

LET'S TALK ABOUT PASTORAL CARE IN A CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
By Pastor Al Schroeder, MDiv MACL  
May 2017

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a 30-hour course taught at the seminary level in several cities in Asia. Information about the course instructor, including his advanced degrees and well over half a century of experience in the field and ministry of pastoral care, is found on page 42.

### CLASS PLAN

The man Jesus raised his eyes to heaven...

“At that time Jesus said, ‘I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.’

Then he announced himself and gave his credentials...

“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Jesus, Son of God and Mary's son, calls out as did the ancient figure of wisdom, called out to all people to come and learn truth...

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:25-30.

It's about Jesus. He is Immanuel (Matthew 1:23), that means, God with us! And he said it at the last when he withdrew from sight, “Surely I will be with you to the last (Matthew 28:20). And he assures us that “where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them” (18:20).

Let us learn together to know Jesus. Let us learn the wisdom he is going to teach us all our days. Let us learn that Jesus makes life different for us who believe. And we are his friends, his brothers and sisters, his family. Therefore we are all family together because of Jesus. He teaches us to know the Father. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help us and guide our learning together. Amen.

Imagine you are serving a church and the following happens.

You have some people who want to learn about this Christian faith. You tell them it's about Jesus. Who is Jesus? He was a Jew who lived two thousand years ago in the land that is today known as Israel. He lived and taught a way of life and gathered disciples. He was looked upon by

the authorities as a threat to their leadership and they got the Roman Empire to crucify him. On the third day, however, he was raised from the dead by God. A movement began that now has followers all over the world. Jesus has been a moving force throughout history. What is the secret that has made this movement so powerful? What place does this story have in God's plan for all time? Was Jesus only a human teacher? Or was he more? The Gospel is summed up at John 3:16-17. See also Ephesians 3:9-11 about this.

A husband and wife are about to divorce. They have hurt each other badly, and the love they had has turned to bitter anger. Whenever they try to talk, they throw back at each other their hurtful memories. How would you begin to do pastoral care with them? How does the presence of Jesus provide the healing? This is a crisis that may lead to healing and maturing, or to death of the relationship. Can each take responsibility for their own actions and not blame the other? Will they rely on Jesus who is present with them and loves them? Matthew 18:20. Will they confess their faults to one another, that both may be healed? James 5:16. Will they "love one another as I have loved you?" John 15:12. Will they value their relationship, though at risk, and forgive each other? Will their marriage then grow stronger?

What does this course in pastoral care include, and what does it not?

First, what is pastoral care?

Pastoral care is the care of souls, of persons and of the fellowship of persons. It deals with the health of the soul. Today we must say it deals with the whole person, in living the life our Creator intended, but especially with any disruption of it. The state of soul at spiritual health is called blessed. "Blessed is the one who..." Psalm 1, as it points the way to godly living. They thrive in living the life our Maker intended for his human creatures. In this God is glorified. They thrive, even when they must deal with troubles in their lives. They show a robust ability for dealing with troubles, for they have a vital life source. In the Psalms they are said to rely on the word of God. "It will go well with the person who... has a passion for the Lord's instruction, indeed, meditates on it day and night." Such a person has reliable knowledge, wisdom, discipline, confidence and hope on the way of life. Among Christians this is the way to healthy living for the individual and for the company of believers. Jesus is the source of spiritual vitality. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5.

The opposite or the threat to healthy living comes from rejection of the life source, which is our Maker. This attitude is called sin in the Scriptures. Sin amounts to turning one's back on the Creator, with whom God's human creatures were intended and designed to have fellowship. Sin, this state of disconnect from the Creator's fellowship, brings on sins and all the destructive consequences from them. In the story of Adam and Eve, God came to them in the cool of the day, but they had disobeyed the Lord, and in their guilt and shame they tried to hide. God, however looked for them and found them and asked them to say what they had done.

People who turn their back on God are called fools. Their lives will to some degree, if not altogether, lack the qualities of the faithful. Again the Psalm, "But the God-forsakers, not so for them! They are blown away like chaff. They will not survive God's scrutiny, and they will not

remain in the community of the good. For the Lord knows the future of the upright (that is, where the life of the good is headed) but the end of God-forsakers is ruin” (that is, their life comes to nothing).

God has shown mercy throughout history. God calls for response, for faith in his mercy. Jesus came to deliver what God promised: “Blessed are they who...” Matthew 5, as Jesus addresses the soul in need. Through his death on the cross, sins are forgiven - for all humanity, and for the daily sins of all who believe.

Spiritual care that the spiritual leader attends to means fostering the spiritual vitality of the individual and of the church for which the pastor is called. Spiritual care is also to be practiced among the members of the congregation, the company of the faithful. The pastor will train the congregation so that the members care for each other in a kind and loving way, in the love of Christ, that is, as Christ has loved them all.

The intended outcome of pastoral care may be summed up in the traditional statement, “delivered... from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil,” to live the godly life, which Jesus Christ delivered with his death to set sinners free, and with his resurrection to empower the new life as exhibited in Christ.

Where to start? And where to finish?

Pastoral care concerns every part of the parishioner’s life, from conception to grieving. Pastoral care is involved in everything that the parish pastor does in his vocation. This study will look at the pastoral care aspect of the ministry of pastor and people. Further courses of instruction would then be needed for the hows and whys of the several pastoral practices, such as preaching, teaching, counseling, outreach, parish administration and the rest.

The presenter will offer some resources for further study.

Whence is there confidence that pastoral care works? Paul states a fine summary in Ephesians 4. “I appeal to you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,” v. 1. “Grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift,” v. 7. “His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and up-builds itself in love,” vv. 11-16.

1) What is pastoral care?

- Pastoral care begins with the pastor who cares for his flock, all and each one; he loves them with the love of Christ.

Pastoral care begins with the pastor who cares for the flock, all and each one. He loves them with the love of Christ. The call to do pastoral care comes from the Lord, the Savior of the world, who is the Lord of the Church. The call is to serve the faith health of the Savior's people.

What is pastoral care? The work that a pastor does is sometimes like a priest and at other times like a prophet. There is first the priestly action of teaching, comforting, and bringing peace to the heart of the person and to the congregation. Then there is the prophetic action of the discipline, confronting inappropriate behavior in the life of parishioners, and warning them of actions that are dangerous to their person and to their character, and to the peace of the fellowship. Pastoral care works for repentance and amending sinful life. Pastoral care brings hope to the despairing. Pastoral care is part of all that the pastor does. The pastor should also train the congregation so that they may show pastoral care to each other. The congregation then becomes a fellowship that nurtures the Christian life and fosters accountability.

- The call to do pastoral care comes from the Lord, the Savior of the world, the Lord of the Church.

The call to do pastoral care comes from the Lord, the Savior of the world and the Lord of the Church. At the start of his public ministry, Jesus trained twelve who would become his apostles and carry on the work once his time on earth would be done. He sent them out to all the towns where he himself would go. Then he trained seventy more and did the same. They reported back and learned from their experience. After his death and resurrection, Jesus gathered his students, then called the Eleven, and he spoke to Peter in the hearing of all. Peter, as we know, had denied Jesus three times. Now he demonstrated the grace of forgiveness with three questions. Peter and all the disciples had failed in various ways, but Jesus graced them all with the grace of forgiveness and the commission to carry on his work.

“Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep.” Gospel of John 21:15-17

- The commission is from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Jesus' love for the pastor and the people is the model and the motivator for doing pastoral care.

The pastor does this ministry with the people himself first. Then he proceeds to train the congregation similarly to the way Jesus did. This work of training will be taken up in a later unit of study.

The caring pastor has empathy for people who are in distress of any kind. The caring pastor is ready to offer aid for the strengthening of the person's faith in Jesus. Suffering is indeed a part of life experience. People may respond to suffering in ways that strengthen character, as the Apostle

Paul writes in Romans 5. However, the experience of suffering often discourages and disables a person. The worst outcome may be defeat and death, sometimes by one's own hand. The caring pastor engages the hurting person by listening to the person's lament. Then he directs their attention to the love of God. God always works for good with his faithful ones. See Proverbs 3:11-12; Romans 5 and 8:28. The pastor must work lovingly, carefully and patiently to nurture their faith and guide their maturing.

- The call is to minister to and with the Savior's people.

In the Acts of the Apostles we have a record of how the church became established and how it began to grow and impact the world. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised, John 16, led and taught and empowered the believers to do mighty actions in the Lord's name. Jesus himself called the Jewish scholar Saul/Paul, Acts 9, to serve as the great missionary, builder and teacher of the church. The letters of Peter, Paul and John show some ways how pastoral care of souls can be done. They also write about the qualifications for leaders in the church. These qualifications can be summed up this way: 1) one who holds true to the confession of the historic Christian Church (such as seen in the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed). 2) one who is competent to teach. 3) one who lives a life of Christ-like integrity. Such a person is a model and example for the church he serves. Cited in Wilhelm Loehe, Page 14.

The pastor must also have the trust of the people. The pastor and the people promise to accept one another. Otherwise the work will be to some extent ineffective. When you become their pastor, work with them to establish trust and clear expectations.

- What is pastoral care, and what are its limits?

To sum up. Pastoral care is done by a caring pastor. The caring pastor has a heart for the soul of the person under his or her care. What the caring pastor brings to people, in good times or in times of distress, is the good news of Jesus, for Jesus came to save sinners and give them the life of God. The pastor does this at the call of the Lord. Jesus told the churches and their leaders to "feed my sheep." The pastor has a covenant with the people to serve. There may be secular professionals and agencies available that are dedicated to the healing arts, and the pastor may freely refer people to them as their services appear to be needed and helpful. The caring pastor will need to keep feeding the people's souls. Their first need is the nurturing of their faith.

Several resources:

Brister, C. W. *Pastoral Care in the Church*. New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964.

Hulme, William E. *Pastoral Care Come of Age*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abington Press, 1970.

Loehe, Wilhelm. *The Pastor*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2017.

McNeill, John T. *A History of the Cure of Souls*. New York, New York: Harper & Row, 1951.

2) Pastoral care has for its base the forgiveness of sins; the pastor provides peace for the conscience through the forgiveness of sins, provides for confession and absolution, fosters a “lively faith in the promises and threats of God” (Luther, as quoted in McNeil), and from it springs a renewal of one’s life.

- The biblical concept involves ‘sin’ = failure, missing the mark, failing to live up to the Creator’s expectations of his human creatures; ‘transgression’ = overstepping the bounds that the Creator set; and ‘rebellion’ = willful defiance of God’s will and commands.

2) Pastoral care has for its base the forgiveness of sins that God brings in the atoning death of Jesus Christ and the new life in relation with the risen Lord Jesus. God invites the person to receive it. A person receives it by faith and repentance.

The pastor provides peace for the sinner’s troubled conscience through the forgiveness of sins. The pastor provides for confession and absolution, especially with a view to helping the individual deal with a spiritual flaw or weakness and gain strength and spiritual wholeness. The pastor fosters a “lively faith in the promises and threats of God” (Luther, as quoted in McNeil), and from it springs a renewal of one’s life. The expected outcome is that the person served, experiences the warm love of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and matures in faith, in personal integrity, and in the Christian life. On the other hand, the pastor may need to disturb a conscience that is not causing the sinner guilt or shame. The erring person must get called to account for sin and be warned of consequences of wrong-doing.

Man is by nature sinful. The Bible uses three expressions for sin. One is failure, missing the mark, or missing the way. The sinner fails to live up to the Creator’s expectations of his human creatures. A second is ‘transgression’, that is, overstepping the bounds that the Creator set. The person is expected to take responsibility for one’s actions and misbehaviors. The wrongs one does affect the person and cause trouble for others. The third is rebellion, willful defiance of God’s will and commands. These are outward manifestations of something wrong in the heart. Behind such behaviors is the break from easy and peaceful relationship with God. God created human creatures with personality. God wanted to relate to them as his children, and he gave them responsibility for managing life on earth. Man tragically turned from the Maker and has taken worship and obedience we owe to God, and instead directing it elsewhere. It may be something in nature that we fear or rely on. Sin is simply turning in on one’s own self. The sinful nature is self-centered. Another way of saying it is that the sinner looks for love in all the wrong places.

- Behind such behaviors is the break from God, taking worship and obedience that we owe to God, taking it from our Creator and instead setting it elsewhere; it may be something in nature that we fear or rely on, which God created, and certainly turning in on our own self in pride and arrogance or despair. Our nature is self-centered. God changes our heart. God turns us around through the message of salvation in Jesus. The believer lives in the restored relationship with the Lord.

The sinner must have a change of heart. The Bible calls this repentance. Greek '*metanoia*' and the Hebrew '*nacham*' mean a change of heart, a transformation of one's thinking, and a new way to look at life. The Word of God calls for change from idolatry to worship of the living God.

God changes our heart. God turns us around through the message of salvation in Jesus. Jesus atoned for the sins of all, so that all who believe may be saved. The believer lives in the restored relationship with the Lord. The pastor guides the believer in spiritual growth and maturing in the Christian way of life. In the fellowship of believers they also support and maintain each other in the godly life. Luther proposed, as the agency of peace, the 'priesthood of all believers': "a brother/sister has sinned and needs help within the fellowship of believers." (McNeill)

- The whole life of a believer in Christ is engaged in spiritual warfare. Each person is a sinner, and so vulnerable. There are many places of vulnerability in each person and in the life together. Each person, and also the fellowship, must know their vulnerabilities and practice defense. Each person, and also the fellowship, must engage in bold and robust offense.

The whole life of a believer in Christ is engaged in spiritual warfare. 1 Peter 5:8. Each person is a sinner, and so very vulnerable to the attacks of evil. There are many places of vulnerability in each person and in the life together. Each person, and also the fellowship, must know their vulnerabilities and practice defense. Each person, and also the fellowship, must engage in bold and robust offense. "Break down the gates of hell!" Matthew 16:18. We go on the offensive with the weapons of God's Spirit, the Word and Sacraments. We also have the company of believers, the church, for support and accountability. The Holy Spirit has "called, gathered, enlightened and sanctifies" (from the explanation of the Apostles' Creed in Luther's Small Catechism) the Body of Christ in local congregations and the larger, whole faith fellowship on earth and in heaven. We have the community where Christians are spiritually fed, supported, encouraged, protected, challenged and loved. They who have finished this life in faith celebrate their victory in the Lord,

with the Lord. We, living in this generation, are engaged in the battle of good and evil, of faith and unfaith, of hope and despair. Each person, leader or congregation member, must seek to know how the powers of evil can exploit a vulnerable place in each person and in the life together in fellowship. Temptations are all around. Each must also work with a spiritually assertive attitude. Each person, and also the fellowship, must engage in bold and robust offense. Pastoral care calls for ongoing attention to deal with this reality.

I have been told, and I have read, that in Chinese folk culture the sense of sin and guilt are not so strong as it is with Western people. The sense of shame is far more important for the Christian message to speak to. I wonder, would not shame be simply the back side of pride? This will take further discussion in the class session. Both pride and shame are centered in the self. Don't both indicate an extreme self-awareness, even self-indulgence? Would not a healthy reaction of shame move a person to change behavior?

In the West, the concept of shame has taken on a different connotation. Psychology has interpreted shame as a negative self-image that resulted from harmful experiences in early life. I suggest that in any case, a turn of the self, from one's self, to a gracious and loving Father in heaven is the necessary action to take. This is to repent. To reach out to that divine hand of – yes, of friendship! Jesus said, "I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other." John 15:15-17. Jesus endured shame at the hands of his enemies when he gave his life for our salvation. "Greater love has no one than this, that that one lay down his life for his friends." John 1:13. Can any experience of shame come near the shame our Lord endured? And now he calls us friends!

Here are some Scripture texts regarding sin and forgiveness, and the ministry of transformation of persons through the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ:

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead." Philippians 3:10-11.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe in him is already condemned because he has not believed in the name of God's only-begotten Son." Gospel of John 3:16-17.

"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Galatians 1:3-5.

"Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." Gospel of John 20:31.

“Since we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience... Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

“So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf. Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says,

‘In the time of my favor I heard you,  
and in the day of salvation I helped you.’

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2.

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together,” that is, make sense and well-being. Colossians 1:17.

“Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.” James 3:18.

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other that you so that you may be healed.” James 5:16.

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Galatians 6:9-10.

Several resources:

Kolb, Robert. *Speaking the Gospel Today, a Theology for Evangelism*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1984.

“Building Up the Body of Christ,” Bruce M. Hartung; Concordia Publishing House 2016.

“Life Together,” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

3) The pastor is instrumental for the healing of wounded people.

- The pastor brings healing out of his own experience. He or she has known the despair of sin, guilt and shame. He or she has experienced the blessed relief of forgiveness and peace in the grace and love of our Father in heaven.

3) The pastor works as an instrument or agent for the healing of wounded people.

He brings healing out of his own experience. The pastor must know the warm experience of Jesus' kindness and love. The pastor must know the depth of human pain, sorrow, guilt, shame and loss of hope. This all humans share. The pastor must know his or her failings and faults, the sins and the repentance that seeks the mercy of God. The Christian pastor must know the forgiving grace of the Father in heaven, the forgiveness that sets the sinner free. The pastor must live a life that is recognized for discipline and self-control, so that the person to be served or the congregation to lead, has a model that wins confidence and respect and honor.

The pastor looks to his or her own faith and life. The daily discipline that pastors should follow is prayer and meditation. Pray for the Spirit's guidance for inner growth. Meditate on the Word of God. Read from the Psalms or the Gospels or other parts of God's Word. Make a regular plan and keep with it. Pray for the Spirit's guidance, read the text, and then reflect on what is read. What does this word have to say about my life? How may this word impact how I think? What impact on my behavior? What sin or failing in me does this touch and reveal? What new insight into the mind of my Savior? What does this word tell me to do? Then thank God for the calling as pastor and set yourself to serve.

- It has been God's plan that sinners minister to and with sinners. It must be that way, for we understand each other.
- God in his favor and mercy has responded to our sinful condition, and he has brought us healing. He has offered us forgiveness of all sin in our nature and in all our days. So his mercy has made impact on our heart through the story of salvation that we have heard and learned. And we keep learning with each life encounter. The relationship with Christ is affirmed, and one faces life experiences with confidence in and faithfulness to the Lord.

It has been God's design that sinners minister to and with sinners. It must be that way, for we understand each other. God in his favor and mercy has addressed us as sinners, and he has brought us healing. We know the relief. We know the faults in ourselves that we must be watchful over, lest we fall. We know the strategies we must use to continue overcoming our weaknesses and to grow in our integrity. Jesus has offered us forgiveness of all sin in our nature

and in all our days. So his mercy has made impact on our heart through the story of salvation that we have heard and learned. And we keep learning with each life encounter. The pastor then understands the experiences of others who struggle with life. What the pastor has personally experienced, he will be able to share with another person. The pastor knows what the congregation needs to keep the faith and live the Christian life. The pastor will instruct, comfort and warn against the temptations that put faith and life at risk.

Also the members of the church can and are expected to care for each other and bring each other God's healing, as the pastor himself does. As the pastor has experienced the presence and power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, so the members of the Christian congregation will also have this experience in their own lives. As the pastor serves the people with the Good News of life in Christ, so the people of the church shall serve one another and the other people whom they meet in their daily activities at work and play. In this way the knowledge of Jesus Christ spreads abroad. Christ's people will encounter the behavior of sinful humanity. They will see what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians. "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you against these." Galatians 5:19-21. The Christians in the church fellowship can hold each other accountable to resist such behaviors, and they can encourage each other in good behaviors. The Apostle Paul wrote: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." Galatians 5:22-26.

- Thus the members of the church can and are expected to care for each other and bring each other healing, as the pastor himself does.

Teach the congregation to pray, to meditate on God's Word, and to put that word into action in their day to day living. In this way they will grow spiritually and in their actions. In this way the fellowship of the church will grow strong and the members will grow in their ability to serve one another. In this way the church will make an impact on the world around them. They will spread the name of Jesus. They will become instruments or agents of the healing that God wants to spread in his world through the Christian church. As agents for good, the Christians need to have strength and courage. They need the integrity that comes from faith in the heavenly Father and trust in the presence of Jesus. The Christians must care about God's world and the people. For Christ died for all so that whoever believes in him may be saved. God loves his world, and God's Christian will love his world too.

- Suffering happens. What purpose may suffering have, and what may one gain through it?

Suffering happens. What purpose may suffering have, and what may one gain through it? We do not like suffering. Suffering can break us. We want to escape pain. We want to move past problems that we should deal with, and decisions that require change. We take pills and drugs to dull the fear and anxiety that threaten our peace. People in Bible times too pleaded with God. God's answer sometimes was, "Wait... trust in me." The worshipers cried out, "How long?" (Numerous occurrences in the Psalms.) Why does God let such things happen to his believers? It strains faith and threatens to break it. Some people despair. The faithful will wrestle in prayer with our Father in heaven. They will go to the foot of the cross and look up to see how great the love of God is. "Greater love has no one that this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.) Jesus considers us his friends! They will find new depth in the mercy and love of God who promised, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." (Romans 8:28.) The Apostle Paul writes about the peace we experience through faith in our God through Jesus Christ. Because of God's grace, we have access to the heart of our Father in heaven. In this way suffering becomes our friend. We can grow and gain through it. "We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." (Romans chapter 5.)

- Destructive forces that plague human life and the life together are guilt and shame, anxiety, despair and hostility. The church, led by the caring pastor and as the people care genuinely for one another, tend to people who are struggling with these experiences. They do so through the Gospel of divine grace and mercy in Christ. They apply the forgiveness of sins to set hearts free from the afflictions.

Destructive forces that plague human life and the life Christians have together are guilt and shame, anxiety, despair and hostility. Through history spiritual leaders, priests, prophets, sages and pastors have dealt with these human experiences. These are basic spiritual and religious matters, and the church knows how to deal with these problems adequately. For this we look at Jesus. It begins always and each time with the forgiveness of sins that Jesus died for on Calvary's cross. The sinner is set free and the relationship with the risen Christ is affirmed.

- Secular healing agencies have also developed means of helping disorders of person, relationships and life in community; church professionals may work in partnership with them; skills are needed for such partnerships to work.

Pastors can ask doctors and professional counselors to help the needy person. There have been many good developments in the knowledge of how the human personality works and skills needed in treating disorders. Trained professionals work toward healing physical and mental and emotional disorders, and modify behavior. Clinical training has been provided also for church professionals. The sciences of psychology and sociology have developed a variety of skills for helping people. Church professionals can learn much from them about how human nature works. Pastors may also partner with secular professionals where it could be beneficial to the individual

and to the community at large. Make sure the doctor or counselor will keep in touch with you so you can all work together to help the needy person.

Pastoral care is more than healing the person with psychiatric methods, or modifying the social environment in which the troubled person lives. The basis of pastoral care is repentance for sin, realizing the forgiveness that God offers through Jesus' death and resurrection, and the faith that receives it. Then the person is freed from the sin power and opens the heart to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The believer then takes personal responsibility and works at amending of life with the disciplined behavior that God's Word teaches.

1 Timothy chapter 1; 2 Timothy 2:15.

The Letter to the Roman Christians.

The Book of Psalms – e.g., 130, 139, 51, 34, 4. The traditional penitential psalms are 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143; Psalm 37 Instruction for life, integrity

Elert, Werner. *The Structure of Lutheranism*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1962. This writer looks at the impact that the love of Christ has on one's heart and that changes one's life.

Gunderson, Gary. *Deeply Woven Roots, Improving the Quality of Life in Your Community*.

Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1997. Good for revealing the strengths that a Christian congregation has for spreading good in community life.

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Wounded Healer*. New York, New York: An Image Book published by Doubleday, 1979.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 gives encouragement to the community that God provides all the resources that are needed for healing broken people and broken communities.

4) The pastor equips and sends his people for ministry in Jesus' name, to spread the love of the Lord for the world he came to save.

- God has given the church a variety of spiritual gifts that are to be used faithfully, in harmony, for the common good. See first Romans 12.

I came to believe early in my ministry, and I have found it to be consistently true, that "God always provides the persons, the faith and the gifts necessary to work out what God wants in this place at this time." This comes clear in the paragraph with which the Apostle Paul begins his First Letter to the Corinthian Christians, 1:4-9. It is necessary for the pastor to discern the gifts that are present in the congregation that he serves. God has given the church a variety of spiritual gifts that are to be used faithfully, in harmony, for the common good. See first Romans 12. I have included reflections on this in the Appendix. Ephesians 4 emphasizes the goal of bringing maturity in the church.

- The church, led by the pastor, will discern the spiritual gifts knowing that, God always provides the persons, the faith, and the gifts necessary to achieve what God wants in

this time and place.

These people are to be recognized as God's gifts. They may be brilliant, outstanding in their personality, their grace and giftedness. Often a person who does not seem capable becomes a very capable worker after he has been trained. Some may be fragile and need encouragement and inspiration. But they are God's gifts, and the pastor and church leaders shall value them as such and praise the Lord of the Church who provides them. As the Apostle Paul teaches in Romans 12, God's intention is that all learn to work in harmony for the common good and to the honor of Christ before the world.

- Persons who are to be placed in service must be trained to develop their gifts and to know their role in the place of serving

Persons who are to be placed in service must be trained, as Ephesians 4 directs, to develop their gifts and to know their role in the place of serving. For this the pastor and the congregation must have a clear sense of the mission that God sets before them.

The pastor equips and sends out his people to give witness with their actions and words in the places where they live. They are Christ's disciples dispersed among the people around them. What does the church offer this sin-filled world, but hope? Jesus came to bring light into the world, the light of the knowledge of God's truth (John chapter 1). He speaks to the world with ten "blesseds" (the tenth is an exuberant 'Rejoice!' Matthew chapter 5). These speak peace to a crippled, crooked and broken world. The promise of God that comes with these Beatitudes frees despairing hearts to live with the Spirit's energy and will. We can know and believe that Jesus is there with us in the deep, dark places of our life. (Hebrews 4:14-16) The life-bringing words of the Gospel enable believing hearts to live new, ordered and meaningful life as patterned in the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy chapter 5). Jesus then calls upon the disciples, his church, to be salt and light and leaven to make the world new. How does it work? Jesus stands at the crossroads of the world and calls, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:25-30.) This is the mission of the church of Jesus Christ: to bring hope by helping people to learn to know Jesus the Savior and learn from him.

There are three main arenas of life in which people of faith will live out their life. The first is in the home, in the family. The second is at the work place where adults make their living and fulfill their calling. Children study in school to learn what their place will be in the world of work. Leisure, to balance with work, is the time that people take their God-ordered rest from work and restore their energies. This is the time to worship and praise the God who gave us this life and this world and all his gifts. The third arena is where we live out our citizenship in a place, a community, and as supporters of governance. In each place Christians serve others as disciples and friends of Jesus.

- Parents hand on the faith to their children and grandchildren, the next generations

The pastor needs to teach parents how to have a Christian home. Father and mother make the character of the home. They shall live together in the love of Jesus. They exercise the love with each other that is joyful, patient, humble, striving always for peace and harmony and for the good of the family. (1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22-26). They follow the command of Jesus, “Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12). They bring up the children that God gives them in love. They shelter them, nurture them, and prepare them to live lives of integrity and service. Parents must understand that the faith of the children is formed from the very beginning of life on – in the family. Parents will teach their children to respect them, and they will live in a way that gains the respect of the children.

The family worships together. Families keep attention on God and the Christian faith by such things as prayer at mealtimes, Bible reading together, and talking about issues of life and the answers that the Christian faith provides. Families worship together in the congregation. This strengthens the likelihood that the young will keep the faith as they grow up and go out into the world. Parents hand on the faith to their children and grandchildren, the next generations.

Families will struggle. The pastor is ready to encourage and to help them find hope. The fellowship of the church members can give encouragement and care. When any members of the family are not believers, the believing members can help them see the truth of God’s salvation. The pastor and the caring congregation can help by welcoming them and engaging them with caring conversation about Jesus. The loving support of the church can bring the light of hope with their example of the joy and strength that faith brings. Single parents need the love of the church fellowship. The church can give encouragement and practical help. They may need financial assistance or help with food and clothing. Another family may adopt a single parent family and help them.

The family is not alone. They are part of the larger church family. They have relations there. They have friends, both the adults and the children. They belong. They inspire and encourage each other.

The following Scriptures provide guidance:

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” From the Decalogue, Deuteronomy 5:16.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

“My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.

Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck.  
When you walk they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you;  
When you awake, they will speak to you.  
For these commands are a lamp, their teaching is a light.  
And the corrections of discipline are the way to life.” Proverbs 6:20-23.

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22:6.

The second arena where Christians live out their calling is at the work place. We read in Genesis 2:15 that God created the first human being and set him in the Garden of Eden, and he set him to work. He also gave him the freedom to eat the produce of his labors. In the first chapter of Genesis we read that the human race shall have stewardship of the nature that God created. People must work, as everyone knows. A person must work to support himself and his dependents. The Christian faith sees work as done, not only for the obvious boss or business or organization that employs the worker. Since work is God’s idea, the worker should see the work that he does as being done for God himself. (Ephesians 6:5-8 Paul wrote this as encouragement for those who found themselves working as slaves, but also truth for workers who are free.) The Christian workman is serving God and providing benefit for the business and the client or customer. The Christian does good honest work. The character of the Christian worker reveals the new life that faith in Christ generates. The Christian workman honors Christ with his or her behavior, and also finds opportunity to put in a word about Jesus. The workplace provides many challenges, to be sure. This puts the faith and patience and integrity of the Christian worker to the test. Here there are opportunities to practice the virtues that a Christian holds. (Ephesians 5:15-17.) This gives good witness to the Lord and the faith. Work well done brings rewards. (Ephesians 6:8.) For further meditation see Ephesians 4:17-32.

Children get their first learning about life in the family. Parents will teach their children to take responsibility, as they become able, for help around the house. Here the children learn to live, work and play with each other. They begin to learn to live in community with others. Children go to school to learn about the work they will be doing when they become adults. Students look for what their role in life may be and where they will spend their working life. Teachers, in partnership with the parents, help the children discern what they are gifted in. God has gifted all people differently, and so the skills and understanding are there to serve the vocational and service needs of a society. Children in Christian families can learn to know the Creator who has gifted them and fitted them for specific roles where they can serve God and the society. They will learn that Jesus is present with them wherever their life journey takes them.

God has directed that his human creatures take leisure, and that they rest regularly from their labors. In ancient Israel God ordered the Sabbath at the end of every week. At the Sabbath and at specific holidays they were to remember their Maker and bring their worship of prayer, repentance, praise and gifts from their labors.

The third arena in which Christians live is as citizens in a community, a state or province, and a country. Christians will be good neighbors. They will look out for the welfare of their

neighborhood and larger community to which they belong. Christians will abide by the laws and regulations that are set for the safety and good order of all the activities in that place. As citizens, Christians will pay their taxes to support the government that provides the services that are needed and good order. Christians are willing volunteers when called on. Christians with leadership interest and ability will step forward to serve as they have opportunity. They will serve in elected office as they can. Christians will look out for the common good. Christians, as disciples and friends of Jesus, will serve as peace-makers when there is discord in the community. This happens many times in this sin-filled world. At times the example of the Lord's apostles may be called on, "We must obey God rather than man." Acts 5:29.

Some Scriptures for study, meditation and discussion: Romans 13; 1 Timothy 2:1-6; Titus 3; 1 Peter 2:9-17.

- The pastor sees to the training and encouragement of those who serve, whether elected or appointed, volunteer or paid. All should be commissioned for the work of ministry they will do.

The caring and dutiful pastor teaches the congregation about the life of faith and integrity, the life filled with joy in the Lord, and the life of service to God and to the world around them.

"God so loved the world..." John 3:16. Christians love the world. They care for the world, as Jesus does, and he gave his life to redeem the world. Christians know that Jesus brings peace, joy and above all, hope. As Jesus is the light of the world, so do we Christians know that we have the knowledge that can bring hope into this world that we live in. Bringing hope is "the door set open that no one can shut." Revelation 3:8. The pastor equips the people to share the faith with others they encounter. All who believe in Jesus are the salt and the light of the world (Matthew 5). They are able to bring hope. This is why the world can love the church.

The congregation can show that family life can work. Christians in the work place can show a strong work ethic, a commitment to honesty, loyalty and good working relationships. The communities will notice that Christians are good citizens who care for the common good. Where there is strife, they will be peace-makers. Where there is poverty, they will be seen as generous to help. Where there is dishonesty or corruption, they will insist on doing what is right. Even when Christians are suffering, they will be seen as having hope in the Lord in whom they have confidence. Christians know that life is always worth living. With joy, and with hope.

Beyond the example that Christians, alone and in families and as a congregation, can give of joyful and confident living, it also takes relationships. Christians who care about others in their communities, schools, work places or where they shop or play, will form relationships. In these relationships they can spend time in caring conversations. As they gain trust, they can share the faith that generates the good life.

Pastoral care has always recognized the helpless, the defenseless, the poor, those in prison, the

homeless and those with various illnesses and distresses. The pastor equips the people to care for these, for so we see that Jesus reached out with mercy. The pastor sets the example.

- The pastor equips the people to share the faith with others they encounter, and so the “Word of the Lord grows!” Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20

5) The pastor nourishes his congregation with preaching to instruct, convict, correct, inspire to action.

- The message must always explicitly state the forgiveness of sins that sets the sinner free to live the Christ-like life; the hearer must clearly hear the message that the God who made us all loves each of us as a Father and invites us to come to him.

The pastor nourishes the congregation with preaching to instruct, convict, correct, and inspire them to action. The message must always explicitly state the forgiveness of sins that sets the sinner free to live the Christ-like life. The hearer must clearly hear the message that the God who made us all loves each of us as a Father and invites us to come to him. God invites us to love him as he as first loved us.

The message must always bring the love of God for the hearers. It is not enough just to urge the people to live good lives. The message about the love of Jesus and his atonement for us must impact the heart. The love and power and presence of God’s Spirit in our hearts and minds will move the Christian. It’s about Jesus. Tell about Jesus our Savior. Through him we have become children of God, that is, God’s own special people. God’s love is at work in our hearts. God’s love for us moves us to live boldly. “Every good tree bears good fruit.” Matthew 7:17.

Preaching must always be persuasion. The sermon is not a lecture, though the preacher communicates information. The sermon is not done for entertainment, though wit and humor can lighten up the message. The preacher aims to persuade the people toward steadfastness and confidence in their faith. The pastor will urge the people toward living the “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-26). Faith in God’s saving grace goes into action in a God-pleasing life.

- The message must address real sin that people experience, and the freedom in Christ must be directly connected to it

The pastor must call for change in the hearer’s heart. Call for repentance and rededication. The message must address real sin that people experience, and the freedom in Christ must be directly connected to it. Just telling the story is not enough. Just explaining a text is not enough.

Help the hearers understand the fault or failing that the story or text speaks to. Warn the hearers of the harm that such behavior can cause and the danger to faith. For example, a person is snubbed or insulted by someone and gets very angry. The anger may cause that person to do physical harm to the other person, or to someone else. He may tell someone else what a bad person that is and start gossip. He will likely carry a resentment for some time, but resentments eat away at the heart. The Christian, the person with faith, will realize that God in Christ has loved each of these persons greatly, all the way to the cross. We have the forgiving love of God, and we must love one another even as Jesus has loved us. The resentment needs to evaporate. One can feel secure in the love of God, no matter what others say.

The people may feel unsure in their faith or discouraged in living out their faith. Preach strong messages of encouragement. Turn their doubts and uncertainties around with stories of courage as seen in Biblical personalities and even in the history of the Christian church. As the Apostle Paul said it so confidently, "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13.

- The preacher must assure that the hearers understand the message by effective telling, by using commonly understood language, stories and examples.

- Varieties of preaching style will be used, such as lecture, dialogue, talk with pictures, drama, and other ways.

The preacher must assure that the hearers understand the message by effective telling, by using commonly understood language, stories and examples. The preacher preaches out of his or her own life experience and experience in ministry. The passion of the preacher and his or her caring heart must be evident to the hearers.

Varieties of preaching style will be used, such as lecture, dialogue, talk with pictures, drama, and other ways. Bring the hearers' hearts to praise and inspire to action.

#### About preaching

2 Corinthians 1-7 From the Apostle Paul the task, the purpose, the content, the passion of the preacher, and an example for preaching. Of course, all the letters of Peter, Paul and John are fine examples of preaching for the New Testament church.

John 17 reveals the heart of the Lord of the Church whom every pastor serves.

Isaiah 40 and 52-53 open up the Old Testament, the history of God's people Israel and the entire plan of God for his people through all of time.

Galatians 4:8-20 breathes with the spirit of pastoral care.

Galatians 5-6 show goals for persuasion.

Sermons of Martin Luther and John Calvin as examples of preaching, for Biblical insights and for their connecting with the people.

Walther, C. F. W. "Law and Gospel, How to Read and Apply the Bible;" Saint Louis, Missouri:

Concordia Publishing House, 2010.

6) The pastor administers the Sacraments in accordance with Scripture. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism initiates the person into the covenant with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper or Eucharist renews the bond of the covenant with our Lord and his death and resurrection to new life, celebrates the new life in the forgiveness of sins and strengthens faith for godly living, affirms the communion of the believers in the congregation and in all Christendom, and it anticipates the victory celebration and the full realization at his return.

- At each baptism the pastor must be sure that the persons involved understand and commit to what the covenant requires, that is, to continue with the nurture of the faith that is newly planted by the Spirit and with daily prayers. The new life in Christ requires discipline that is done by daily contrition for sins that one goes on doing, and seeking forgiveness in the grace and promises of God. The Christian must always exercise self-discipline, according to the teachings of the Word of God, and amend sinful living. For we are still sinners in our nature. This is why Martin Luther said that confession and absolution could be called a third sacrament, along with baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism.

“Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Romans 6:3-4. This calls for faith, faith in the gift of a new life to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. Baptism then amounts to a dedication to the new life in Christ. It calls for a disciplined life. Also John 3:5; 4:13-14; 7:39-39.

At each baptism the pastor must be sure that the persons involved understand and commit to what the covenant requires, that is, to continue with the nurturing of the faith that is newly planted by the Spirit. The new life in Christ requires discipline that is done by daily contrition for sins that one goes on doing, and seeking forgiveness in the grace and promises of God. The Christian must always exercise self-discipline, according to the teachings of the Word of God, and amend sinful living. For we are still sinners in our nature.

- It is good to confess one's sins to the pastor or to another trusted Christian, and to hear the forgiveness or absolution directly. The pastor must be bold and ready to speak the truth in love to sinners, even when they do not want to hear it.

It is a good thing to confess one's sins to the pastor or to another trusted Christian, and to hear

the forgiveness or absolution directly. This is why Martin Luther said that confession and absolution, that is receiving the forgiveness of sins, could be called a third sacrament, along with baptism and the Lord's Supper. "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." James 5:16. This refers to making the heart whole.

The pastor must be bold and ready to speak the truth in love to sinners, even when they do not want to hear it. Pastor and the fellowship of Christians can give members firm support by holding each other accountable.

See Baptism in Luther, Martin. *The Small Catechism*. May be found in Kolb, Robert and Wengert, Timothy, editors. *The Book of Concord, the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2000.

- At each celebration of the Lord's Supper, which is also called the Communion, or Eucharist, let it be clear to all what this sacrament means, and urge the communicants to take it in faith for assurance of forgiveness in Christ and to honor Christ.

The Lord's Supper.

Each time the Lord's Supper, which is also called the Communion, or Eucharist, is provided, let it be clear to all what this sacrament means. Urge the communicants to take it in faith for assurance of forgiveness in Christ and to honor Christ. Essential texts to consider are 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 and the Gospel accounts in Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Acts 2:42. Also John 2: the Cana scene emphasizes the new wine Christ offers; 3:57-58; 6:32 the bread of life replaces the ancient manna; 15 references to the vine as source of the Christian life; 19:34 both sacraments have their source and power in the death of Jesus Christ.

This sacrament always affirms the covenant with the Lord that Baptism initiated. Christ is present to affirm the communion that the forgiven sinner has with the Lord Jesus and with the fellowship of the church. Eating the bread and drinking the wine is a sign of sharing in the death of Christ to sin and the sin power, and to begin living the transforming life! Each time "you are announcing the Lord's death" – to one's self, and to all others at worship – that is to say: Jesus is my Savior, and I am going to clean up my life! My celebrating with Jesus announces that Jesus has overpowered sin and the sin powers for me and for all Christians. Because I am with Jesus, I can also say No to the voices of sin within me that say No! to God and to what I know is right. As I participate in this sacrament, I have the opportunity, and the duty, to commit myself to grow in my faith and life with Christ.

How does it work? The redemption that Jesus won for us at Calvary becomes present for us when we hear the words of Jesus addressed to us, and we believe them. The sacrament works, the gifts are present, because Jesus says so. We receive it, when we believe it for ourselves.

The Apostle Paul presented himself as a model of how the message of the cross applies to life. He said, “Be imitators of me” (1 Corinthians 4:16). While we can intellectually separate the messenger from the message, Paul recognized that the two are closely linked in the perception of the public within and outside the church. It is vital that the pastor be genuine, and the message of the church has to be genuine and authentic. The leader must be willing to be scrutinized. “Be imitators of me as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1). The congregation too must display the Christian life in the community where they exist. With their behavior they show the power of the message. The pastor or his delegates will deliver the sacrament to those home-bound or otherwise unable to worship with the congregation. In this way they know they belong to the fellowship.

See this Sacrament called the Lord’s Supper or the Eucharist or Communion or the Sacrament of the Altar in Luther, Martin. *The Small Catechism*. May be found in Kolb, Robert and Wengert, Timothy, editors. *The Book of Concord, the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2000.

Brown, Raymond E., S. S. *The Gospel of John*, volume 29 in the Anchor Bible Series. Doubleday & Company: Garden City, New York, 1966.

7) The pastor provides for comfort, counsel and strengthening of faith for those experiencing life’s challenges and dangers to their faith. The pastor comforts them with the Gospel of God’s grace of forgiveness in Jesus and gives them hope for vital living and for gaining maturity as they know the love of God and hold on to it in the time of their trial.

(above paragraph is same as power point slide)

- The faithful pastor knows the challenges that go with life’s stages and assures that the members of the congregation have preparation for them

The faithful pastor knows the challenges that go with life’s stages and assures that the members of the congregation have some preparation for them.

We humans have certain deep-felt needs. We need answers to basic questions of life. Who am I? What is expected of me? How do I relate to other people? What is my identity? From the beginning of life one needs a sense of security. Is this world a safe place to live? Do they love me, and will someone watch out for me? Growing up, a person wonders about the place and purpose he has in the order of things. Why am I here? God’s human creatures shall find the answers to these question in the heart and mind of our Creator. God came among us, and comes among us, in the person of Jesus Christ with direction about these questions. The people need to learn from God’s Word.

At the beginning of adulthood, there come the choices of vocation. Then comes marriage for many, though not all. Children come along and joys and stresses of family life. Aging brings a whole new set of challenges. Strength wanes and for some the memory and judgment fades. This

troubles the individual and the family who need to make decisions for the aging family member. As the end of life nears, the pastor and the church have opportunity to prepare the individual and family and loved ones for “finishing well to the glory of God,” as the desired end has been sometimes described.

As said before, the preaching can and must educate the congregation about these stages, changes and challenges of life. The pastor has the opportunity to give Christian counsel. Many people go to their pastor for counsel and guidance. The pastor who has a good grasp of what God has taught in the Scriptures is able to give good direction. A pastor may also find opportunity to gain skills in counseling through continuing education. There may be counselors within the church who are willing to volunteer time as their way of serving the Lord and his people. Some churches take on a parish nurse as part of the staff. The parish nurse can educate the congregation about the relationship between belief and health, and be available to give advice about maintaining health of body, mind and spirit. This person can be a valuable resource for the pastor when dealing with aging members who can no longer take care of themselves. The church can advise and support the family that takes care of them in their infirmity. They can find care for those who have no family to care for them. For the mentally ill, resources in the area must be sought and referred to.

The pastor may educate the congregation for robust Christian living by organizing some Bible study for the congregation to undertake in spiritual formation. This helps them understand the Christian’s relation with Jesus and the Spirit-guided life. The whole congregation could spend time studying a book of the Bible such as the Gospel of Matthew or John, for example. The members might be divided into small study groups to encourage discussion. Such small groups may also welcome new people into the fellowship and so gain members for the church. Small groups within the congregation provide a fine opportunity for deeper study together. In this setting the participants can discuss, raise questions, do research and come to better understanding of the Christian life. Closer ties, even friendships, can form in the small groups. They can hold each other accountable for growth in knowledge of God’s grace and will and the strength needed for productive living. They can support each other in times of discouragement or failure. They can celebrate victories.

- The caring pastor is sensitive to changes that will occur in their lives, and he or she will organize the congregation so that they can get help as needed

The pastor knows the chances and changes, ethical decisions, relationship problems, and whatever threatens the confidence of the people’s faith.

Life’s changes and disruptions become crises in people’s lives. Illness, accidents, losses, disruption in family life, and many more challenge the Christian’s faith. Such experiences can discourage and break the faith. Christians ask why these things are happening. They suffer pain and sorrow, and they may lose hope. However, it is just in these dark experiences that faith can grow stronger. The Christian knows the Father, from whom there is hope. “We know that suffering produces perseverance,” said the Apostle Paul (Romans 5); “perseverance character;

and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” The pastor and the church fellowship become friends in need who help the sufferer to gain through the experience.

The pastor should teach the congregation to engage with God in prayer. Prayers may be offered up when the congregation is together at worship. People will then bring their concerns to the pastor for prayer when the congregation is at worship. Christians can pray with confidence that they will be heard, and that God responds to their prayers. Their prayers do not have to be formal, though printed and prepared prayers can surely be used. The people need to know that Jesus is praying for their safety and their growing in their faith and life. He intercedes for us. John 17. The Holy Spirit prays for us. “The Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” Romans 8:26. In some congregations prayer groups form to spend time in prayer for the church, for individuals and for the world.

Song is vital to the life of the church. With their songs at worship, the congregation sings God’s praises. The singing can lift the spirits of all who participate. Songs and hymns touch the deepest places in the heart. Profound awe can be expressed with music. Deep sorrow and despair is best expressed not in spoken words, but through music. God’s ancient people Israel had the psalms to use. These express the praises of the God who made covenant with them and established them as his people. Psalms bring the desires of the heart, the fears and guilt and disturbing questions of life, and plead for God’s answers. The psalmists then reached back to God’s promises, his past help and rescue, for assurance and to restore hope. By using the psalms, one may find insight and wisdom and knowledge about what God is doing.

The New Testament also has poems of praise. For example, after the angel announced she would bear the baby that is the Son of God and our Savior, Mary’s Song gives expression to the praise of God and the joy in her heart, Luke 1:46-55. The Song of the Angels, Luke 2:14 proclaimed God’s gift of peace and joy and hope to the shepherds, and to all creation, at Jesus’ birth, Luke 2:14. The Song of Simeon in the Temple in Jerusalem, when Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus, rejoices at the coming salvation for all nations, Luke 2:29-32. Saint Paul urged the Christians at Philippi to have a Christ-like disposition with the song of Jesus’ humble servanthood, Philippians 2. The church has expressed itself in song through the ages and in every place and culture. Music touches the deep places of the heart. Music and the arts express mood and meaning and the fullness of message. The Christian faith has inspired each generation to make music and all forms of art. Great works of art have presented the faith to all the world, in words and images, and all the world enjoys it. Is there then a place where the name of Jesus is not known? It was said that the hymns sang the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century into the hearts of the people, both Lutheran and Calvinist tradition. After the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s Catholic worshipers have filled their worship with song.

The pastor must encourage the members to learn to sing and use their artistic gifts. These enrich worship and life. When visiting the sick, the elderly and especially the home-bound and those in care institutions, the use of music comforts and raises the spirit. Old people will remember the songs learned in childhood, and they warm their hearts.

- Let's explore what resources may be available to the pastor and the parish, such as parish nurse, Stephen Ministry, 12-Step programs, marriage enrichment, parent training, grief ministry, support for those divorced, support for those who are troubled over sexual matters, and many other spiritual needs.

Let's explore a few of the resources that may be available to the pastor and the parish, such as parish nurse, Stephen Ministry, 12-Step programs, marriage enrichment, parent training, grief ministry, support for those divorced, support for those who are troubled over sexual matters, caring confrontation, ministering at the time of dying, and other ways to meet spiritual needs.

There may be nurses in your congregation whom you could call on for help or advice. This can be a valuable asset to the pastor and the congregation. They should have a good grasp of Christian beliefs as well as nursing, and should reflect personal and professional maturity. Other professionals in the healing arts who belong to the church may also be asked to volunteer their services as needed. In your town, do people who have the same need meet together to encourage one another? If not, can you imagine yourself bringing people together, such as people who are trying to overcome drinking too much, or people who have lost husband or wife. You might explore the following programs. They may be available to you. You might also use their model.

**Stephen Ministry.** This very effective approach to bringing the cure of Christ to people struggling requires fifty hours of training. This is an independent, not-for-profit Christian educational organization, founded in 1975 and based in St. Louis, Missouri. The organization was founded by Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D. and is known for the Stephen Series. The program teaches laypersons to provide one-on-one care for individuals who request support. Reasons for requesting a Stephen Minister's visits may range from grieving the loss of a loved one, experiencing a major illness, going through a divorce, job loss, struggling with substance abuse, or other life difficulties. [www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org).

**Twelve Step plan.** While first used and developed with alcoholics, this program for rehabilitation came out of Lutheran and Anglican sources. Alcoholics Anonymous has used this approach to bring healing to those afflicted with addictions. Addiction is a spiritual, as well as personal, disorder that relates to the First of the Ten Commandments.\* The addict has lost control and is governed by the object of the addiction. This approach to rehabilitation is lay-led. The groups teach clients to recognize their helplessness and turn to "God as I understand him." The AA group provides a setting of mercy and acceptance such as one looks for in the Christian congregation. The group holds the client accountable for his behavior and supports sobriety. The goal is to help the client get health back and return to healthy relationships. This involves recognizing whom they have hurt and make amends where possible. The concept of God is not the Christian understanding of God, but a generic deity, or "higher power," in AA words. The purpose for doing this was to reach addicts who do not have the faith or cannot face God. Used in the Christian setting, the client must recognize the need for help, surrender to the good heart of the Father in heaven, and plead for healing. Healing comes about by repentance and confession of sins (1 John 1:9). The client will then recognize where he has done another wrong, then attempts to reconcile and make right. It is vital for one's well-being to live by Christ's

commandment (1 John 2:3-17). The believer in recovery from addiction will tend carefully to the nurture of his soul. Healed, one senses a call to share healing with another person who may be in trouble with addiction.

\*It may be understood as follows, as explained by Martin Luther:

“You are to have no other gods.” That is, you are to regard me alone as your God. What does this mean, and how is it to be understood? What does ‘to have a god’ mean, or what is God?

“Answer: A ‘god’ is the term for that to which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need. Therefore, to have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe in that one with your whole heart. As I have often said, it is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true one. Conversely, where your trust is false and wrong, there you do not have the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God. Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God.” From the Large Catechism, available in The Book of Concord of 1580, translated by Kolb and Wengert.

- There are now some secular resources, such as counseling, psychiatric care, adopting agencies, hospice, and others; these must be chosen judiciously; referral must be done wisely, so that the person needing help from those professions does not feel the pastor or caring congregant is “dumping” that person, but feels confident that the pastoral care continues and some sort of collaboration with the secular agency goes forward.

There are secular resources and non-governmental agencies that the pastor and the church can refer people to, such as counseling, psychiatric care, adopting agencies, hospice, and others. The pastor may refer people to them as it seems necessary. These must be chosen judiciously. How well do they seem to work? Do they have a good reputation? The pastor should get acquainted with them in order to refer with confidence. The pastor must maintain a pastoral care relationship with the person being referred to an agency. It is well for there to be trust between the pastor and the agency. The pastor will continue to provide nurture for that person’s faith in God.

Amity Foundation, Nanjing. Welfare and a printing press.

Books and other resources at Bao Jia Yin. I have seen works there by Dobson and Bonhoeffer, for example.

The China Christian Council (CCC) assists the local churches in their daily operations, as I have been told.

Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation. Offices in Hong Kong, Guangdong, Yunnan and Cambodia. [www.cwef.org.hk](http://www.cwef.org.hk).

Hulme, William E. *Pastoral Care Come of Age*. “Pastoral theology exists in a mutual relationship between the word of God and the dynamics of personal interaction.” Pastoral care is a ministry of listening. “Listen to your people!”

Kolb, Robert. *Speaking the Gospel Today, a Theology for Evangelism*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1984.

Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.

Steinke, Peter L. *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2006.

Stephen Ministries, 2045 Innerbelt Business Center Drive, Saint Louis, Missouri 63114.

[www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org).

Williams, Daniel Day. *The Minister and the Care of Souls*, New York, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1961.

8) The caring pastor knows his people, for he must nourish them with the Gospel of freedom in Christ through the forgiveness of sins.

The caring pastor knows his people, for he is responsible for nourishing them with the Gospel of freedom in Christ through the forgiveness of sins. When a congregation is small, it is easy for pastor and all to know each other. The larger the congregation, the more he will subdivide them and provide individuals whom he trains to extend the pastoral care to as many parishioners and their friends as possible. None should be overlooked or forgotten.

- It is good for the pastor to establish a relationship with congregation members at the outset; in small congregations this comes easily, but in larger congregations this is more difficult.

Get to know them when they come into the fellowship. It is good to teach a class for them about the beliefs of the church. Recruit sponsors who will welcome them into the congregation and help them participate. Bring the new people to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, if they have not yet been baptized. Tell them this is their initiation into fellowship with Jesus as children of the heavenly Father. It is initiation into the fellowship of the Christian church too as fellow disciples.

- The initial relationship continues in effect with good congregation-wide communication.

Keep in touch with them in the first months of their membership. Let them know that you know them and care for their spiritual well-being. Make them feel that you are open and available when they need pastoral care and attention.

- Good records are kept so that the pastor and caring members can be informed of the people as they form relationships and become engaged at worship and serving in ministries for which they are gifted.

Keep good records of their personal and family information so that you can continue communication with them as you need, and so that you remember them well. It is helpful to keep record of the gifts, talents and interests of individual members for the sake of recruiting volunteers for the church's ministries. It is helpful to keep record of their activities of serving. Many congregations keep record of members' attendance so that church leaders will notice when any may stop worshiping and leave the fellowship. It is vital for the good of the fellowship to communicate with the whole congregation through a weekly or monthly newsletter. This fosters a sense that they all belong.

- The larger the congregation, it is good to form smaller groups for study, fellowship and mutual support; the "congregation within the congregation."

As the congregation grows larger, it becomes difficult for the pastor to remember and attend to each one. There is much benefit in forming small groups for study of God's word, for support and accountability of the members, and for outreach and promoting serving. Here are some benefits to be gained:

- 1) You provide opportunity for discussion and conversation about matters that are important, maybe even of concern, to the people in your fellowship. At worship we listen, mostly, and there is not time enough to learn more about something that is said in the message. In your group conversations they can find out how to learn more.
- 2) When a level of trust develops, then someone with serious doubt can voice it safely and receive comfort, assurance from the members of the group, and encouragement in the faith and love of Christ. Even deeper understanding of God's grace and will for transforming our lives. Struggles are meant for us to learn and grow.
- 3) In the safety of the group they may deal with a sense of guilt, disappointment or sorrow.
- 4) Here individuals may meet and find friendship. People want to be known, and they need to be.
- 5) The small group provides one of the finest ways to introduce someone to Jesus and to the fellowship of the church. Be it family, friend, neighbor, fellow worker or student, or someone whom you meet – anyone who expresses a spiritual need with

you or asks to know Jesus better – the warmth to be realized in the small group provides incubation opportunity, so to speak. Make another disciple.

- 6) Share some joy or excitement that someone has experienced and the joy becomes multiplied.
- 7) A Christian is never meant to be alone. The Holy Spirit “calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the true faith.” So we learn from Luther’s Catechism. Here is how a congregation can keep members from drifting away.

- Leaders of the smaller groups must be trained to care knowledgeably, whether they are elected elders who are given responsibility for portions of the whole congregation, or whatever the structure may be.

Leaders of the smaller divisions or groups must be trained to care with knowledge and understanding. These leaders may be elected elders who are given responsibility, under the pastor’s guidance, for portions of the whole congregation. They may be assistant pastors on the church staff. Lay members would be recruited and trained to lead the small study and fellowship groups here described.

- The pastor is open to people to speak to him or her.

Scriptural direction may be studied at Romans 12 and Ephesians 4.

- 9) The pastor creates vision for individuals and groups and for the whole congregation.

The pastor creates vision for individuals and groups and the whole congregation. It is the leader’s duty and responsibility to lead the congregation in the direction of the mission God has set for it. The church is called to serve the mission that God intends for it. What is that mission that the congregation, its members and its leaders need to fulfill? Jesus said, “Make disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (which means they belong to God as his children, his family) and by teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. I will be with you – Immanuel – all the way.” Matthew 28:19-20. Jesus calls the church to work with him. God is in the world making it new. God is present and calls the believer to take a part by loving and serving people. The congregation needs to learn from God’s Word what God’s mission is. God is bringing to all the world the blessing of life with God and a

new creation through the death and new life of Jesus. God promised to do it through people he chooses. It was Abraham and his descendants. It was Moses and the chosen people Israel. The Son of God himself brought the light of life by offering forgiveness of sins and deliverance from sins through his death, and bringing new life by his resurrection. All who believe in him are the first-fruits, the vanguard, of the new creation that is coming. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15. The work of pastoral care is the preparation and maintenance of the congregation as workers serving God in mission. We live in a changing world. The times are unsettling. Our faith and confidence is challenged. For this they need pastoral care, nurturing, and encouragement.

- The pastor, as leader, must present the vision for the whole ministry of the church; the pastor should have the members help in forming this vision.

The people must be confident in the knowledge that they are serving God in his purpose for bringing blessing to more and more people. They must learn to know the people among whom they live and work and play. They must also know what the world around them needs from them as the Christian church and as people with their lives made new. The people will study, under the pastor's leadership, how Jesus and the apostles and Christians in Bible times served in mission. They will commit themselves to being salt and light and help to people as they see the need. They will engage in conversation about their faith in Jesus whenever opportunities open. They will bring hope to people they meet.

This is the mission for all churches. However each congregation has within its membership unique gifts and people with unique relationships for furthering the mission. Each location has unique needs for the church to meet with love and kindness and the Word of Life. Everyone has a longing for something better. The peace they have with God and the hope for living, they will share with others. Acts of kindness that are done by church members will make impact beyond what the church does. There will be people saying, "Let me tell you what that church did for me!" We must offer hope, the hope that we have ourselves received in knowing Jesus. In the process of getting to know this congregation's workers and the needs around them, they will see how theirs is a different and unique church. They will see their strengths and how they may be put to the service of the Lord.

- The pastor sees to it that the congregation has a structure that enables the congregation to achieve the vision that is held before them; as important, or more, is that the leaders work together according to the values and the vision that is agreed on

Parish planning is about deciding what the members of the church will do in the coming time, whether months or a year, or what to try to achieve in the service of God in three to five or ten years. What purpose shall we work at, and what goals to work toward? What workers will be

enlisted for this? What will be spent in money, time and labor? Let the goals be challenging and not faint-hearted. As the work goes on, let there be reporting to the congregation to keep them informed and in prayer with the Lord, whom we work alongside. Inspire, give encouragement, and celebrate achievements along the way.

The pastor must see to the organization and administration of the parish and give pastoral nurture to the leaders and workers. How to organize? “Form follows function,” is often said about organization. There are models available that others have tried. The church is a spiritual body set within the world. The church must follow the instructions the Word of God gives. The church is also a human organization or institution that must follow the requirements of governing authorities. The church must manage its employees kindly. It must manage its properties and finances responsibly. It must give good witness to the world around them with its integrity and for seeking the common good. The church must show its spirit of hope. In times of trouble the church and its members will show care and give help with its resources. In times of strife, the church will serve as a peace-maker.

- The pastor sees to the training and placement of capable people at all places of the congregation’s work.

- All who do ministry in the church have to work with all kinds of people. Some will be easy to get along with, some not so easy. How can they do it? The Gospel of the forgiveness of sins in Christ works for transformation of our minds and hearts. Christians are meant to grow and mature, and to develop character. People in ministry will diligently study the ways in which sinful human nature works. They will then exercise forgiveness and grace, love and patience with them. This way they will learn to work collaboratively with all people.

“A Door Set Open, Grounding Change in Mission and Hope,” Peter L. Steinke; The Alban Institute, 2010

#### Eight Steps to Significant Change

- 1 Establish a sense of urgency (motivate).
- 2 Form a strong guiding coalition (identify and enlist trusted leaders).
- 3 Create a vision (images stir up hope, people respond) and strategy to get new behaviors.
- 4 Communicate the change vision (encourage and enlist still others to add ideas, participate).
- 5 Empower others to act on the vision (share the vision widely, clearly, dramatically; encourage risk).
- 6 Plan short term wins, celebrate.
- 7 Consolidate gains, keep moving forward, build on achievements, more people, give hope.
- 8 Incorporate new ways of doing into the system, identify and train new leaders to continue what has started. We have changed. We are new!

10) The pastor works with his people to handle conflict, for it is inevitable, and it is not always a bad thing. Different people will have different ideas, viewpoints, comfortabilities, fears and concerns, and varied experience.

- The manner of the pastor sets the tone for the church

Where it is all calm and looking serene we like it. However, may there be unrest under the surface? May there be disagreement suppressed to keep the peace? May there be fear of conflict? Or is it just boring, and is there lack of will to take on challenge? Or, are there new ways that ministry could be done to the church's advantage? Is creativity being stifled?

Where there are no questions asked or different views brought forward, and no changes occur, then there is no growth and likely no excitement. Life does change though, and the state of affairs is going to be challenged. Opportunities come along that the church should take. A congregation and its ministries must always be growing and expanding. It is natural to do so. One can look at conflict and fear the worst, or look at conversations in the congregation that will make everyone glad. Stephen Ministries uses the words 'robust conversation' for the good kind and 'conflict' for the dark, unpleasant events that end in some sort of failure or disruption.

- Leaders will recognize the dangers that may occur because people experience guilt, anxiety, despair and hostility.

There is dialogue that aims at solutions to problems, needs, and changes. Such dialogue aims at the issues before the people. For this dialogue to work, the participants must respect one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. There is a need to listen to each other, and to make sure they understand each other. Everyone must be willing to state their view and make their argument, and so bring further aspects toward the solution. Else some information that could be critical or helpful would be missed. All must be willing to yield personal concerns to the final solution that they can agree on. In this way the fellowship draws together.

There is another dialogue that aims to persuade the opponents of the majority view. Participants direct their attention and energies to the person to be persuaded. There will then be defensive reaction and offensive reaction in turn. The conversation will get more intense, conflict will arise and the members of the group will separate – emotionally, if not physically. When this happens, efforts must be put forth to turn attention to the real problem or issue that is before them. The leader should direct this effort, also all in the group need to recognize what is happening and change course. Respect one another with grace as brothers and sisters of our Lord. The group needs to make the decision to amend their intentions and bring the people

together. They need to think about the fact that the Holy Spirit works in the church fellowship to bring people together and deepen their faith in Christ. They need to bring down the intensity of the conflict.

The participants need to speak to the issue before them. They need to listen intently to each other. They must be careful to try to understand each other. As fellow followers of Jesus, they must give each other respect due them. Value each other as God's gifts to the fellowship and to the dialogue, and not despise them. They must decide to collaborate together toward the needed solution. Pray, praise and give thanks for the community of Christ.

To work toward solution, encourage each other to look for possibilities, for change, for new opportunities opening up before them. The leader could solicit questions, urge participants to be creative, look for ways to make it better.

A congregation may be divided. Interpersonal conflicts may have resulted in people taking sides. Others want nothing to do with the conflicting parties and withdraw emotionally or leave the congregation. Such partisanship will raise intensity of conflict and emotions. There will be power plays. The members pull apart instead of coming together to achieve the goals of ministry with and for the Lord. In so doing the work of the Holy Spirit to gather, train and send the church in mission is frustrated. Many churches have split, lost members or even closed. The several churches that come out of the conflict may compete or dislike each other. The harm to the reign of God on earth is clear and disturbing. To deal with this and to bring people together is difficult and may fail. The church in Galatia was at risk of breaking up and maybe dying. "You will destroy each other!" Galatians 5:15. Saint Paul wrote to them to give guidance. The theological problems in that place were different than today. The human factor however is easy to see. People will find ways to conflict. Galatians chapters five and six give great help. Also Paul's instruction at Romans 12:16-21. Much patience and prayer, much grace and kindness must be applied to create harmony in the church. The basis is forgiveness of sins. Let those who work for harmony be confident that they themselves are not without fault, but forgiven. Let them look at the others with love as Jesus has loved them. John 15:15.

- All must commit to confront each other with forgiveness and grace, and work toward healing and reconciliation. So the power of the forgiveness of sins will be realized and enjoyed by all the congregation.

How to attempt healing? As did Paul, there has to be an appeal to faith and to loyalty to the Lord Jesus. There must be much prayer to the Holy Spirit for repentance and faith. Someone, most importantly, the pastor must commit to pulling the people together. The pastor's role is crucial. In a setting of conflict and discord, it needs a model of reason and of faith and of hope. Here are some words of a friend of mine:

"For congregational leaders the time for testing will come, as will the occasion for elevating

spirits and celebrating. The low periods are painful. Your energy is exhausted and your spirit is drained. For good reason, the apostle Paul urged the early Christians not to grow weary in well doing for in due season they would reap (Galatians 6:7-10). In anxious times, congregations are especially in need of their leaders' wisdom, integrity, patience, and faithfulness. The highs are natural periods for rejuvenation, thanksgiving, and sharing joy – activities for building up the congregation's positive "emotional bank account."

"Your challenge is twofold: You will sometimes be asked to deal with sorrow, anger, anxiety, even evil. What will you do when reactivity erupts and tranquility is shattered? Second, you will want to contribute to the congregation's positive emotional and spiritual well-being. How can you ensure an increase of spiritual growth and goodwill?

"For you, the leader, there are no off-seasons, because every season under the sun requires leadership. All seasons are important, but none more so than the strong season when emotions run high." (Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times.*)

The focus must be turned from the conflict among persons and toward the purpose and mission of the church. Strategic efforts are necessary. There will be members with the gift of peace-making, and they will be necessary allies with the pastor. They will form a leadership group. They formulate a vision and a plan of action. Each person and this leadership group altogether can speak to the members of the church in love and draw them together. Since they are working now with the Holy Spirit to return people to the Lord of the Church, there is hope that success can be realized. The Apostle Paul taught the Galatians to recognize the motives and behavior of the sinful flesh, and he pointed out wonderfully the "fruit of the Spirit" that church members need to practice. That will be reason for celebration. There is example from American industry, developed by John Kotter, that sets forth eight steps in this direction. The congregation's heart and soul must be turned once more to the purpose and mission of the church. Here is an opportunity, through the struggle of the faithful, to realize anew the grace and power of the salvation that is from heaven in Jesus.

Another classic in the field of peace-making is the following:

"When my thrust as a person – my hopes, dreams, wants, needs, drives – runs counter to your thrust, there is conflict. To sacrifice my thrust is to be untrue to the push and pull of God within me. To negate your thrust is to refuse to be reverent before the presence and work of God within you.

"Caring, confronting and integrating your needs and wants with my needs and wants in our joint effort toward creating Christian community is what effective living is about.

"It is not the conflicts that need to concern us, but how the conflicts are handled. The frontal impact of our coming together can be creative, strengthening, and growth producing. This concern for a balanced wholeness of personal integrity, and sensitivity to persons runs throughout these essays on care-fronting (i.e., confronting because we care!) as a creative way of uniting care and candor in life's relationships...

“...wholeness begins in the meeting of grace and truth, love and power.” David Augsburger,

- The pastor must, like good understanding parents do, learn what battles to fight and what to let go, at least for the time being.

Galatians 5-6 are especially helpful

Augsburger, David. *Caring Enough to Confront: How to understand and express your deepest feelings toward others*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, revised edition 1981.

Hartung, Bruce. *Building Up the Body of Christ*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2016. helps understand levels of intensity of conflict

Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.

Steinke, Peter L. *Healthy Congregations, a Systems Approach*. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 1996.

Steinke, Peter L. *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2006

11) The pastor looks to his own nurture and well-being, continues his education, has a pastor to whom he is accountable, who will also extend the grace of confession and forgiveness; the shepherd is not alone.

The pastor looks to his own nurture and well-being. It would be good if he could find someone to be a pastor to him, to whom he is accountable, who will also extend the grace of confession and forgiveness.

- Attends to personal daily devotional practice

The shepherd should not be alone. It is good to have a confidant with whom he can share his joys and woes, other than a spouse or family member. Recall also what was written above about spiritual warfare.

- Has an accountability partner

The well-being of the body makes well-being of the spirit. The well-being of the spirit makes

well-being of the body.

The pastor must take care of his physical health and well-being. He needs enough sleep. Be careful how many hours worked without letup. Time off for leisure is vital. There must be a day for relaxation each week. Notice that God ordered a day of rest in every seven, Deuteronomy 5. Along with rest there must also be physical activity to keep good blood flow, good exercise for the heart, and good blood-flow to nourish the brain. Too much sitting weakens the body and muscle tone is lost. The result will be back pain and much more. There is a saying, “We sit ourselves to death!”

The pastor must eat well. Include fresh vegetables and fruits along with meat and grains. Beginning the day with good breakfast brings gain throughout the day. Eat and drink in moderation. Be sure to remember your Creator and give hearty thanks for provision and nourishment enjoyed.

Keep up regular personal devotional practice. Morning prayer that includes readings from the Book of Psalms directs the heart and mind toward our gracious Maker and Savior. The pastor must remember he serves the eternal God. With prayer and meditation on God’s Word the pastor touches the heart and mind of God for encouragement and enlightenment about the work to be done and people to care for. There must also be longer and deeper Scripture study for personal and professional maturing. See the handout Introduction to Psalms or Psalms for Daily Reading.

- Looks for opportunities to attend more classes and workshops, or study groups.

Continuing education is vital for the pastor. Look for classes that are offered for this by seminaries. See if there are conferences and workshops to take advantage of. Subscribe to theological journals. Find books on theology to gain deeper insight into the Christian faith. Read good novels whose writers show keen insight into human nature and behavior. Keep informed about local and world affairs so that you can connect the message you bring with real experiences of the people. Listen to what they say. Find out what troubles them or excites them. Observe where the love of the Savior in our hearts meets the needs of people. Find time to reflect on your ministry experiences and learn from your experience. Some pastors join a few others for an ongoing study group. Some pastors write in a journal every day.

- There must be celebrations!

There must be celebrations. Praise God each day for what you see God doing through your caring for people. Celebrate the seasons of the life and work on earth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Celebrate the seasons of the year that our Creator brings around without fail. Join with your church to celebrate anniversaries. Join with your lay leaders to celebrate when their work brings good results. Likewise, share any disappointments they may have and pray for the mighty

working of the Holy Spirit to help.

This from the midst of the Book of Ecclesiastes that otherwise reflects many frustrations and uncertainties of life that we know so well:

Behold, I have seen this to be good and fitting:  
to eat and drink and find satisfaction in all the labor  
one does under the sun for the number of days of life God gives us;  
for this is our lot.

Indeed, for all people to whom God gives wealth and possessions  
and the ability to enjoy them and to accept their lot  
and find labor satisfying --  
this is God's gift to them.

For they will not brood much over the days of their lives,  
because God makes their hearts glad.

Ecclesiastes 5:18-20

Hartung, Bruce M. *Holding Up the Prophet's Hand: Supporting Church Workers*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 2011. Especially about having a worker support team.  
Kadel, Thomas E, editor. *Growth in Ministry*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1980.  
Vaill, Peter. *Learning as a Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.

12) The pastor's family needs nurture from outside his family. The shepherd's loved ones are not alone. They also need to be cared for – by one and by all the congregation. The pastor must let this happen.

12) The pastor's family needs nurture from outside his family; the shepherd's loved ones are not alone; they also need to be cared for – by one and by all the congregation.

- Love that the pastor's family extends to the congregation and public will be returned.

- Avoid mistakes that can and will disturb the caring relationships and hinder caring of the family by the congregation.

- A caring congregation will treat the pastor's family with forgiveness and grace.

Some maxims.

The married pastor is a loving spouse first.

The married pastor is a loving parent first.

The well-being of the family is first. Pastoral care begins here.

Serving as a pastor is a calling in which one serves the spiritual well-being of the people and the mission of God. This usually also provides the livelihood for the pastor's family, though it may not be the main income that supports the family.

It is vitally necessary that these callings – of marital, parental, family and pastoral responsibilities – be rightly integrated. For this to be happy and harmonious, it takes constant conversation and understanding within the family.

It is vitally necessary that the pastor have conversation with the church to assure good mutual understanding and agreement about the expectations that each hold of the other. This is much like any worker in another occupation.

There will be disagreements about what each expects from the other. Unexpected events will upset the best plans and agreements. Family demands will press the pastor for more of his attention. Church demands will take away the pastor's attention from family time.

Compromises will need to be made. Pastor and people and the family will need to come to agreement, if possible.

The pastor will need to learn from each such experience to set limits and boundaries.

The pastor gets to exercise grace in it all. And forgiveness.

The family of the pastor are also members of the fellowship. They must in no way be apart from it. As the family and the congregation grow to know and love each other, they will care for each other.

The pastor's children are involved in the fellowship of the church, along with the other children. Pastor and spouse, as loving parents, help it to happen well.

The pastor's family, when whole and healthy, lives in the midst of the fellowship as good witness for the faith.

Should the pastor and spouse struggle, let them seek counsel and so give witness to their taking

action toward health and wholeness.

Should they have trouble with their children, again let them seek help and counsel. So they show the way for others to gain family health and wholeness.

The grace of God is powerful for all.

## Appendix

### Romans 12: Reflections

When we are being observed by people, they must see Jesus through us. For this, God works at transforming his saints.

Paul addresses the Christians in Rome. He uses '*Parakaloo*' for this. It means 'appeal' in this context. This is his pastoral approach. He does not here call them down for any inappropriate behavior as he did the Galatians or the Corinthian Christians. Perhaps there was no outstanding disturbance among those in Rome as there was in the other places. One might think that he did not know them so well, however he clearly had news from many people as the end of the letter shows. I have always found that Paul addresses people at the point of their faith. There is where the response will come from.

Paul reveals his heart as he uses the expression '*dia oiktirmoon*' of God. Arndt-Gingrich-Danker (AGD), 179, takes '*dia*' here as indicating "attendant circumstances". Specifically, Paul is aware of the 'mercies', that is, the compassion of God for his human creatures, and Paul sides with that compassion. God and Paul want people to have better lives together than our default, sin and self-centered nature allows us. Rather than live for self, they are invited by Paul to experience something far better. It's the life God intended from the beginning. It's living by the 'will of God'.

Paul makes his pastoral appeal. I have in recent years come to appreciate how much Paul is the model pastor. He fully understands theology and history and the themes of *Heilsgeschichte*, that is, redemption history. He has also learned how it takes legs, how it plays out in the real life of us, the redeemed, as the Spirit transforms us. So, here he makes pastoral appeal to the redeemed who are being sanctified and asks them to give themselves as living sacrifices in response to the Savior.

Paul calls such a dedicated life 'holy'. Throughout Scripture the word holy has the meaning and impact of people and things as belonging to God, who is holy. As God's own personal possession, devotees, elect, they are different in their new nature, and separated from the crowd.

Paul uses the word *'euariston'*, pleasing, approved, satisfactory. In 12:1 this word expresses God's pleasure with us. This is the basis for the relationship we have with Jesus. It's his gift to us, upon whom he has set his heart. This experience is wonderful! In 12:2 this same word, used differently, gives the value of our behavior as we live with each other, learning to live lives that are being transformed. God smiles on this! He likes it! What a wonderful relationship to live! This is surely what we at Immanuel want to experience. To an extent we do. In my experience with churches and with the Synod, I keep saying Immanuel does it better than many others.

God calls us from living by the *'schema'* of the world, but we must be transformed. This word means the fashion, behavior, way of life people live. Paul clearly points to the mind, where this has to start. This new life has to be learned. We need maturing. There has to be *'spiritual formation.'* I like that term.

Now, in keeping with learning a new *'schema'* to live by, Paul lays out four to study. These *'schemata'* or patterns look at our life together as holy people from four different perspectives:

I) Romans 12:3-8 seven gifts, i.e., as you are *'graced'*, to use as expressions of our faith and for the common good, v. 3; all these are agency, operating in the body of Christ in any location:

- Prophecy = preaching in accordance with our faith, AGD 56; bring the revealed word to them
- Serving, do the work of ministry
- Teaching in the ministry of education
- Appeal, encourage
- Contribute liberally
- Give aid, or lead or do administration, with zeal and diligently, AGD 713-4
- Do acts of mercy, reflect the kindness of God and his pity on those in need; only here in Paul. Do it with *'hilarotees'* = with a glad and generous heart; compare Paul's advice about financial contributions, 2 Corinthians 9:7; the adjective more likely = kind, gracious, AGD 376; each occurrence is once only in Paul

II) Romans 12:9-11 seven actions to express genuine love toward one another, v. 9:

- Abhor, detest what is evil – only occurrence; a related word occurs in Titus 3:3 as a characteristic of behavior with default human relations
- Associate with and be devoted to what is good; AGD 442
- Love each other dearly with brotherly/familial love
- Esteem one another more highly than oneself; AGD 713
- When zeal is needed, don't let them down!
- Act with conviction (Karl Barth. 20<sup>th</sup> century Swiss theologian)
- Serve the Lord. There is a sense here in this context of intensity of purpose. *'Carpe diem'* – or seize the moment, the *'kairos'*, that is, a moment of opportunity for good, quite true of Paul.

III) Romans 12:12-15 seven actions in our life together that are driven as we are “filled with hope”, v. 12; AGD 881:

- Be patient in tribulation, stick it out – we have hope
- Constant in prayer through it all and not lose touch with the Lord
- Provide for one another’s needs among the saints – we are one in hope, no need to be anxious about our own needs; it’s not “me first!”
- Exercise hospitality, for the same reason
- Bless those who persecute you, refrain from cursing, the default human response, but take kind, godly action
- Rejoice with each other; this is not to be taken as trivial, but see it in the context of tribulation and endurance, toughing it out because we have hope, experiencing need and suffering and pain, and persecution; we can do this, and we must, for the good of the saints together
- Weep with each other; same as above, for the same reason

IV) Romans 12:16-21 another seven to work out relationships (and it ain’t easy!) with one another to effect harmony, v. 16; suppress motives that disrupt our life together and destroy community:

- Don’t set your mind on high things, but on low things; here is a view of life like what Luther saw as theology of the cross rather than theology of glory; don’t be prideful toward one another; this passage may refer to things such as longing for success and fearing failure, or despising lowly people and associating with successful and powerful people; God is in the business of salvation and restoration, and as his own we will be setting our minds to the same end; we will look for the lowly, lonely, poor, troubled and bring good news
- Do not repay evil for evil, for this is default human behavior; rather set high goals within the fellowship, and what all would consider good and ethical behavior; here Martin Luther refers to 1 Peter 2:12, “Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they should speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God.”
- “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” We may not succeed every time, but we are obligated to make the effort, “as far as it is possible for us to do.”
- Do not take revenge. This is God’s right.
- Treat your enemy with kindness, and you may change your enemy’s heart. Through your agency, God may achieve in this person repentance and conversion.
- Do not let yourself be overcome by evil; then you become a liability, potentially a destructive factor in the fellowship;
- But overcome evil with good. Be a healing agent when the fellowship is at risk. Be Christ to one another.

The ‘*schema*’ or pattern of life in our world is not pretty. We are meant to be different, that is

one implication of 'holy'.

Paul uses the word 'grace', *'charis'*, of his office as apostle. Yes, this word includes the freely given favor of God to us, for he has forgiven our sin. The back story behind Paul's assertion in 12:3 is the entire Letter to the Roman Christians. Then comes a 'Therefore!' at 12:1. Now to action! Now the rest of this letter makes application of all that Paul has rehearsed in the first eleven chapters. Here is where 'the rubber hits the road.' What does this mean? In this present context, the word grace means an assignment from God, an opportunity to serve the realm of God, the vocation he has called us to, God's call to us and what he has qualified us each to do. "I appeal to you as called by God to do so...." The saving campaign that God has worked from Creation on, and will till it's finished, goes to work among us in our life together. Jesus clearly called Paul as his minister. God also gives each of the redeemed a grace, an assignment, an opportunity to bring good to our life together in Jesus. And it's always life together, never alone. It's about relationships.

I see Paul appealing to the Christians to leave the worldly life for a different way to live. A holy life. He lays out four versions or four actions for the Christian church to work out a new '*schema*' for the church. After all, our life is to be worship in all ways. And the world shall see Jesus in the church. Here's how it's done, says Paul.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND TEACHER OF THIS COURSE

The author, an ordained pastor in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has served churches in Colorado, Missouri, Arkansas, and Illinois, including a pastoral care ministry at a treatment center for alcoholics from 1971-78. His B.A. and M.Div. are from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis; his M.A. is from Regis University in Denver; and he has done graduate study and much additional continuing education throughout his career. In May of 2017 he taught pastoral care for church leaders in Asia. He and his wife, Flo, have seven children and seven grandchildren.

Resources –

- Amity Foundation, Nanjing. Welfare and a printing press.
- Arndt, William F; Gingrich, F. Wilbur. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Augsburger, David. *Caring Enough to Confront: How to understand and express your deepest feelings toward others*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, revised edition 1981.
- Benne, Robert. *Ordinary Saints*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1988.
- Benne, Robert. *Reasonable Ethics, a Christian Approach to Social, Economic, and Political Concerns*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2005.
- Benne, Robert. *The Paradoxical Vision, a Public Theology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg, 1995.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*. New York: Harper One. 2009. First published in English 1954.
- Books and other resources at Bao Jia Yin. I have seen works there by Dobson and Bonhoeffer, for example.
- Brister, C. W. *Pastoral Care in the Church*. New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964.
- Brown. Francis; Driver, E. R; Briggs, Charles A., editors. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. Oxford, England: at the Clarendon Press, 1907, 1962 (several times reprinted with corrections).
- Brown, Raymond E., S. S. *The Gospel of John*, volume 29 in the Anchor Bible Series. Doubleday & Company: Garden City, New York, 1966.
- Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation. Offices in Hong Kong, Guangdong, Yunnan and Cambodia. [www.cwef.org.hk](http://www.cwef.org.hk).
- Elert, Werner. *The Structure of Lutheranism*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1962.
- Endo, Shusaku. “Silence” New York Picador, 2016. Picador is a division of MacMillan Press. First published in English 1980.
- Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Adopted Saturday, May 17, 2014.
- Gunderson, Gary. *Deeply Woven Roots, Improving the Quality of Life in Your Community*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1997. Good for revealing the strengths that a Christian congregation has for spreading good in community life.
- Habel, Norman C. *The Book of Job: a Commentary*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1985. 586 pages.
- Habel, Norman C. *The Book of Job*. In the series The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible. Cambridge, England; Cambridge University Press, 1975. 252 pages.
- Hartung, Bruce M. *Building Up the Body of Christ*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2016.
- Hartung, Bruce M. *Holding Up the Prophet’s Hand: Supporting Church Workers*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 2011. Especially about having a worker support team.
- Hulme, William E. *Pastoral Care Come of Age*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abington Press, 1970.
- Human Sexuality: a Theological Perspective*. A Report of the Commission on Theology and

- Church Relations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod as prepared by its Social Concerns Committee, September 1981.
- Kadel, Thomas E, editor. *Growth in Ministry*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Kidner, Derek. *A Time to Mourn and a Time to Dance: Ecclesiastes and the Way of the World*. InterVarsity Press, 1976.
- Kidner, Derek. *Proverbs, An Introduction and Commentary*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press. Copyright by The Tyndale Press, 1964.
- Kolb, Robert and Wengert, Timothy, editors. *The Book of Concord, the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Kolb, Robert. *Speaking the Gospel Today, a Theology for Evangelism*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1984.
- Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.
- Loeche, Wilhelm. *The Pastor*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2017.
- Luther, Martin. *The Small Catechism*, also *The Large Catechism*. Available, e.g., in *The Book of Concord of 1580*, translated by Kolb and Wengert, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press. Also available through Apple iTunes.
- Marty, Martin E. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Letters and Papers from Prison: a Biography*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- McNeill, John T. *A History of the Cure of Souls*. New York, New York: Harper & Row, 1951.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Wounded Healer*. New York, New York: An Image Book published by Doubleday, 1979.
- Rad, Gerhard von. *Wisdom in Israel*. London: SCM Press and Nashville, Tennessee: Abington, 1972.
- Schaller, Lyle E. *It's a Different World! The Challenge for Today's Pastor*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abington Press, 1987.
- Schaller, Lyle E. *The Pastor and the People, Revised*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abington Press, 1973, 1986.
- Steinke, Peter L. *A Door Set Open*. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2010.
- Steinke, Peter L. *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What*. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2006.
- Steinke, Peter L. *Healthy Congregations, a Systems Approach*. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute. 1996.
- Stephen Ministries, 2045 Innerbelt Business Center Drive, Saint Louis, Missouri 63114. [www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org).
- Vaill, Peter. *Learning as a Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.
- Walther, C. F. W. "Law and Gospel, How to Read and Apply the Bible"; Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2010.
- Walther, C. F. W. *Law and Gospel, How to Read and Apply the Bible*; Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2010.
- Walther, C. F. W. *Pastoral Theology*. Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2017.
- Westermann, Claus. *Roots of Wisdom*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.
- What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality? Helps for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love*. Dr. Edward Seely, 2015. Available at [fromacorntoak12.com](http://fromacorntoak12.com).
- Williams, Daniel Day. *The Minister and the Care of Souls*, New York, New York: Harper and

Row, Publishers, 1961.  
Wolff, Hans Walter. *Anthropology of the Old Testament*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress and London: SCM, 1974.  
Wright, N. T. *Paul: in Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2009.  
Wright, N. T. *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion*. New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016.

#### Several Journals

*Chinese Theological Review*. A publication of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia. Hong Kong.

*Theology & Life*. Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong

Word & World: Theology for Christian Ministry. Luther Seminary, Saint Paul. Minnesota. On the church in China, Spring 1997 issue.

Amy Lay added these known resources:

Bates, Richard. *A Christian World View*.

DeKruyter, Arthur H. *Basic Christianity*.

DeKruyter, Arthur H. *Journey into Joy*. Available in Chinese, translated by Amy Lay.

Student Work ... Brief written work will be discussed in class sessions. The longer major paper will be evaluated after the course of study is over. Choose one of the several options.

What makes me want to be a pastor or church leader? What do I expect to accomplish? What are my points of vulnerability at which the devil or circumstances could make me fall? How will I protect myself? What strengths do I recognize in myself that I must make use of in my work for the Lord?

Pastoral care is about relationships. God created us to live, not alone and to ourselves only, but in relationships with other people and with the society as a whole. It begins with our relationship with the Lord. Expand on this.

What resources for research are available to you? What scholarly works delve into issues of pastoral care? What journals probe the problems that you are likely to encounter? Find them and list them. It is of course vital that you be discerning as to whether they are helpful or not, and whether they have a true Christian faith foundation. Recall 1 John 4.

The concept of the calling or vocation. Every human being has a potential vocation by the Maker's will. What is one's purpose? What is unique about the vocation of a Christian person? How will it help a person to know with some clarity what his vocation is? How can you use this knowledge in doing pastoral care? Give specific examples. A major paper.

*"...a man's nature and potentialities, and the laws which govern him, have been bestowed on him by his Creator to enable him to fulfill goals chosen for, not by, him."*  
Italian philosopher Vico, quoted in Bach, Music in the Castle of Heaven, John Eliot Gardner, page 138.

What is man? How is the human understood in the Christian faith as set in the Chinese context? Compare and distinguish the world views. The Christian doctrine of man will clash with the cultural view. Explain in detail how using the Christian view helps with doing pastoral care. Are there aspects of the cultural view that you might use to help people? A major paper.

Recall a significant life experience, an event that made an impact on you. Some happening may have caused great fear and anxiety. How did you handle it? Who helped you through it? How did you use your faith, prayer, Scripture to find strength and hope? What people or agencies helped you? Describe your experience succinctly as follows: the problem, attempted solutions and results successful or not, and the final outcome. What have you learned from this experience? How have you grown? How did emotion, reason and faith work through it all? This exercise gives you a model for a case study. Case studies are a good way to professional growth. Present case studies in conferences or study sessions with others.

Briefly state the Gospel of salvation by the grace of God effected by Jesus Christ. Cite explicit texts from Scripture that make it clear. Then explain how you may use this in pastoral care. Give at least five examples.

Briefly state the human condition as God declares it and what the consequences are for living a life, individually and in community. Cite explicit texts from Scripture, such as Romans 7, that make it clear. Give at least five examples of troubles people find themselves in because of acting on faithless human instincts.

Briefly prepare a model for personal devotion and meditation. One approach to spiritual growth is proposed by Martin Luther: prayer, meditation and testing or affliction make a theologian.

Write a longer essay that applies the instructions of the Apostle Paul in Romans 12. You are a leader in the church. How will you identify the spiritual gifts in your church? How will you enlist them and train them? What vision do you have of what they can accomplish as they work together? How will you lead and encourage them?

Prepare a sample sermon on a Bible text, that addresses a real life spiritual malady that people have, for evaluation and discussion. Let this sermon demonstrate your sense for pastoral care.

Briefly explain the covenant the God has made with us in Jesus. Explain the meaning of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper for this covenant with us. How do these as sacraments and as rituals distinguish the Christian within the Chinese society? How does understanding the covenant and the covenant's sacraments help people cope with, overcome, and even avoid problems in life? Cite at least three ways that understanding the covenant and the covenant's sacraments help people cope with, overcome, and even avoid problems in life.

Someone comes to you, the pastor or church leader, with a real life problem. Describe succinctly how you will discern the problem, and how you will recognize the spiritual need and God's caring answer to the need. Then describe how you will patiently and with caring heart offer help and hope to this person. Remember, this requires careful listening and a sensitive and firm response. A useful major paper.

Select Christian songs that may be used to bring the comfort of faith and hope to a sufferer. Do you have the gift of artistic expression? Examine the psalms, using the guide in the Appendix, as model for engaging the Lord in seeking comfort. Create six songs. Or create a work of art using your talent in a painting, sculpture, drama vignette, or other work. Optional major paper.

Prepare a plan for organizing small groups within your church that are designed to focus on pastoral care matters or equip people with the knowledge, wisdom, and skills in addressing and helping other people deal with the challenges of life. Cite at least one way God's Word will be used in the small groups. Describe how group leaders will be identified, selected, trained, and offered continuing education.

Research and list helping agencies that you might want to call on in your church community. Describe their purpose. Indicate whom to contact.