has taken the initiative to hear a complaint concerning his/her ministry. Although with some trepidation, he/she invites himself/herself to the alleged offender. The pastor shares what he/she has heard and offers opportunity for the faultfinder to explain himself/herself and to share his/her perceptions. The pastor shares his/her perceptions and feelings as well.

We note that Jesus avoids third party interventions in step one. The accuser and the accused must meet in open confrontation. The accused takes the initiative. There is hope in the relationship if the persons listens.

The importance of the two parties getting together is prompted by the insight that it takes two to create conflict. As Leas has observed in his research, "It is rare that one party in a church conflict is solely to blame for the difficulty."[13] The pastor need not be alarmed at this perspective for in a way the pastor is a symbol of the community and will become the scapegoat for the ills of the community or will be lauded as the savior if he/she is successful. His/her public presence, consciously or subconsciously surfaces unmet needs for which the pastor may be seen to be responsible. Already for such reasons alone, a pastor is implicated in the disruption of relationships.

Should the pastor choose to be defensive already at the first step, it is hardly likely that he/she will have gained the brother/sister. It is precisely at this initial step that Paul's instructions about "speaking the truth in love" be followed. According to Francis W. Beare, this truthfulness is expressed not only in speech "but even more in the whole inward disposition."[14] It is likely that anger is not absent in such sharing particularly when the pastor is blamed. It too must be acknowledged and not repressed.

The whole process toward restoration could easily end with step one. However, Jesus anticipates situations that become more complex before they get better. It is possible that trust cannot be reestablished. The "brother" is unable to "listen." Communication is not being restored. Painfully the blocks to an immediate restoration remain. A number of neutral persons are encouraged to accompany the pastor to help the parties communicate. The participants are there to listen whether or not the parties in conflict are listening to each other. It is perhaps at this stage that an outside consultant also be invited to assist the process before reporting to the church.

Reporting to the church represents the third step. The church having heard the report from the pastor and the other participants advises further action. The point is made that the "brother" has a further opportunity to listen. Jesus suggests that a series of serious

attempts be made to establish communication and understanding. Action leading to termination of the relationship may follow only after such attempts have been made.

The reverse situation in pastor-congregation relationships is, of course, possible as well. Let us suppose that the pastor "does not listen." If, through the third step, the pastor is stubborn and defensive, it is perhaps necessary to request that the relationship be terminated. In our sampling only one relationship was processed in such a way. It led to the pastor's termination. He did not listen.

The "rule of Christ" waits to be implemented and tested within pastor-congregation relationships. As a point of discipline it deserves to be lovingly imposed as an expectation in Anabaptist/Mennonite congregations. No one is above reproof or correction -- not even pastors. In their many relationships and public ministries it is not at all impossible for his/her weaknesses to appear in the cracks.

D. The Earthen Vessel

One young pastor who followed his I—T experience with further training and reflection in a Seminary context suggested that the most important learnings for him happened in greater self-awareness and self-understanding. But in the I--T experience itself the questions "Who am I?" and "What do I feel?" are camouflaged by questions of blame, "Who did it?" and surprise, "What happened?"

The former questions relate to the affective part of our life, the latter to the cognitive dimensions of our experience. But they are never entirely unrelated. Traditionally our training has focused on an understanding of a body of knowledge, like Scripture, theology, sociology -- summarily, the world "out there," which one would attempt to capture through learning. Training in skills and methods was part of that education.

However, there is also a world "in there," in the caverns of our own being, that wants to be known and acknowledged. The doctrine of "Know thyself," as Socrates suggested, that is, reflection and introspection, motivation and reservation, sensing and feeling -- altogether the whole affective range of being has not been as vital to the preparation for ministry. The discipline of self-awareness, without becoming narcissistic, is the recommended process.

It is a foregone conclusion that we cannot make rational decisions about that of which we are not aware. In crisis moments, in situations that threaten, during evaluations or in discussions about ministry, there are feelings, urges, and impulses that are present in the "earthen vessel" (II Corinthians 4:7).

These messages, whether they come from the body or the

psyche, determine our perceptions of the event. For his/her own mental health, if nothing else, he/she learns to identify those feelings, urges and impulses that interact in the intrapersonal process, conditioning our perceptions and affecting interpersonal relationships. Every new situation arouses some kind of response or reaction within. It is, of course, self-defeating to be making the focus of our ministry centered in ourselves. But when pastors sensitize their awareness facility they are better able to respond responsibly toward others.

Since it is assumed that the traits of a person in ministry are basic to the exercise of Christian ministry, continuing self-directed introspection into the emotional and spiritual life seems essential. Paul was describing this inner dialogue which leads to greater awareness when he wrote to the church at Rome (Romans 7:15-19). It is out of awareness that understanding is achieved.

One of the most important impulses and survival mechanisms, of which we become aware and around which so much else hinges, is the emotion of anger.

In traditional Mennonite piety anger is a bad emotion and an unacceptable form of expression. But since anger is still present nevertheless, it has to be controlled, denied or repressed. It cannot be expressed. On the contrary, it is expected that the ordained minister or pastor display in an exemplary way the good emotions: love, kindness, patience and self-control. Pastors (and others) learned to describe their feelings with cautious words like: frustration, disappointment, concern or confusion. These are acceptable in the Mennonite community, but unfortunately are only mild descriptions of the intensity that is hidden within. Pastors and their spouses admit having difficulty sharing their feelings.

So pastors have learned to program themselves to be nice, good, emotionally strong, never flustered, patient, and kind (Galatians 5:22-23). Anger, they see is listed among the "works of the flesh" (5:19-21). Thus anger is shelved or repressed out of sight. To file our feelings and impulses appropriately requires considerable control and to maintain our feelings at acceptable levels absorbs substantial energy. Congregational representatives were sure to point out the impulsive reactions of pastors as weaknesses. Weakness or not, well-controlled feelings of anger serve to block a person's effectiveness in interpersonal relationships. While control is appropriate a high profile in dominance and self-discipline makes a person rigid and distant. Anger trapped causes depression. Anger turned inward is self-destructing.

The inability to identify his/her own anger, to own it and express it, leaves the pastor ill-prepared to accept it and to deal with it

in others. For if it is unchristian in himself/herself, it is also unacceptable in others. Mennonite theology does not allow for a double standard.

Unable to share angry feelings, pastors maintain a memory bank of unresolved irritations and anger. Following I—T, as was learned from the interviews, those same feelings are transported into the new pastorate.

Mennonites generally, pastors in particular, fear anger. A concept of the pure church "without spot or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27) cannot allow for anger. The injunction "be angry but do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26) is more easily explained as a justification for righteous indignation. However, in its context it relates to building or destroying relationships. Who wants to risk the possibility of destroying relationships?

However, in being angry anyway, we have withheld from each other our honesty. If relationships were maintained, they were shallow at best. The whole I—T event is an illustration of unresolved anger. Many suns have gone down on pastor-congregation relationships, as anger was tucked away. Admission of anger is but an admission of our humanity, our status as an earthen vessel.

Pastors must be encouraged to relieve themselves of such feelings, not in withdrawal, but by admission and confrontation; not in lashing out during the last sermon before their departure, or at the farewell service, but in honest admission "I am angry" or "I am hurt." Perhaps congregations and pastors, as a farewell exercise, could unburden themselves as James, the pastor suggested, "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16).

Also in traditional Mennonite theology anger and love are opposites, the one bad, the other good. Their relationship in ministry is critical. The love here described is not a pious thought or shallow feeling, but a caring concern for both neighbor and enemy alike. It is a love that is not divorced from anger or confrontation. "Speaking the truth in love" we said earlier, involved truthfulness in one's inner disposition. It cannot be honest to present a loving front when resentment lurks underneath.

In that case, love towards others is blocked by concealed hostility or covered resentments. Thus ministry is hampered. The minister is not free. Alienation is fostered when anger is not permitted its healthful resolve.

It is insufficient and incomplete to talk about the need for anger-awareness on the part of the pastor. As we declared, he/she is one important person in the partnership. His/her I—T has its roots in accumulated and unresolved anger in the congregation. Unfulfilled

aspirations, unmet needs, concealed hostilities accumulate in the life of a congregation as they do in individuals. Unmanaged and unresolved, these eventually find their way to the surface. As David Augsburger says, "People unhealed will eventually be heard."[15]

The pastor as a symbol within the congregation, will undoubtedly bear the brunt of such accumulated congregational anger. To be sure, such hostility is generally expressed, at least in our sampling, by a few persons, perhaps a coalition. But it may be strong enough to declare non-confidence, expressed at first in dissatisfaction, then criticism, and later, when the opportunity presents itself or is created, in a vote. The congregation or part of it live with the illusion that their problems are solved with the departure of the pastor.

Another dimension to be considered is the repressed anger of the many who affirmed their pastor. But to maintain "the peace," and to "keep matters from getting worse" they too fail to share their disappointment toward the minority. The pastor must leave, but the anger and hostility accumulate. I—T does not solve individual or congregational ills. It merely postpones their resolution. I—T is a way of avoiding the issues.

To state the concern another way: I—T, most often, is the climax of interpersonal incompetencies on the part of the pastor and certainly also among the membership. The malicious ways in which I—T is accomplished can be explained but hardly justified.

To suggest that pastors are weak in interpersonal competencies is not a judgmental statement. It is a description of our current status as earthen vessels. That we are never competent enough for all the situations in the pastoral ministry is an understatement!

As pastors, we display our weaknesses not only in the exercise of our giftedness.[16] The context of Paul's message speaks also of physical as well as emotional components of our status as earthen vessels. For our comfort Paul presents a case for weakness (II Corinthians 4:7-9; 12:9-10)!

While that perspective keeps us in focus, our weaknesses may not be an excuse for not equipping ourselves better in the art of human relationships. We learn as we minister, forgive and seek forgiveness as we fail. It behooves the servant of God's servants to develop greater self-awareness in those qualities that so crucially pertain to interpersonal relationships and continuing ministry.

E. The Evaluation/Review Process

One way in which anger may find positive expression is to provide a periodic evaluation of the partnership. This is an intentional effort to evaluate a pastor's ministry but only as it relates to the con-

text of the partnership. Beyond that the evaluation must touch on the congregation's ministry as well and the relationship of the whole church.[17] The importance of the periodic review, separate from the end of the term and separate also from the annual membership meeting, was endorsed by pastors and congregational representatives alike. In the interviews other observations about the evaluation process were made:

1.   Pastors and congregations are encouraged to seek clarity regarding the purpose of the review. The pastors felt strongly that the review not be linked to a vote regarding a further term for the pastor. Some evaluation materials suggest that it be done prior to the end of the term (6 months). The review is therefore linked to the question of continuation and less attention is focused on the improvement of ministry.[18]

"The prime purpose of evaluation," says Michael Strembitsky, Superintendent of the Edmonton Public School Board, "is to improve performance. Evaluations are always a bit scarey. But it is better to provide an opportunity for them to be based on information rather than non-information (gossip). You see, evaluation happens, whether you plan for it or not."[19]

2.   In our conversations the pastors expressed some ambivalence on the use of "imported" questionnaires. Instead of questionnaires, they were looking to a process that was more dialogical.

3.   Furthermore, concern has been expressed that the review be integrally related to the goals of the church and the expectations the church has of its pastor. The job descriptions, role expectations and "Memo's of Understanding" vary from church to church. For that reason standardized questionnaires cannot do justice to local variables in job descriptions and expectations. In some cases conference pastors and executives encourage adaptations of the review documents.

4.   The local committee that is selected to conduct the review is not comprised of pro and con elements, but is made up of persons committed to fairness and understanding. They are persons who help to create a protective and supportive climate. Conference ministers felt strongly that a third party should oversee the review.

5.   Finally, current evaluation mechanisms assume the mono-pastoral pattern. They are designed only to improve the funtioning of the pastor in that system, thereby raising the expectations of the pastor as improvements in the delivery of ministry are suggested. In my hopes and visions I see the development of review procedures that will take seriously the church as partnership and pastors in more dramatic facilitating roles. The review document attached (Appendix IV), which represents a revision and elaboration of an earlier docu-

ment by John H. Neufeld (Appendix III), may perhaps provide continuing discussion in the direction that the church needs to move.[21]

F. Leadership, Authority and Professionalism

The issues of styles of ministry, leadership and authority, are current subjects of debate within the churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. This debate has received some impetus by the shortage of professional pastors and by the continuing incidence of unhealthy congregation-pastor relationships. Of importance to these discussions will be the recently published study of the (Old) Mennonite Church.[22] The Summary Statement of that four-year study, "Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church" was adopted by the "(Old) Mennonite Church General Assembly at Bowling Green, Ohio in August of 1981."

This document contains helpful evaluations of different styles of ministry: (1) the traditional Mennonite threefold pattern of elders/bishops, preachers/ministers, and deacons; (2) the single pastor pattern; (3) the team leadership pattern; and (4) the emerging forms of "undesignated leadership" in house churches and small fellowships.[23]

The statement also represents four criteria by which congregations can evaluate their own authority in the church: (1) The authority of the Church is primarily corporate rather than individual. (2) Leadership authority in the church should be expressed in serving one another rather than in lording it over others. (3) The shape of leadership authority in the church is one of mutual submission. (4) Leadership authority in the New Testament is both confessed and confirmed in practice.[24]

There are also other consultations and studies to which we could refer. However, these are documented in a recent study by Leland Harder, "The Pastor-People Partnership: The Call and Recall of Pastors in Believers' Church Perspective." It is therefore not necessary to duplicate mention of the materials here.

A further dimension relating to leadership and authority is what has come to be known as professionalism. What we have in our present history referred to as the salaried ministry or the single pastor system or the mono-pastoral pattern or just the pastoral system, has now also become equated with the professional ministry. Probably the increase of diverse professions and specialization among the membership has been one of the leading factors toward professionalism in the pastoral ministry.

The term "professional" has become fadish in contemporary society. When earlier it referred to the specialized vocations like

medicine, law and teaching, it is now in vogue in many domestic service vocations like, "professional rug cleaning, " or "professional hair stylist," etc. The whole social milieu is imbued with professionalism.

The professional has been defined by Mennonite authors[25] and others[26] as one who is trained and subsequently offers specialized skills and services to people. In that sense the pastoral ministry is little different from other professions. But there are limitations to professionalism particularly as they pertain to the Christian ministry.[27]

The basic weakness of the professional model is that it equates ministry with a profession, as though it were like other professions.[28] But ministry is more than acquired knowledge and the exercise of acquired skills. Urban T. Holmes III proposes that the Christian ministry has two dimensions, "the charismatic and the professional."[29] The "charismatic" is defined as the person "to whom is given a quality of character that is contagious, spontaneous, mysterious, and essentially eschatological."[30] Henri Nouwen calls that added quality "beyond professionalism."[31]

That dimension is more than understanding, preparation, skill, competencies, or techniques. Christian ministry certainly affirms them, but, beyond these it requires qualities that are or become resident in the minister independent of training, although that need may be exposed by training. The qualities that come to mind as they are nurtured in fellowship and solitude are faith, prayer, vision, rootedness, congruency in faith and life, as well as the Spirit fruit (Galatians 5).

This plus to professionalism in the Christian ministry lies in the "sacramental person, who possesses the capacity to communicate the love of Christ, not by virtue of training but through the transcendent dimension of God's love that exhibits itself in his life."[32]

Therefore competent or skillful preaching isolated from personal faith and holy living is an anomaly. However, personal faith does not render competency unnecessary. Skillful ministry undergirded with a sense of divine presence, describes Christian ministry. The converse is true as well. Qualities of devotion and love transmitted skillfully in ministry also describes Christian ministry. This two-dimensional nature of our preparation requires continuing affirmation in the Mennonite Church.

G. Congregational Autonomy and Conference Authority

In the Mennonite Church the local congregation is the basic unit of Christian community. In its understanding the church is

God's people, a reconciled and reconciling community, meeting to worship, to study, to fellowship, and scattering to serve. It is within the local congregation, this basic unit of Christian commitment, that the ministry of Christ - mutual support, admonition, discipline, relationship building - can best be carried on.[33]

Our concerns as it pertains to I—T events in these local congregations, stretches to the realm of the Conference. The Conference is a family of such local congregations, who have committed themselves to each other for mutual counsel, fellowship, and participation in common projects.

In our understanding of Christian community the congregations cannot exist meaningfully apart from the wider Christian fellowship. The wider Conference community offers an arena for fellowship, testing of doctrine, encouragement in mission and mutual counsel regarding its life of faith. Common commitments provide strength, stability and direction to the local congregation. The same principles that guide fellowship and relationships in the local congregations must be seen to operate also within the Conference family. Thus commitment to membership in the Conference family deserves to be taken seriously at every level of commitment and relationship: provincial, national and international, and beyond that into the ecumenical community.

The local church is not only accountable to its Lord, its accountability stretches beyond itself, ultimately to the church universal. Its witness has a ripple effect. In a real sense it is also responsible to the world, "for God so loved the world." In its faith and life it serves as a beacon of light to the world. The church is never not accountable. In its decisions at the local level it influences a web of relationships, and moves on through a vast network of communication, far beyond itself. The influence of its intended or unintended cruelty to the pastor stretches even forward into the generations in the decisions of the children and grandchildren. We know from the interviews that the behavior of the church in conflict is a significant factor in the aversion of young men and women to the Christian ministry. We have also reported the pain of the parents when they see their children use the irresponsibility of the church as an excuse to abandon it.

In the interest of greater congregational responsibility in pastor-congregation relationships, we must shelve the concept of congregational autonomy. Autonomy is congregational individualism within a family of churches. The appeal to autonomy is applied particularly during conflictive events in the life of the church. Avoidance of facing the issues, and withdrawal because of guilt and shame, is as real for congregations as it is with individuals.

Body theology implies interdependence and Conference commitment extends that interdependence. A claim to independence at a time when the pastor and the church need help most, violates commitment and stunts church growth. When the congregation is caught in a web of deteriorating relationships it is least capable of helping itself. The pastor is left alone. It is at such a time that the church, more than ever, deserves the compassionate entrance of persons representing the larger partnership.

In the interviews I found differing degrees of appreciation for the larger partnership. Pastors generally agreed that the Conference should play a stronger role in the placement, support and guidance of the pastor. The congregational representatives on the other hand, while they recognized the wider relationship, reported that thoughts about Conference involvement had received only minimal attention. Of our sampling, only three congregations deliberately invited a third party to offer counsel. One of these reported inviting a team of two to give a whole week to study the pastor-church relationship. This objective study recommended the termination of the pastor. Although painful, the congregation felt positive about itself having chosen that route. A consideration of this as an item for our agenda stems also from the experience of isolation that a pastor experiences in I—T. Also, a congregation, troubled and dissatisfied, generally operates independently without serious consideration of responsibility beyond itself. It is therefore not surprising that a pastor and his family suddenly feel isolated from affection and affirmation.

We are led to explore new directions. In what practical ways can the Conference relate to churches in conflict? Who should enter the fray? Within the last few years provincial conferences have employed conference pastors to minister to pastors and churches alike. Although their job description would include pastor-congregation relationships, the evidence of their helpfulness, as reported by pastors, has not been unanimous.

The reasons are two-fold: For one, conference pastors, as with many pastors, have little training in conflict management, and as I reported about pastors (Chapter II), they also lack in interpersonal competencies. Secondly, and more importantly, conference pastors can hardly enter conflictive situations because they are not given that authority by the local church. In a recent congregation-pastor breakdown, many voices from outside the congregation were heard to say, "Why doesn't the conference minister do something?" or "Why don't 'they' do something?" The reason why conference personnel are slow to rush in is that they lack personal confidence, and they do not go with authority. The ministry of conflict management, at the very outset, if it is to prove helpful requires the willing participation

of the antagonists.

Besides autonomy, the congregational vote too must come under examination and scrutiny, particularly as it relates to the event of termination in the life of a servant of God's servants.

H. The Vote and the Secret Ballot

Both the vote of non-confidence and the vote of affirmation, particularly the secret kind, leave something to be desired. Neither helpfully says what the background reasons are for the non-support or the support. Pastors who have experienced the secret ballot which launched their termination are convinced that alternatives need to be found.

Leland Harder, a sociologist and professor at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, in Elkhart, Indiana, was asked by the Ministerial Committee of the Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church to make a study of "what happens to congregations and pastors in negative vote situations wondering if there are other options that are workable and in use."[34]

He suggests that the ballot comes from modern democratic institutions, but that in the context of the Judeo-Christian faith, "the discernment of the Lord's will in any decision-making process is not a matter of percentages but of consensus led by the Holy Spirit"[35] (Acts 15:28).

In writing to his congregation, Menno Wiebe suggests that the for-and-against vote, "is a structural set-up for contention. . .(it) is to cash into a win-lose, victory-defeat framework."[36]

Actually, the non-confidence vote is a lose-lose proposition. Winning is an illusion. It is a superficial and short-term success at best. The pastor loses. For him/her the main issues are left unaddressed. They are only postponed. The congregation loses. In the non-confidence vote, depending on the percentage required, the minority appears to win the pastor's release, but such a minority along with the whole congregation loses its integrity.

Wiebe is also right in criticizing that the pastor can be "laid bare" before the whole church while "exposure" of the members is not expected.[37] This is one more reason why the total partnership must come under scrutiny and examination in the review process. The failure of the pastor to win a confidence vote actually becomes a failure of the congregation in its ministry. It is a failure because the negative component in the congregation has the power to immobilize not only the pastor but the whole church in ministry.

Furthermore, the secret ballot permits those who are dissatisfied to register their dissent without declaring themselves or without

being identified. They can maintain their anonymity very much like the authors of the anonymous letters. They have exercised their power and prerogative and have been given opportunity to test the strength of their position. But, all at the expense of integrity, honesty, knowledge, growth and peoplehood. Such members live in hope that their point of view although ambiguous and undeclared will be registered appropriately. It is a message to the pastor. The reasons for the dissent, while important to the pastor, are not so important to them. The message may be as unspecific as "we need a change." The secret ballot lacks accountability and seethes with irresponsibility in the Christian community.

Perhaps the problem is not with the vote itself but with its implementation, the timing, or perhaps the lack of process leading up to a vote. The problem may also reside in the integrity of the person who carelessly hastens a vote.

Finally then, the concern regarding the vote is three-fold: (a) the integrity and health of the pastor and his family; (b) the ongoing healthful ministry of the church, particularly in its ministry of reconciliation; and, (c) the image (self and public) of the church in the community and the world.

I. Tenure and Termination

In the earlier multiple lay ministry the minister-pastor generally served in one church for the duration of a life-time. With the introduction of the mono-pastoral pattern the terms were suddenly limited. The reasons for the shorter terms lay not only with the congregation. In many cases pastors resigned to continue their education. Some left "the ministry" to engage themselves in other vocations. Some established for themselves a "rule of thumb": "Ten years is the limit," said one; "Seven years in any one congregation is my limit," said another. When I came to Foothills one brother suggested that I should consider staying, as do missionaries, for the rest of my working years. Another felt that eight years was the limit.

As the professional ministry took root so did the termination syndrome, "the time has come." The "look at the calendar" process is helped along by churches and denominational executives looking for candidates for placement, "Let's see, you've been there ten years. We thought you might be looking." The pastor wonders whether the question or suggestion is also a hint. According to Lyle Schaller, "an examination of the calendar" is "one of the most widely cited and least profound reasons for terminating a pastor's relationship with a congregation."[38]

While there are exceptions to this viewpoint, Schaller favors

"extending the length of the typical pastorate."[39] That is the view of a colleague in ministry, John H. Neufeld, who suggested to the delegates at the annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, held in St. Catharines, Ontario, July 1982, that congregations should "recycle" their pastors. That is, they should allow them periods of refreshing and continuing education so that renewed they might continue their service in and to the same congregation.

Speaking in favor of long pastorates, and just as the professional ministry was establishing itself in Canada, P.K. Regier suggested that "the longer tenure should be encouraged so that the congregation and the pastor may grow into an organic oneness, and the full impact of his/her personality and influence may be brought to bear upon the spiritual life of the church."[40]

John Howard Yoder, whom I have already quoted as defending the multiple-partnership ministry as the biblical model, also leans strongly to long term pastorates.[41]

It does seem ironic that Protestants, and now Mennonites too, will entrust a stranger with the most important functions in the Christian ministry, then see him/her wander off, or forced out, only to have the congregation repeat the same trust (or is it irresponsibility) to another stranger. This strengthens, of course, the argument for long-term pastorates in the mono-pastoral system. But it is an even stronger argument for a partnership ministry where the central functions are distributed and continuity is not threatened with the mobility of the professional. There also seems to be a direct relationship of stability and growth in the congregation and long-term pastorate.

There are, of course, exceptions to long term pastorates. These are to be expected: anticipation of retirement, student pastor internships, interim pastorates following a long term pastorate, obviously poor and mutually recognizable pastor-congregation matches, theological differences and indiscretions by the leadership, and unwillingness of the pastor "to listen" as Jesus instructed.

Professional and interpersonal incompetencies can be remedied by continuing education and renewal efforts, and do not constitute reasons for immediate termination. The alleged incompetencies and other weaknesses deserve to be dealt with helpfully so that pastors, when they do proceed to another church, proceed with new confidence and insight, better equipped to continue ministry in another context. When pastors, however, move on "when things are going good," perhaps to avoid the learning that comes through resolving the underlying reasons, or are involuntarily terminated, both pastors and churches tend to perpetuate their weaknesses. Churches and pastors who sense and anticipate tension or trauma in the relationship

are encouraged to commit themselves to in-depth examination and resolution, before either withdraws from the relationship.

The teachings of Jesus and the biblical mandate generally encourage a rigorous and reconciling approach to human relationships. In the church this is an expected and continuing agenda also in pastor-congregation relationships.

J. Other

Other items that surface from the interviews are as follows: The issue of ordination, the concept of calling and its relationship to training, the deterence factor in "being salaried," the burn-out issue, recycling pastors,[42] and the suggestion of a pastoral relations committee. Here, stated briefly, are two other agenda items:

1. *Roles:* The mono-pastoral system asks that one person have all the needed gifts no matter what the size or make-up of the con-gregations. It is expected that he/she will be competent in preaching, worship leadership, teaching, counseling, administration, visitation, and much else. The shared multiple ministry acknowledges the diversity of gifts present in the church and distributes responsibility and authority in the church. Our ongoing discussions will look at a more realistic job description and expectations of the pastor.

2. *Love and Justice:* Last, but certainly not least, is the issue of love and justice. I—T represents a breakdown of relationships in the social/spiritual community. Love is being withheld because anger and concealed hostility are blocking its desired flow. Through the process of forgiveness, for "forgiveness is a journey of many steps,"[43] says David W. Augsburger, love is permitted back into the relationship. As the coming together in reconciliation happens, love erases the demands that drove and kept the persons apart.

However, forgiveness does not eliminate the need for justice to be applied. Forgiveness and reconciliation cannot take root until also the injustice that accompanied lovelessness is addressed. What could that be in pastor-congregation relationships as it is expressed in I—T?

For one, compensation in monetary terms must be considered essential, particularly if the I—T comes before the end of the term. Acknowledgment can be made in tangible expressions, because a "job" has been lost, financial inconveniences and hardship have been felt. Beyond that is the expense of an unanticipated relocation.

The significantly more important issue, by which the monetary consideration is not erased, however, is that restoration of a tarnished reputation be made, an apology for defamation of character and

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competency be offered, and that public withdrawal of the accusations be proclaimed and published. It is this justice which must be felt by the pastor and his family, both these inside the community of faith and those still outside. Only then can their children begin to have trust and faith in the Christian community restored. If the pastor's self-confidence has been lamed, ways can be found to rebuild his self-esteem and confidence. The kiss of peace, the embrace of love and perhaps the "ring" or other such symbol can be given to remind the once-alienated that inequity and iniquity have been removed.

The peace offering of the Old Testament (Leviticus 3), and the placement of the "ring" in the celebration in the Palestinian home (Luke 15), provides a clue to pastors and congregations. The suggestion of the older brother (p. 117), to a hurting pastor, to treat his offenders to a sumptuous meal, could be such a symbol. While love and peace may be written on our hearts, tangible symbols demonstrating renewed realities, could adorn our homes. Perhaps peace offerings and symbols of peace, love and justice could still be shared retroactively in the community of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada!

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCH

The stated purpose of this project was "to create awareness in the churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada of a hurtful practice in our community." That practice is the involuntary termination of pastors in the church. That intention has been accomplished in the writing. Furthermore, an agenda for the church has emerged. It now seems appropriate to suggest and risk some recommendations that will address this hurtful practice, promote improved pastor-congregation relationships, and stimulate growth, stability, and accountability in both church and the Conference.

Clearly, this chapter represents one particular set of recommendations specifically applied to the churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Other churches and denominations will perhaps review their own situation and discover an appropriate set of recommendations applicable to their context.

In their present form these recommendations cannot represent a blueprint of the final product. It is through discussion in the community of believers that a refinement of these proposals takes place.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING:

A. Leadership and Authority

I recommend that the Conference of Mennonites in Canada make the document of the "Old" Mennonite Church, "Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church,"[1] a focus of study in all congregations in 1983-84, culminating in concluding studies and discussions at the 1984 annual conference.

The General Secretary of the conference is encouraged to seek permission from the "Old" Mennonite Church for the use of these materials, in order to pursue this goal. The newly elected Committee on Ministerial Leadership[2] and the Congregational Resources Board and/or its Executive Secretary would assist in the implementation of

this study in the congregations.

The Committee on Ministerial Leadership is therefore encouraged to prepare a resolution, to implement this study in the congregations, for decision-making at the 1983 annual conference in Winnipeg.

B. A Partnership Ministry

In chapter III, I suggested that the traditional multiple lay ministry model and the current mono-pastoral model (also referred to as the professional model), merge into a partnership ministry. This suggestion is not entirely new. The "Guidelines for Congregations"[3] seems to affirm this position and the practice is recognized in some congregations. The direction is commendable. It deserves to become policy, not only a guideline.

Beyond the merger, however, are adjustments that need to be made of the pastor's role in the partnership. The merging of the models not only distributes responsibility and, perhaps, authority; the role expectations of the pastor need realignment. A shift downward in the current expectations of the pastor needs to be made. In the professional model the focus of functioning rests in the pastor. In the partnership model the focus shifts to the partnership.

Paul believes that the pastor is to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry." I propose that we take that mandate seriously and equip our pastors to be equippers. Not only do training institutions adjust their curriculum accordingly, churches must also free their pastors to become and function as equippers. This mandate then becomes the cooperative responsibility of the teaching institutions, conference, churches and pastors alike. I recommend that the Committee on Ministerial Leadership explore the avenues for continuing the discussions on this theme.

C. Voting

As an alternative to the current use of the vote pertaining to pastoral leadership, the First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg has suggested that the responsibility of the vote belongs to the pastor and not to the congregation.

Their document says, "The congregational vote should be used only as a 'court of appeal' and not as a primary decision-making device."[4]

The process follows a review. The provision reads: 1. "A committee should consult thoroughly with the minister and with the congregation with respect to the ministerial work. It should then recommend to the ministers: (a) Continuance, accompanied by counsel

towards improvement, (b) Continuance, contingent upon a strategy towards significant changes, (c) Resignation. 2. The minister can (a) accept the recommendation; (b) request the appointment of an appeal committee; (c) request a congregational vote."[5]

The side effect of this provision is that the calling of pastors, as well as the review may be regarded with greater care and responsibility, recognizing that in pastor-congregation relationships only the review is the basic instrument which determines and provides guidance to the pastor's length of stay.

It is recommended that this suggested alternative be tested in other congregations. In the least it will stir a response to something that may yet transcend it.

As an interim measure, should churches continue in the use of the vote to determine a pastor's future, three adjustments are recommended:

Firstly, no vote regarding the pastor's continuation or termination should be conducted without prior review or without prior information of that intention·having been shared with all members.

Secondly, pastors should receive the right to appeal a non-confidence vote. A successful non-confidence vote cannot be regarded as a message demanding or suggesting the pastor's immediate resignation. Time should be given to the board to review the circumstances together with the pastor. The church cannot be content until those who desire the pastor's termination have in a responsible way, declared their position. It is recommended that the issues causing discontent, whether resident in pastor or people, be dealt with promptly. Otherwise these issues, and feelings surrounding them, accumulate only to surface in another pastor–congregation relationship.

It is after these encounters that the board and/or Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee will have a sense whether or not the pastor continues to have a strong ministry in that community, and will give their counsel to the pastor accordingly.

Thirdly, it is recommended that the churches of the conference agree on what constitutes a healthy majority for a pastor's healthful ministry among and with the people. In the interviews we discovered a range of 66% - 90% majority for retaining a pastor.

These above recommendations are placed on the agenda of the Committee on Ministerial Leadership for processing. The suggestions will be sent on to the member churches for consideration and feedback. Agreement on policy will be sought at the annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

D. Conflict Resolution in the Churches

The Conference is advised, in the interest of member congrega-

tions, to call a body of mediators known to be discerning, sensitive to interpersonal relationships and skilled in conflict management, to this ministry of conflict resolution in the churches. (I am not assuming that the provincial conference ministers/pastors automatically qualify for this ministry.) Such a pool of persons, pastors or otherwise, should receive a call from the Conference, be approved and affirmed by the Conference at its annual sessions and by mutual negotiation with the respective churches (in the case of salaried pastors), be released to minister to congregations upon their request.

Within the context of commitment and accountability, the term "request" would have the force of commitment to request. Membership in the Conference must have this disciplining component built into its expectations of member churches. Both pastor and congregation must feel assured that their commitment to each other in the calling and installation process, has the concerned participation of the whole Conference, also in a possible unhappy termination.

Due to our strong congregationalism, it is known that "outsiders" delegated or expected to mediate a dispute, have little authority to proceed productively. Conference structures and decisions alone do not assure progress in resolving a local dispute. For that reason local affirmation and authorization of the mediator needs to be confirmed so that the work of conflict management and reconciliation has the concerned participation of the church. This recommendation is forwarded to the Committee on Ministerial Leadership for processing. Processing implies that the Committee decide where these recommendations should first be tested. The options are numerous: (a) provincial ministers and deacons committees and meetings; (b) provincial conferences; (c) workshop sessions at the annual Canadian Conference; and (d) with churches of the Conference.

Feedback from any of these is returned to the Committee which in turn will process the material for presentation, perhaps at the annual Canadian Conference sessions.

E. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

In order to enhance self-awareness and to develop improved skills in interpersonal relationships, every now-active pastor who has not had the opportunity to enroll in a CPE program should be encouraged to do so by mutual decision of pastor and people and at the expense of the church, as part of a continuing education program.

Furthermore, it is recommended that all incoming pastors receive at least one quarter of CPE before they are recommended by Conference personnel to any church seeking their leadership.

The responsibility of this recommendation is placed with the Committee on Ministerial Leadership for testing and implementation.

F. The Decision to Terminate

Since it may be presumed that a healthful termination is the goal of every pastor, and surely the desire of every church, greater accountability on the part of both is necessary.

To maintain a high level of conduct, it is recommended that the pastor and/or the church board assume the responsibility of informing the conference pastor of the intended termination. The conference pastor will then consult with both the pastor and the church board to ascertain the health of the decision.

Depending on his/her findings appropriate action can be recommended. If, for example, lovelessness characterized the decision to terminate, or injustice is evident in the termination, conflict management (See Rec. no. D) will need to be introduced, and justice and reconciliation sought.

G. A Pastor-Church Relations Committee

The suggestion for a Pastor-Church Relations Committee is already part of the "Guidelines for Congregations."[6] This "guideline" deserves to be implemented more aggressively by the churches. The Pastor-Church Relations Committee provides a structure whereby the feedback from the congregation may be processed in a nonjudgmental manner.

The provincial conference pastors are hereby encouraging to assume responsibility for promoting this suggestion in the churches. They can help the congregations to add this structural component to the life of the church. In their report to the annual provincial conferences, they could inform the constituency on the progress made in this recommendation.

H. The Pastor-Congregation Review

The "Guidelines for Congregations"[7] speaks to this provision in part. Although it is in the above document appropriately designated as the "Pastor-Congregation Review," the weight of the review is on the pastor.

My recommendation for an Anabaptist/Mennonite congregation suggests that the review process encompass the following dimensions:

1.   The pastor's perception of himself/herself and his/her work in relation to the congregation he/she serves.
2.   The pastor's perception of the congregation's participation in the ministry.
3.   The congregation's perception of itself as it participates in ministry with the pastor.

4.   The congregation's perception of the pastor's delivery of ministry.

The Committee on Ministerial Leadership is hereby encouraged to review the "guidelines," as well as "A Proposal For Pastor-Church Evaluation" (Appendix IV). The Committee will need to ascertain whether the "Proposal For Pastor-Church Evaluation," with or without the use of a questionnaire, represents a possible mechanism fulfilling the expectations of this recommendation.

I. Autonomy and Accountability

Membership in the Conference is more than the fellowship of a few delegates at an annual meeting; it is more than the acceptance of a financial commitment for common projects. Membership implies accountability, not autonomy. The accountability[8] of the congregation must also extend beyond the arena of conflict pertaining particularly to pastor-congregation relationships.

I am looking for an accountability of churches within the Conference that stretches to other fronts: doctrine, ethics, discipline, unity, celebration, program, projects, and participation in the Conference.

Perhaps an illustration of how this vision may find application is appropriate. The churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta are distributed generally in northern, central and southern regions. These clusters of churches provide the setting for the following recommended activities:

1.   Firstly, pertaining to an annual "examination" or visit: Annually the Ministers and Deacons Conference or some other body would be authorized to nominate a number of persons from the body of pastors and deacons who have served the constituency reputably for at least five years. These persons (a committee of six for the Alberta Conference, two for each region), would accept as their responsibility a visit to the churches in a region or church other than their own.

In anticipation for the annual "examination" or visit, the church board and a few members selected at large, would prepare themselves to give an account on the welfare of the church. The preparation could be guided by questions sent in advance by the Committee of Six. The questions would relate to the various ministries of the church as well as pastor-congregation relationships.

At the meeting itself the two visitors, one leader the other writer, ask questions, record the noteworthy, offer encouragement and admonition, and hear the accomplishments and the disappointments of the church.

A comprehensive report is prepared and shared at the annual meeting of the provincial conference. The conference pastor, too, hears and receives these reports and uses them as a base from which to assume follow-up responsibility.

2.   Secondly, the cluster of churches in each region are also charged with shepherding each other through counsel, visits and mutual celebration. An illustration from the interviews comes to mind. When a daughter church in the early days of its existence suffered a breakdown in relationships between pastor and people and among members, the mother church graciously supplied speakers for the Sunday morning service, but it was unwilling to participate in the suffering or provide guidance toward reconciliation.

Congregations in easy geographic proximity of each other could provide edifying exchange visits that promote mutuality, greater unity in faith and practice and offer complimentarity and encouragement in ministry. In our history collegiality of this kind has happened in part among ministers and pastors. Its benefits need to be appropriated at the congregational level.

The above recommendations, which seek to enhance accountability would be implemented by the provincial Conference Executive, but, prior to that, discussions of their viability must be initiated by the Committee on Ministerial Leadership.

J. A Workshop on Conflict

In as much as we have had workshops and seminars on evangelism, peace, women in the church, etc., it is appropriate to punctuate our conference and congregational life with discussions pertaining to conflict in the congregation. Specifically, such themes as a theology of conflict, avoidance and schism, dealing with antagonists and conflict management, would be helpful to many in the church. I recommend that the Congregational Resources Board project plans for such an event.

K. Teaching Churches

We cannot depend upon our institutions to produce the finished pastor-product in an institutional training program alone. In the pastoral ministry formal education must be integrated with congregational life and ministry.

The recommendation, therefore, includes the selection of "teaching churches"[9] in which the teaching institution, the pastor and/or pastoral team, and the church, cooperate to provide an internship program of one year to a pastoral candidate before he/she is commissioned to work alone in any one congregation. Evidence of

this is already apparent in isolated situations. An internship program deserves to become direction and policy.

The responsibility for processing this proposal rests with the Committee on Ministerial Leadership for presentation for decision-making at the annual conference.

L. "Guidelines for Congregations"[10]

In numerous of the foregoing recommendations I am pointing to the need for greater accountability on the part of the churches to each other within the framework of the conference. It is likely that we dilute our interdependent relationships and commitments by an appeal to the voluntarism of a believers' church and to congregational autonomy.

It is my recommendation that we process the document "Guidelines for Congregations" to eventually become policy for member churches.

I am entrusting this recommendation to the General Board for discussion and processing.

M. Tenure

With the introduction of the mono-pastoral system the terms of service have generally been short. Pastors expect to move, are expected to move, and, as our study reveals, are helped to move. A termination syndrome has taken root in many churches. Except for some legitimate reasons (See Chapter III, p. 75), it is recommended:
1.   that after the initial and satisfactory two-three year term and relationship, the pastor be given tenure;
2.   that the conference encourage pastors and churches toward long-term pastorates, with periods of leave for renewal and continuing education.

These recommendations are made believing that a long-term pastor-congregation relationship ensures greater stability, enhances growth, and offers continuity in ministry. While short-term pastorates encourage avoidance of the issues which effect relationships, long-term pastorates, on the other hand, necessitate a mutual commitment in accepting the weaknesses and working at the issues.

The responsibility of this recommendation is placed with the Committee on Ministerial Leadership which will process it for its eventual appearance for ratification at the annual Canadian Conference.

CHAPTER V

AN INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of chapter IV were sent to fourteen´ people who are leaders in the provincial and Canadian conferences. Thirteen responded.

After I had received these responses I was invited to appear before the Committee on Ministerial Leadership (CML). The Committee consists of three elected persons and includes also the provincial conference pastors. All had earlier responded to the recommendations on an individual basis.

The earlier individual responses were generally positive but laced with caution. The mood among the respondents is characterized in the following comments:

The General Secretary wrote: "Your outline serves as an excellent summary of where we need to go, but it's important that the people move in this direction willingly or the whole process will be aborted. I believe with careful planning we can move the process forward step by step toward the objectives you have listed."

A pastor, who is also on the Committee, responded saying, ". . .too much expected of a small committee in too short a span of time. . .I question whether we have the trust and confidence of the conference to proceed at the pace indicated in your proposals. That does not negate them, but pleads for more time to work at some attitudinal changes which are a vital prerequisite to implementation."

In the individual responses as well as in the Committee I sensed a slight resistance to the directive approach in the presentation of the recommendations. In my estimation such resistance represents not only the current cautious and non-directive leadership style represented in the conferences, but also represents a vestigial resistance to the authoritarian leadership of the elder/bishop pattern in our recent past.

The following is a summary of the response of the individual leaders as well as the discussion of the Committee on Ministerial Leadership:

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A. Leadership and Authority

The respondents agreed that this recommended study was a "timely issue" for the Conference. A few admitted that they were not yet familiar with the study materials. The only hesitancy expressed was that our congregations "appear somewhat tired of the numerous studies proposed by Conference bodies." The Committee was concerned that adequate preliminary preparations be made to assure widespread participation in the churches. I suggested that those preparations include a thorough examination of the process within the "Old" Mennonite Church, and their recommended suggestions for changes in the study process. The CML agreed to "set the machinery in motion" with hopes of bringing the recommendation to the 1984 Conference.

B. A Partnership Ministry

The affirmation for this recommendation was strong, although, as one conference pastor stated, "fraught with some very real possibilities for tension." That possibility is not to be denied as tension is also not absent in other models. However, a new frontier in the ministry of the church is to accept the possibility and the reality of conflict and to boldly confront it for its growth-producing potential. Furthermore, the presence of gifts and untapped potential in the church along with the needs of the congregation and beyond it, demand that we enhance and expand the ministry beyond what is possible in the professional model. In merging the models, ministry has a chance of moving from a maintenance of ministry to a mission-oriented stance.

Historically, the Mennonite churches knew only a multiple lay ministry. Since the introduction of the mono-pastoral system, a clergy-laity distinction has emerged. A partnership ministry will attempt to obliterate this distinction, both in structure and vocabulary. A partnership ministry affirms all saints as ministers. Among them are pastors, teachers, evangelists and others.

As an interim measure the CML encouraged the conference pastors to gather case material on current practices on the status of the lay ministry in the churches.

C. Voting

The response to this issue was more vigorous. One respondent did not see the non-confidence vote as widespread policy. The research, however, reveals otherwise. Another questioned whether there is any other way to get a "comprehensive feedback without the vote?" A committee member suggested that the proposal was "ideal-

istic" and, although that is our goal, we are, he said, "not mature enough to confront and honestly share our concerns in that way." Testing and implementing alternative measures could certainly contribute to greater maturity.

The First Mennonite model was given only minimal attention. Perhaps it needs to be tested in that congregation first before the committee or congregations will be encouraged to accept the alternative to the current practice.

Generally speaking, the respondents agreed with the provision that "no vote be taken without prior review." As one conference pastor said, the vote "is a method of hiding behind our responsibilities." Referring to the vote as an interim measure, one respondent replied, "these points seem so reasonable one wonders why they aren't universally accepted."

Only one person commented specifically regarding percentages that represented a healthy majority. He said, "If the congregation is argumentative in nature, 90% is even a problem. If, on the other hand, it is understanding, 60% is a good show." He found no comfort or solution in any figure. We must work on prevention not on a "cure for an existing problem," he said. He is right, and to that concern most of the recommendations are addressed.

D. Conflict Resolution in the Churches

The respondents agreed that this ministry was necessary. Reflecting the feeling of them all, one committee member said, "I. . . whole-heartedly agree that it is necessary to create ways in which conflict in the churches can be resolved in a more 'christian' way than has been done in the past. Your idea is worthy of testing. . ." But the respondents disagreed as to who should do this. A few felt that the suggested "pool of persons" was an acceptable way to proceed. Others again felt that since this was part of the current job description of the conference pastors, we should not need to add additional structures. If necessary, conference pastors could always call in additional resource persons.

In making the proposal as I did, I could not assume that conference pastors automatically qualified for this ministry even though their job description expects it. The real issue is not who does it, but that the mediator, whoever he/she is, is qualified, authorized and affirmed to minister in that capacity.

The issue of authority is a "thorny one" and as another respondent suggested, I did not state the "authority to proceed productively" strongly enough.

The CML recalled an earlier era (1960's) in the conference when a Church Unity Committee functioned to help churches in con-

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flict. None could recall why that office was discontinued.

E. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

This resolution aroused divergent opinion. While a few whole-heartedly endorsed the move, others appealed for caution. The hesitant were not among those who did not understand this training, but included such who understood it well. As one put it, "to take one CPE course, may be more dangerous than none." He felt that one quarter of CPE could conceivably surface "all kinds of anger," but not resolve it sufficiently to prevent a serious handicap to ministry. Another respondent suggested that this requirement "will run into serious opposition. Some churches feel they have been burned by pastors who have taken this type of training and have then seriously disappointed them by using the language of CPE to cover up their wrongful actions. . ." Another raised a practical issue, "In view of a shortage of people (pastors), would such a requirement be realistic?" If the shortage of pastors becomes the main concern, the requirements may indeed be lessened, interpersonal competencies neglected, and the disappointments in pastor-congregation relationships unabated. The research itself points to the fact that, for many, it is because of a lack of interpersonal competencies that I—T takes place. Some of these pastors become casualties in the pastoral ministry. Part of the current "shortage" must be attributed to a neglect in this kind of preparation for ministry.

The CML generally agreed that training in self-awareness was necessary but proposed that the recommendation be broadened to include training through Supervised Pastoral Education (SPE) or the equivalent training as it may be obtained through the practical theology departments of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

The issue in the stated recommendations is not merely the completion of one or more units of CPE or other related courses, but, as one member on the CML affirmed, "readiness for ministry" is the real test. How that "readiness" is to be tested becomes still further agenda.

F. The Decision to Terminate

Of those who responded to this proposal all agreed that this recommendation was a "good suggestion." The Committee agreed. A few qualified their approval. One respondent was concerned that "such a process would require the commitment (congregation's and conference), far in advance, to the steps suggested." He asked, "would congregations in the stress of a termination situation stick to it?" The question and concern is certainly legitimate. With a history

of strong congregationalism and autonomy, accountability of this kind may suffer, but a new practice will eventually become accepted policy, particularly if it helpfully serves both the pastor and the congregation in healthful terminations.

G. A Pastor-Church Relations Committee

This recommendation and the current conference guideline received unanimous support. However, caution concerning this "guideline" was expressed. One member on the committee felt that this provision was "freighted with landmines" since it is still a "frontier" for us. What those "landmines" are was not explored. While he liked the idea, one respondent suggested that the usefulness of such a committee was "analagous to the leaky roof: When the weather's fine, you don't need to fix it, and when it's raining, you can't." As a corrective to such a temptation, the point of such a committee, however, is to look at the "leaky roof" when "the weather's fine." But, the function of the committee is not only to prevent unhealthy relationships; much more, it promotes the enhancement of ministry and sound relationships between pastor and people.

The CML agreed that the conference pastors should help the congregations to implement this provision and to serve as consultants to such committees.

One member testified: "I have worked with such a committee . . .and found it to be very helpful, in being honest, supportive and helping me to see myself as a person and pastor of the congregation."

H. The Pastor-Congregation Review

This recommendation, too, was upheld. The committee agreed that the guideline pertaining to this provision in the "Guidelines for Congregations" be rewritten since it was "weighted against pastors."

Speaking of the suggested process (Appendix IV), one respondent said, "The process outlined seems to me to be firstrate. If congregations and their pastors would deal openly with each other, it would be possible for them to do what needs to be done without the damage that is done so often now."

While affirming this as a "needed item," another suggested that "care must be taken to do follow-up and assure implementation."

In a review, "the problem is in maintaining a position of objectivity and openness combined with honesty and mutual trust, love and understanding," said one respondent. I agree, and for that reason, numerous conference pastors suggest that reviews be conducted with the presence of "outside" consultants.

While affirming that a review needs to "encompass the. . .di-

mensions" of the recommendation, one member on the committee felt that "the pastor-congregation review needs to focus also on the aims and goals of the congregation and the leadership potential among the members." The review process does not exclude this concern (Appendix IV, no. 9).

Initially, the staggering expectations of such a review process seem complicated and overwhelming. For that reason a member suggested that the review not be a comprehensive one annually, but that only certain agreed-upon areas of ministry be touched on every year.

I. Autonomy and Accountability

This recommendation aroused considerable discussion as well as hesitation, particularly on the specifics of the "vision." They see it as involving "considerable expenditure of resources, time, travel, emotional stress, money," and, "a massive undertaking," and, "a tall order," and, it would perhaps lead to "much fragmentation, unless some general guidelines could be prepared nationally."

The CML stuttered more on this recommendation than on any other. While the members agreed that the issue of accountability was of high priority for the conference and the churches, they were initially reserved and pessimistic about any implementation toward change. "It will take a long time to get our people to think this way," said one. "Our churches value autonomy very highly, and they're not about to relinquish that independence unless it can be shown that it is really a better way," said another. Repeatedly, respondents and members of the Committee saw this as "a long term goal."

Aside from the viability of the "examination" or the annual "visit," is the more foundational concern, namely, the ideological/ theological foundations to autonomy and accountability. The CML recognized this and agreed to give attention to this item through a keynote address already at the 1983 sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. In addition, the Committee is providing workshop sessions on this topic and other recommendations at the annual sessions.

Appropriately, the CML felt that the "seed must be sown" and that it needed to germinate also within the Committee before specific implementation of projects be attempted in the churches.

The CML felt that the concern for greater accountability was a "long educational process," while at the same time affirming that "the idea of congregations shepherding each other is long overdue."

Since the issue of autonomy and accountability touches a basic nerve in the congregational system the response of one of the leaders serves as a prophetic call to the conference constituency:

I have often felt that our autonomy is our own worst ene-
my. I believe we have not understood what it means to covenant
together. A quotation from Ross Bender's book, *The People of
God: A Mennonite Interpretation of the Free Church Tradition*,
comes to mind: 'The first principle of church order was that the
church was constituted on the basis of voluntary covenants a-
mong persons who confess their faith freely in Jesus Christ. Two
important distinctive marks of the true church are discipline and
dialogue.' [1] My understanding would be that we as congregations
have covenanted together to be a conference -- we have banded
together voluntarily into a fellowship to discern the Will of God
together. This means we have committed ourselves to dialogue
with one another and to accept the discipline and counsel of each
other. Our emphasis on voluntarism does not mean license -- that
every congregation can do their own thing. Something so preva-
lent in our individualistic society. . .

Because the whole conference makes it possible for every
congregation to go its own way (having very little input as to pas-
toral leadership, doctrine, ethics, etc. of the individual congrega-
tions) we get our cues and guidance from many sources. I am of-
ten amazed at the wide spectrum of thought and practice we hold
together under the conference umbrella. I sometimes feel that
once the binding force of our common ethnicity is gone we will
be in a lot of difficulty. As our common ethnicity becomes a
lesser factor we will have to focus and become united in matters
of faith. For that reason I am supportive of your emphasis on ac-
countability. It is as we give and accept the counsel and disci-
pline of each other, the more principled congregations will be-
come in their relationships to their pastor.

J. A Workshop on Conflict

If the preceding recommendation received the most attention,
this one received the least. Six of the respondents had "no com-
ment," the other seven affirmed the idea. Two had reservations that
anything could be achieved through the traditional workshop. The
Committee affirmed instead, training seminars in regional settings.
I concur with this improvement in the recommendation, although
the intention was implied within the framework of the workshop.

K. Teaching Churches

The concept of "teaching churches" was also affirmed, except
that the responsibility for its implementation was lodged with the
teaching institutions such as Canadian Mennonite Bible College or
the Seminary. Although it is not of major importance, it seems to
me that a provincial agency, perhaps conference pastor or ministerial
committee, closer to the "teaching church" would best be able to ne-

gotiate such an arrangement, for it involves the suitability of the congregation, the willingness of church, and the supervisory capacity of the pastor. Furthermore, the regional conference pastors and their committees have a more knowledgeable and direct involvement in the suggested placement of a pastor. They would know where any one intern would find a most productive learning context.

L. "Guidelines for Congregations"

This recommendation touches again on the accountability issue. Only five persons responded to the recommendation. A few affirmed the suggested direction. There is obvious hesitation in moving from "guideline" to "policy." There is evident dissatisfaction in a set of guidelines that are given little or no consideration by the churches. The CML is aware that the "Guidelines for Congregations" needs to be updated and rewritten and presented to the conference for action. Beyond that, the "guidelines" will perhaps receive more attention as the more fundamental issue of accountability is addressed and clarified.

M. Tenure

This recommendation was affirmed in the individual responses, but these were not unqualified. The respondents did not want tenure to mean "guaranteed employment," but felt that tenure could be acceptable to congregations subject to review and evaluation procedures. One committee member was concerned that offering tenure "might fossilize the relationship between pastor and congregation." Another asked, "What if the pastor is no longer creative?" This recommendation is not intended to lock a congregation into a contract or relationship that is unhappy or unproductive. Instead, it assumes that healthy relationships may mature with the years and that the growth of the church has a better chance with long-term pastorates.

The CML affirmed both tenure and long-term pastorates, but not without some qualifications such as the recommended review suggested earlier.

THE CONCLUSION

The church must wrestle diligently with the lovelessness and the injustices that result in the I--T of pastors. A vision of the church as a partnership of ministers, including the pastor, becomes our immediate agenda. The church must accept that all its ministers are earthen vessels and subject to limitations. Pastors, whether in the

mono-pastoral system or in the multiple-shared ministry, will never be competent enough.

Our training institutions will adjust the curriculum to the changing patterns in ministry and to the needs within the churches and the world. They will be concerned to equip potential leaders to equip others for the work of the ministry. To rightly handle the word of truth, pastors will want to be concerned about continuing education. Along with additional training, however, pastors will be aware that to be a minister of Christ is to be a bearer of the Spirit of Christ who empowers for ministry.

Finally, all the adjustments, corrections and restructuring will not extricate pain from the ministry or from the pastor-congregation relationship. The nature of the gospel and the ministry imply suffering. Also, the presence and power of sin with the limitations that sin imposes on body and spirit, thus affecting ministry, will be present in the church until the consummation.

In the meantime, God's servant, the church, its ministers, will suffer pain. Pastors will suffer abuse and rejection. They will be accused and labelled as incompetent by the ones they serve, but they will learn that accusations and maliciousness arise largely out of a person's own need and sin. Our response or reaction as pastors to these needs is a reflection of our own. The pastor's vision of the ideal will continue to run counter to the real. The resulting clash within the pastor and in the partnership will bring disappointment to ministry.

However, a church without conflict and suffering is perhaps too comfortable and unenergetic. The biblical vision of the church sees a God in Christ who suffers because he loves, and loves in his suffering. Mennonite pastors stand in that kind of tradition, as does the church they serve.

APPENDIX I

THE PASTOR'S EXIT:

A study of the dynamics of involuntary termination of pastors in the Mennonite Church.

A LIST OF QUESTIONS TO PASTORS:

A. *The Story*
1. What happened? Is there a story to tell?
2. What were the reasons for your dismissal/resignation?
3. As you reflect upon the resignation, what were some of the warning signs?!

B. *Pressure Points*
1. If there was opposition to your ministry, where was it centered? + Person(s)
   + Board
   + Group
   + Church
2. Did you at any time, feel abandoned by those who were your supporters?
3. Identify the feelings present within you during the crisis?
4. What were the tactics used to secure your release?

C. *Installation/Termination Practices*
1. Please share about the dynamics, process, issues leading to the termination?
2. How long did you serve following the resignation?
3. When you were installed as pastor, what commitment did the congregation make to you? Have you been betrayed?
4. What mechanism/process should be used in an Anabaptist/ Mennonite Church to terminate pastoral leadership?
5. Were your roles/expectations well defined?

D. *Intervention/Help*
1. What outside help was sought? What third party interven-

tion was useful?

2. What responsibility does the conference have to pastor-church conflict?
3. What support was helpful to you in the trauma of termination? From whom did it come?
4. When there are criticisms/problems, how would you like the congregation to work these out for you? With you?
5. In your opinion, is it possible for a congregation and pastor to come to a mutually agreeable decision regarding termination?
6. Is it possible for reconciliation and forgiveness to pave the way for a new relationship between pastor and church?

E. *Family Participation*
1. What was the role of your spouse in the process?
2. What did the experience do to the marriage relationship?
3. Identify the hurts? Pastor? Spouse? Children?

F. *Theological Reflection*
1. Does suffering have a place in the pastoral ministry? How do you relate termination suffering to the calling of ministry?
2. Is congregational autonomy a blessing or a curse in these matters?
3. What is your view of ministry in relation to the congregation? (e.g. partnership)
4. How do you see the purpose of conflict in the church?
5. What biblical materials/understanding/verses come to mind when you consider how you were treated?
6. How does a pastor reflect theologically about involuntary termination?

G. *Learnings*
1. As you reflect upon the experiences, what new insights come to you that you have incorporated into your ministry and leadership style?
2. Do you see the possibility of involuntary termination being good for the church? When?
3. Reflecting upon the experience, are there things which you would do differently had you known?
4. How do the disappointments of a termination resolve themselves?

H. *Present Status*
1. Are you in a full-time pastoral ministry now? If not, why not?

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APPENDIX II

THE PASTOR'S EXIT:

A study of the dynamics of involuntary termination of pastors in the Mennonite Church.

A LIST OF QUESTIONS TO CONGREGATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:

A. The Story
1. What happened? How long had the pastor served?
2. How did the pastor disappoint the congregation?

B. Pressure Points
1. Were the reasons for dismissal/resignation centered in:
   a) personality/power
   b) doctrinal/issues
   c) incompetency
   d) other
2. What actions were taken by the board/congregation?
3. What did you observe happening to the pastor when he was under pressure of dissatisfaction, etc.?

C. Family Awareness
1. What awareness do you have of the pastor's and his family's suffering?

D. Installation/Termination Practices
1. When the congregation accepted X as pastor, what commitment was made?   + by the church?
   + by the pastor?
2. When the pastor left, was there unfinished business?
   + pastor towards congregation?
   + congregation towards pastor?
   + within the congregation?
3. What were the tactics used to secure the eventual resignation/dismissal of the pastor?
4. In the case of dismissal, what settlement was achieved?

5. What satisfaction/dissatisfaction did you feel about the termination?

E. *Intervention/Help*

1. If factiousness was involved, were any efforts made at reconciling the parties?
2. Was an outside third party involved in the dispute/differences? What third party help was useful?
      + Regional?
      + Local?
      + National?

F. *Theological Reflection*

1. What biblical material and understanding was applied to the situation?
2. Was the conflict unresolvable?
3. Is it possible for a termination to be mutually agreeable for pastor and congregation?

G. *Periodic Assessments During Ministry*

1. Would you consider periodic assessments of the pastoral ministry appropriate?
2. Were the role expectations of your pastor defined by the board/congregation at the time of contract negotiations/installation?
3. When dissatisfactions with the pastor arise how should these be dealt with?

APPENDIX III

A PROPOSAL FOR PASTORAL ASSESSMENT
by John H. Neufeld

Another set of "Guidelines for Congregations" towards a policy of calling ministers and maintaining effective pastor/congregation relationships was prepared in 1981 by the Committee on the Ministry of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (13 single spaced pages plus 5 exhibits: Suggestions for a prospective pastor interview and call, Questionnaire for ministerial ordination, Report of Ordination, Pastor's compensation worksheet, and Sample of a memo of understanding between a congregation and its pastor). The document suggested a "Pastor-Congregation Review," but did not append an exhibit of instrumentation for it. In the following brief article, John H. Neufeld, the pastor of the First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, adds his suggestions for the review process itself. It was published in *The Mennonite*, Vol. 97, No. 3, Feb. 2, 1982, p. 67. (This preamble is taken from Leland Harder's, "The Pastor-People Partnership").

In recent years there has been considerable dissatisfaction with the questionnaires that have been suggested as tools for the evaluation of pastors. The document, *Guidelines for Congregations*, . . . does refer to and suggest a "Pastor-Congregation Review." But this document does not go far enough. It does not provide any suggestions for the review process itself.

The following proposal is an attempt to meet that need. Hopefully, pastors and others in leadership positions will study and evaluate it.

It should also be stated at the outset that this proposal is not linked with a congregational vote. Rather, it should be used in the second year of a three-year term.

Step one: Pastors prepare detailed self-assessments including identification of their strengths and weaknesses, areas of ministry in which they feel they are making progress and areas in which they need to begin to develop some strengths. This written statement will be specific, in that it will illustrate the points made by providing "for instances" of involvement in ministry as supporting data. This statement can also include the pastor's perception of the strengths and needs of the congregation.

Step two: The pastor shares this self-assessment statement with a group of six to eight representative persons from the congregation who respond to it in detail, i.e. each point is discussed. Through this process the perceptions that the committee members have of the pastor will be checked against the self-perception of the pastor. The discussion in this committee can take two or three sessions.

Such a procedure gives pastors the first opportunity to identify areas in which they feel inadequate, ill-prepared, unsuited, or ungifted, as well as identifying areas in ministry about which they feel positive.

Step three: As a result of the committee procedure, the members write a profile of their pastor. The pastor is present during the writing of the profile, but not verbally involved. When the profile has been prepared, the pastor has an opportunity to respond to it, and, if needed, ask for further discussion and possibly revision. When in its final form, the profile is jointly owned by the committee and the pastor.

Step four: The committee presents the profile statement to the congregation, affirming the gifts and strengths of the pastor, identifying areas that have been designated as areas for growth, and sharing with the congregation an assessment of the congregation's life and work that has been emerging in the process. The members of the congregation then have an opportunity to respond to the profile. Questions are referred to the committee members who have prepared and presented the profile.

Such a process will not place pastors on the defensive or exclude them from the congregational meetings. They know eight persons at the meeting have worked with them in depth and will assist in representing them to the congregation.

Step five: Since areas for continued growth and training have been identified in the process, the congregation under the leadership of the committee and the pastor can endorse a strategy for the continuing education of the pastor so that the envisioned growth can become a reality and the pastor's ministry in their midst be enriched.

A P P E N D I X   I V

A PROPOSAL FOR PASTOR-CHURCH EVALUATION

Introduction
(For the purpose of orientation)

1. The church is a partnership. The pastor does not stand alone, but with the people. It must be assumed that gifts for ministry are distributed to the whole and not limited to the one. An evaluation of a pastor's ministry is linked to the ministry of the whole. It is questionable whether a fair evaluation of a pastor can be done without looking at the total partnership.

2. The evaluation must take into consideration the expectations outlined in the "Job Description," "Memo of Understanding," "Contracts," "Agreements" (or however else the decision to relate and employ has been described), between pastor and people. This will vary from congregation to congregation.

3. The orientation of the evaluation committee (elected or appointed) is thoroughly positive and honest. The committee will be concerned to maintain objectivity. The exercise has the potential for being a positive growth experience in the life of the congregation and pastor-church relationships. Congregational responsibility includes pastoring the pastor.

4. The timing of the evaluation is crucial. Preference is given to a time period well before the contract expires, perhaps already during the "honeymoon" phase or at least during a period of time when relationships are generally good and dissatisfaction is minimal.

Steps To Be Taken

1. The committee members prepare their own independent evaluation, one of the church and one of the pastor. In both cases they identify areas of strength and weakness. It is important to develop an awareness of what strengths needed in ministry are absent in both pastor and congregation. It is desirable to be as specific as possible citing evidence in the experience of ministry. These evaluations are

based on interviews with members of the congregation. All members are invited to share their perceptions. It is hoped that the responses in the interviews are spontaneous and solicited in unstructured settings. Both fact and feeling should be noted.

2. The pastor prepares his own self-evaluation and offers an evaluation of the whole church, identifying areas of weakness and strength. Included in the written presentation is his perception of congregation-pastor relationship.

3. The committee and the pastor assemble to hear the presentations/findings of each participant. Everyone is given the opportunity to respond to each submission. Through this process the perceptions of the committee members are checked by the pastor and members alike. The process could involve a number of sessions.

4. As a result of this sharing, the committee produces one comprehensive report on the evaluation. This may be done in committee, or the committee may authorize one member to serve as writer. At a subsequent meeting the written material should be tested for presentation in its final form to the congregation. At all stages the pastor is invited to respond to possible revisions.

The report may include affirmations of the pastor's gifts and strengths. Weaknesses need to be acknowledged, concerns that have emerged deserve to be identified. Likewise, the report would include also the strengths and weaknesses in congregational life particularly those which relate to pastoral functioning.

5. The committee presents its report to a board meeting and/or at a membership meeting, depending on local practices. Questions for clarification are directed to the committee. The pastor is permitted to be present. He has confidence in the committee's presentation because in earlier stages of the process he experienced the committee to be understanding and fair.

6. The committee may wish to offer suggestions/recommendations regarding follow-up action. Examples include:
   a) rest for the pastor,
   b) continuing education to enhance strengths, improve competencies,
   c) re-ordering of priorities,
   d) termination of pastor-congregation relationship,
   e) deliberate efforts to enhance congregation-pastor relationship,
   f) discipline members that are known to undermine ministry.

7. Depending on the suggestions made, the pastor is given time to retreat and to reflect upon the discussions and recommendations. Even after a generally positive evaluation, the pastor still needs to de-

termine whether or not and to what extent he has a ministry among and with the people. He should have access to the committee or board to report on his perception of the suggestions and options.

8. Subsequent action by the congregation and/or pastor follows consideration of the options. In the case of continuing ministry, formal affirmation is encouraged. In the event of possible termination it is desirable for the membership as well as the pastor "to speak the truth in love," thereby serving each other helpfully in the pain and grief of termination. Even in termination, affirmation and celebration need not be absent in a christian congregation.

9. Although a pastor may be affirmed for continuing leadership, a thorough review may require adjustments to priorities and the program. The assessment may perhaps encourage a review of the "Memo of Understanding." It may necessitate an exercise in goal setting. A change in structures may be desirable as well.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

[1]Robert Friedman, *The Theology of Anabaptism* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1973), p. 116. According to Friedman, the concept of the invisible church is to be credited to Augustine. According to Harold S. Bender, *These Are My People* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1962), p. 20, "the doctrine of the invisible church is the invention of the Reformers." See also, Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1953).

[2]Henry J. Schmidt, "Portraits of Pastoral Leadership," *Direction* (April 8, 1979, Vol. 8, No. 2), p. 7f. In this article Schmidt describes also four other leadership models.

[3]All Scripture references in this essay are taken from the Revised Standard Version of *The Bible*, copyrighted 1946 and 1952 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

[4]Fredrich Hauck, *"Koinon* - in the New Testament," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. III, ed., Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 804. See also Erland Waltner, "The Church in the Bible," *The Believer's Church* - Study Conference, 1955, p. 55-71.

[5]Title of the book by Paul M. Miller, *Servant of God's Servants* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1964).

[6]Gary Harder, "Leadership in the Church," *The Mennonite* (February 21, 1978), p. 114.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ralph Lebold, "Leadership, Servanthood and Power," Lecture (March, 1978). A most helpful essay is the one by Roy M. Oswald, "Power Analysis of a Congregation," The Alban Institute, (1981).

[9]H.S.B. Neff, "Call to the Ministry," *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, 1957, p. 704-707.

[10]Lesslie Newbigin, as quoted by Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton, *God's Frozen People* (London: Collins Press, 1964), p. 161.

[11]Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacrament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 604.

[12]Miller, op. cit., p. 34.

[13]The term "Believers' Church," "has been used by historians and theologians to describe the church which emphasizes the necessity of personal faith as a condition for baptism into the church, and related characteristics of Christian faith and life. This broader term would include Anabaptists, Mennonites, Brethren, and other similar types of churches which have sometimes been called 'free churches'." From "Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church," A Summary Statement Adopted by The Mennonite Church General Assembly, Bowling Green, Ohio, August 11-16, 1981, p. 59.

[14]Miller, op. cit., p. 24. Also, John H. Neufeld, in an unpublished paper, "A Study of Ephesians 4:1-16," 1981, p. 14, in the writer's file.

[15]See Helmut Harder, *Guide to Faith* (Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1979), p. 56.

[16]Cooke, op. cit., p. 64.

[17]Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4-6: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1974), p. 479.

[18]In an earlier essay, "Ministry Belongs to the People," more detailed attention is given to the contention that every saint, believer, member, priest, is also a minister (1978). For more detail see the word study by David Schroeder, "Serving, Service, Server," in *Others: A Manual for Helping/Healing Ministries*, Board of Christian Service, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 1968. Also, Harold S. Bender, *These Are My People*, ch. 5, is helpful in sorting out the vocabulary on related terms.

[19]While not an explicit part of the discussion, the giftedness of believers speaks in support of every priest/member as also a functioning minister.

[20]John C. Harris, *Stress, Power and Ministry* (Washington: The Alban Institute, 1977), p. 24.

[21]Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke, *A Theology of Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), p. 216.

[22]John Regehr, "Leadership = Ministry and Authority," *Direction* (April, 1979), p. 21. See "Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church,"

A Summary Statement Adopted by The Mennonite Church General Assembly, Bowling Green, Ohio, August 11-16, 1981, 62 pp. This is also the view of Waldo Hiebert as quoted by J.A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1975), p. 307. Paul M. Miller, in *Servant of God's Servants*, however, states that "no one term or clearly defined pattern of leadership can be said to be normative in the New Testament," p. 23.

[23]James D. Smart, *The Rebirth of Ministry* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 21.

[24]Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1953), pp. 429ff.

[25]From the biography by Harold S. Bender, in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1956), pp. 3-29.

[26]Paul D. Robbins, "Comments from the Editor," *Leadership* (Spring, 1980, Vol. I, Number 2), p. 3.

[27]Gordon Nickel, "The Bitter Fruit of Mutual Mistrust," *Mennonite Brethren Herald* (March 12, 1982), p. 14-16. Reference to this dismissal was made in the *Mennonite Reporter* (March 8, 1982, Vol. 12, No. 6), p. 6. Also (Feb. 22, 1982, Vol. 12, No. 4). Also, "Anatomy of a Dismissal: An Article on an Event That Should Never Have Happened," *Mennonite Mirror* (April, 1982), pp. 11-19.

[28]Ray Friesen, "The Way We Deal With Our Leaders," *Mennonite Brethren Herald* (March 12, 1982), p. 8.

[29]Speed B. Leas and Paul Kittlaus, *Church Fights: Managing Conflict in the Local Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), p. 28.

[30]Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to World and Sacraments* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 346.

[31]Richard C. Richard and Del Olsen, "Go to Your Corners and Come Up Fighting! The Psychologist as Conflict Manager," *Theology News and Notes* (October, 1976), p. 7.

[32]David W. Augsburger, *Anger and Assertiveness in Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 32.

[33]David W. Augsburger, *Caring Enough to Confront* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1973), p. 11. This position is also represented by James G.T. Fairfield, *When You Don't Agree* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1977), pp. 18-20.

[34]C. Douglas Lewis, *Resolving Church Conflicts* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), p. 39.

[35]John L. Hoff, "Conflict Management: An Organizational Principle," *The Christian Ministry* (January, 1973), p. 17.

[36]Lewis, op. cit., p. 40.

[37]Bernie Wiebe, "Editorial," *The Mennonite* (December 15, 1981), p. 732.

[38]J. Stanley Glen, *The Parables of Conflict in Luke* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 137.

[39]The word "community" is used here in the place of "brotherhood." This latter term is used copiously in Anabaptist/Mennonite writings to describe a quality of relationships among members of the believing community. The terms "peoplehood" or "community" do not carry that same meaning of mutuality, affection and regard (See I Peter 2:17; 5:19). While the term, in my estimation, was never intended to exclude sisters from the fellowship, they were absent at the *Bruderschaft* (a business meeting of the church with only male members in attendance). Transcending that practice were the salutations "brothers and sisters."

[40]Larry L. McSwain and William C. Treadwell, Jr., *Conflict Ministry in the Church* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), p. 36.

[41]David W. Augsburger, *Caring Enough to Confront* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1973), pp. 9-22. Augsburger has coined the term "carefronting" to describe growing relationships among people.

[42]Speed B. Leas, from notes on the course, "Conflict Management in the Church" (Summer, 1981), feels that conflict resolution is perhaps too presumptuous a term, therefore prefers conflict management instead.

[43]Cooke, op. cit.

[44]Fredrich Büchsel, *"Katalasso," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel, ed., Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 255.

[45]Leas, from notes mentioned in op. cit.

[46]Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), p. 117.

[47]David W. Augsburger, *Caring Enough to Forgive* (Scottdale: Herald

Press, 1981). Augsburger says that "Forgiveness... a complex and demanding process" needs to be done in steps to be effective. See ch. 2.

[48]William Klassen, *The Forgiving Community* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 145.

[49]Wuest, op. cit., p. 126.

[50]John W. Bailey, "Introduction and Exegesis: I and II Thessalonians," *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. II (New York: Abingdon, 1955), p. 267.

[51]Donald Guthrie, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Pastoral Epistles*, Vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 115.

[52]Kittel, op. cit., p. 138.

[53]William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary, I and II Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 315.

Chapter II

[1]Speed B. Leas, "Should the Pastor Be Fired?", The Alban Institute, 1980, p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 9.

[3]Ibid, pp. 9-10.

[4]Ibid., p. 10.

[5]James E. Dittes, *When the People Say No* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979).

[6]Urban T. Holmes III, *The Future Shape of Ministry* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1971), p. 152.

[7]Ibid., p. 150.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Eric Dukatschek, Calgary Herald, June 2, 1982 -- Spoken about Al MacNeil who was removed as the coach of the Calgary Flames Hockey club.

[10]Menno Wiebe, "On Hiring Ministers," *The Mennonite Reporter*, Vol. II, No. 10, May 11, 1981, p. 5.

[11]Leland Harder, "The Pastor-People Partnership: The Call and Recall of Pastors in a Believer's Church Perspective," Elkhart, Indiana, 1982, pp. 100-107.

[12]Ibid., p. 105.

Chapter III

[1]John Howard Yoder, "The Fullness of Christ, " *Concern*, No. 17, February, 1969, p. 85.

[2]Ibid., p 82.

[3]"Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church," A Summary Statement Adopted by the Mennonite Church General Assembly, Bowling Green, Ohio, August 11-16, 1981 (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1982), p. 13.

[4]The documents particularly helpful to understand the basic principles are those mentioned under footnotes 1 and 3. To be added is: Leland Harder, ' The Professional Pastor in a Brotherhood Church," *Builder*, November, 1978 (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1978), p. 7.

[5]"Leadership and Authority..." op. cit., p. 14.

[6]Yoder, op. cit., p. 43.

[7]George Webber, *God's Colony in Man's World*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 74.

[8]*The Believer's Church* (Newton: Mennonite Press, 1955), p. 210.

[9]Speed B. Leas, "Should the Pastor Be Fired?" (Washington: The Alban Institute, 1980), p. 3. Speed Leas maintains that "in terms of primary dynamics ...it really doesn't make much difference what kind of system you have." The comment was made to an inquiry, "whether Methodists have it easier because they can be protected by the hierarchy or whether Baptists have it easier because they can be protected from the hierarchy." The comment still assumes the mono pastoral system. We are here dealing with a radical reorientation of ministry a change in attitude, a departure from hierarchical structures, an allowance of participation and partnership.

[10]Erland Waltner, "Peace and Your Health," *The Mennonite*, 95:43, November 25, 1980, p. 689. Also, Erland Waltner, "Shalom and Wholeness," a paper presented to the Marpeck Academy, Washington, D.C., April 4, 1981, 8 pp.

[11]C.L. Dick, lecture at the annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta, March, 1981.

[12]Calvin Redekop, "Brotherhood and Schism," *Concern*, No. 9, 1963. Redekop discusses both the conceptual and sociological aspects of schism, pp. 3-43.

[13]Speed B. Leas, "Should The Pastor Be Fired?" The Alban Institute, 1980, p. 4.

[14]Francis W. Beare, *Ephesians: The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 10 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), p. 694.

[15]David W. Augsburger, *Anger and Assertiveness in Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 74.

[16]Marlin Miller, "Spiritual and Gifts Weaknesses," a chapel address (January 7, 1980) in the file of the writer. Marlin Miller is President of the Goshen Biblical Seminary in the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

[17]Loren B. Meade, "Evaluation: Of by for and to the Clergy," The Alban Institute, 1977, p. 2. Meade suggests that every evaluation of a persons work involves four areas: "the person, the task to be done, the way the task is performed by the person, and the context within which the work is done." From an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective such an evaluation would be too limited and unfair to the pastor.

[18]One such review linked to terms' end is that of Ralph Lebold, "A Guide to Pastoral Leadership Evaluation," June 1982. The Virginia Mennonite Conference "Guidelines," suggest that "review and evaluation should be done on an ongoing basis rather than only every several years when the pastor's assignment is up for review," p. 18.

[19]Quoted in correspondence with pastor Jake C. Froese, Faith Mennonite Church, Edmonton, July 2, 1982. See also article by David E. Richards, "Evaluation: Individual and Corporate," *The Christian Ministry*, January, 1975, pp. 24-25.

[20]Leland Harder, "The Pastor-People Partnership: The Call and Recall of Pastors in a Believer's Church Perspective," Appendices, p. 12, 1982.

[21]A helpful article by Harold Bauman, "Pastoral Evaluations: Painful

and Helpful," was published in the *Builder* magazine, Vol. 12, No. 7, April, 1980, p. 29, and No. 9, June, 1980, p. 26. The article focuses on the learnings gleaned as they have come together from many sources.

[22]"Old" is here introduced to distinguish this Mennonite Church from other Mennonite bodies, like the General Conference Mennonite Church.

[23]"Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church," op. cit., pp. 25-31.

[24]Ibid., pp. 16-19.

[25]*The Believer's Church*, op. cit., p. 201.
Leland Harder, "The Professional Pastor in a Brotherhood Church," op. cit. p. 6.
J. Lawrence Burkholder, "Theological Education for the Believers' Church," *Concern*, No. 17, February, 1969, p. 12.
John H. Yoder, op. cit., p. 73.

[26]Richard John Neuhaus, *Freedom For Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publisher, 1979), pp. 55-56.
Urban T. Holmes III, *The Future Shape of Ministry* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1971), p. 195.

[27]Neuhaus, op. cit., p. 57.
Sheldon W. Burkhalter, "The Impact of Professionalism on Congregations," *Perils of Professionalism*, editors, Donald E. Kraybill and Phyllis Pellman Good (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1982), p. 97. There are other "perils" mentioned in the above mentioned book. To these can be added the list of P.K. Regier, *The Believers' Church*, p. 201, and Leland Harder, "The Professional Pastor in a Brotherhood Church," p. 7.

[28]Holmes III, op. cit., p. 196.

[29]Ibid., p. 247.

[30]Ibid., p. 248.

[31]Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Creative Ministry* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971), p. xviii.

[32]Holmes III, op. cit., p. 248.

[33]For a more comprehensive rationale for the "centrality of the congregation" doctrine, see "Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church," op. cit., pp. 49-56.

[34]Leland Harder, "The Pastor-People Partnership: The Call and Recall of Pastors in a Believers' Church Perspective," op. cit., p. 2.

[35]Ibid., p. 101.

[36]Menno Wiebe, "On Hiring Ministers," *The Mennonite Reporter*, Vol. II, No. 10, May 11, 1981, p. 5.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Lyle Schaller, "When Should the Pastor Move?" *The Parish Paper*, Vol. 9, No. 9, March, 1980, p. 1.

[39]Ibid., p. 2.

[40]Regier, op, cit., p. 203.

[41]Yoder, op. cit., p. 78.

[42]David L. McKenna "Recycling Pastors," *Leadership*, Vol. I, No. 4, 1980, 27 pp.

[43]David W. Augsburger, *Caring Enough to Forgive* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1981), pp. 30-31.

Chapter IV

[1]Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church," A Summary Statement Adopted by the Mennonite Church General Assembly, Bowling Green, Ohio, August 11-16, 1981 (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1982).

[2]Until the summer of 1982 this Committee was known as the Committee on the Ministry. At the July sessions in St. Catharines, Ontario, the Committee received a new mandate and was made responsible to the General Board.

[3]"Guidelines for Congregations," Prepared by The Committee on the Ministry, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 1981, p. 6.

[4]"Pastoral Assessment," a document from the First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, received in July of 1982.

[5]Ibid.

[6]"Guidelines for Congregations," op. cit., p. 12.

[7]Ibid., p. 13.

[8]This idea took root in discussions with Jack Hielema, pastor of the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Calgary. The Reformed policy, with questions included, is described in detail in William P. Brink, and Richard R. DeRidder, *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government*, 1979 edition (Grand Rapids: Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, 1979), pp. 173-179.

[9]Robert G. Kemper, *The New Shape of Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), p. 49.

[10]"Guidelines for Congregations," op. cit.

Chapter V

[1]Ross Thomas Bender, *The People of God: A Mennonite Interpretation of the Free Church Tradition* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1971), p. 86.

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