

SourceBook

for
Ministerial
Development
(Canada)

Pastors, Mentors and Board of
Ministry Members Guide

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Education Committee
Church of the Nazarene Canada
January 2006

Foreword

Since the very beginning of this project it has been the desire of the National Board Education Committee to bring together under one cover, an understandable and concise summary of the process of becoming a minister in the Church of the Nazarene.

While the process may seem obvious to those outside – a simple accepting of the will of God – it has proven to be anything but simple to those who embark on that journey. Many of the most important aspects of the process are implicit in our church culture and, thus, unspoken and virtually unseen. We expect our ministers to be and do particular things in particular ways, but have never brought together in one place a written statement of those expectations. This *Sourcebook* is an attempt to respond to that deficiency.

Here we offer in straightforward form a description of what a Nazarene Minister in Canada is expected to be and do. We do not attempt, of course, to say everything that could be said. We do not presume to change anything that has been our heritage. We do not add to, or take away from, our Church *Manual* or our doctrinal commitments. We simply attempt to make visible that which has always been assumed, yet difficult to see *because it is so obvious*.

I have not labored alone in this endeavor. I thank all those who have struggled with me through this process, arguing, encouraging, challenging and refining it. I especially thank our National Director, Dr. William Stewart for his continual support in this project over several years. Without his involvement from the very beginning, this *Training Manual* would never have been.

I thank, too, our Committee Chairman, Dr. Daniel Gales for his leadership in keeping the project on course. His inspiration, focus and friendship has been essential and cherished.

The other members of the Education Committee, Dr. Riley Coulter, President of Canadian Nazarene University College, Mrs. Marjorie Osborne, National Church Growth Coordinator, and Rev. Wesley Campbell, Superintendent of Canada Pacific District have borne with me throughout the entire project. I thank them for their research, their wisdom, and their many contributions to the process.

Dr. Wilbur Brannon, Director of Pastoral Ministries for the Church of the Nazarene International has been a constant source of encouragement throughout. His involvement in planning and energizing the Breckenridge Consultations, and inviting me to participate in them, has broadened my base of knowledge and understanding in the field. This work would be much the poorer but for this.

Finally, I must say a special thanks to the board and congregation of Moncton First Church. Without their prayers and sympathetic support in granting me time from the busy demands of a growing congregation, much of this material would still be swirling around in my head. I could never have made the time available without their encouragement.

I am deeply conscious of my debt to these, and to the many others who have helped to form and shape the Church of the Nazarene, and continue to do so. Our prayers will be answered and our labors rewarded as we raise up another generation of Spirit filled leaders to experience and promote the holy life, and contribute to the re-evangelizing of Canada.

Clair MacMillan
Moncton, NB
January, 1998

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Lay Ministry

**THE FOUNDATIONS
OF MINISTRY**

Getting Started

In the Church of the Nazarene it is expected that all lay people will be involved in ministry activity of some kind. We believe that God has given spiritual gifts to all believers which enable them to be actively and fruitfully involved in evangelism and ministry. In this respect all Christians are called to be involved in the ministry of the church.

All people are not gifted in the same way or for the same kind of ministry activity, but all have a part to play in the work of the ministry. When all people in a group of Christians work together to serve God with their spiritual gifts, the church is strengthened in two ways. First, the church grows numerically as new believers are added to the congregation and, second, the believers are strengthened spiritually, becoming more mature in their faith and more Christ-like in their attitudes and behavior.

It is the normal expectation that Nazarene lay people will be active in and committed to ministry activity. God's purposes for the Church can only be fulfilled by the active involvement of all lay people in using their spiritual gifts. Lay people need neither special permission, nor credentials of any type, to use their spiritual gifts within the church. The norm is for lay people to serve God in a relationship of accountability to a local congregation, using their gifts under the leadership of a pastor.

A few people have been gifted by the Holy Spirit to be leaders in ministry and are specifically called to fulfill that function. Within the Church of the Nazarene such leaders are expected to express that role and function by holding the position of pastor.

People who believe they are gifted to be leaders in ministry have a two fold obligation to God, the Church, and themselves.

First, they have an obligation to demonstrate that special calling through fruitful action in lay ministry. Before they can claim to be called to be leaders in ministry, people need to prove themselves to be competent and fruitful practitioners of ministry. Thus the first step in preparing to become a leader in ministry is to become proficient and fruitful in ministry activity.

Second, they have an obligation to prepare themselves to be leaders by gaining the tools and learning the skills of leadership in ministry. This involves a lifetime commitment to practicing and refining ministry skills and leadership skills.

The Church of the Nazarene is committed to the belief that the Church has a responsibility to set a high standard of expectation regarding the lifestyle and activity of people who will serve as pastors. The *Sourcebook* has been developed as a response to and expression of that commitment.

Before candidates go any further in the *Sourcebook* they must demonstrate that they are active and competent in ministry as a lay person. If they are not active in lay ministry but believe God is calling them to prepare for ordination the first step is to consult with the pastor and seek his/her help in becoming active in lay ministry in the local church. You will explore with the candidate, their gifts and abilities, and give them an assignment which is appropriate to the spiritual development and current skill level. Their assignments will usually be in a ministry role under the care and supervision of one of the existing ministries of the local church.

Remember that most ministry done in the church should be done by lay people. To be a good lay person the candidate does not have to abandon that calling and embrace preparation for ordination. The Church functions at its best when all lay people are active in ministry under the leadership of the pastor or pastoral team.

As the candidate begins to demonstrate their effectiveness and fruitfulness in ministry, you will help them proceed to the next section of this workbook. The candidate must have a minimum of one year in active lay ministry before expecting to move to the next stage of preparation for ordination.

If you are unable to provide the candidate with a ministry opportunity after they prove their seriousness and commitment to serve, the candidate should be advised to contact the District Superintendent for advice on how to proceed.

On page 7 you will find a copy of the "Lay Ministry Service Log". Please encourage the candidate to complete it and return it to you. A copy of this form will be required when the candidate applies for a District license.

Assessment Phase

**PROVING
THE CALL**

Introduction

When a member of the Church of the Nazarene has proven faithful and fruitful in ministry and senses a call from God to prepare for ordination, the Church claims the right and obligation to test that call, asking the candidate to prove, over a period of time, that God has indeed called and that the candidate has the necessary gifts, personal qualifications and preparation to be a leader in the ministry of the Church of the Nazarene.

It is normal in the Church of the Nazarene to refer to the call to prepare for ordination as “The Call to the Ministry.” We will follow that conventional terminology throughout this *Sourcebook*. All Christians are called to ministry, but only a few are called to be professional leaders in ministry and, thus, to be ordained.

The transition from being involved in lay ministry to preparing for professional ministry leadership is one of the most important transitions in the life of the church. The initial supervision of that transition involves the pastor, the local church board and the district superintendent. Later, as the candidate proves to have been effective within the local church and its ministries, the assessment process begins to involve the other levels of the Church of the Nazarene: The District Church, The National Church, and the General Church.

Each level of assessment has an important contribution to make to the life of the candidate. There are no short-cuts or fast-tracks through the process. The assessment at each stage prepares the candidate for the next stage. The final stage in the assessment process is the action of a district assembly to elect the candidate to be ordained, indicating that the candidate has been proven to understand and be competent in contributing to the overall ministry of the International Church of the Nazarene.

Beginning Assessment

The assessment of the call by others begins the very moment the candidate says to anyone that God has called them to the ministry. Every person to whom they communicate that news will begin to make an assessment of whether or not the candidate is the kind of person whom they believe qualifies for that role and responsibility. The purpose of this section of the *Sourcebook* is to give order and form to the process of assessment so it can assist the candidate in evaluating their potential for success in the ministry. There will be several types of assessment proceeding at one time, and in sequence. This workbook provides the candidate with tools for managing and learning from those assessments.

Candidate’s Self Assessment

The first stage in assessment lies predominantly within the candidate’s power. Guide the candidate in using the forms provided to begin a process of accumulating information about themselves as they view themselves, and as other people see them. It is important that the candidate take this project very seriously, for it will be the foundation of all that follows.

The more clearly the candidate is aware of his/her life and motivations, and the more clearly they are aware of who they have been up to now, the better chance they will

have of undergoing the transition necessary to become ordained in the Church of the Nazarene.

Spiritual Autobiography

The self assessment begins with exploring God's call. Instruct the candidate to read the "Spiritual Autobiography" section in the Candidate's Manual and then complete the spiritual autobiography form that follows.

Assessment of Suitability

The second part of the self-assessment involves collecting information from other people regarding the suitability for the ministry of leadership. The central difference between lay ministry and pastoral ministry is the issue of leadership. To be a leader the candidate must be able to interact with people in a way that inspires them to follow. While some leadership skills are learned, and can be refined over time, there is a "core gift" of leadership which people either have or have not. The purpose of this exercise is to discover whether or not the candidate has evidence of this gift.

Using the form that follows on page 18 the candidate must interview fifty people over the next three or four years and ask them what they think about the candidate's prospects for becoming a minister. Further instructions regarding this are outlined in the Candidate's manual.

Copies of these forms may need to be submitted to the district office, however, because these forms are designed to instruct, the candidate should keep the originals.

My Pilgrimage With God

The third part of self assessment is another exercise in journalizing. It involves keeping an on-going record of the candidate's spiritual life. This is different from the "Spiritual Autobiography" in that it is scripture based, not merely reflective. It is a record of what the candidate is learning in an on-going, lifetime study of the Bible. A sample copy of this form follows on page 19.

Counting the Cost

In preparation for the professional ministry several projects are underway simultaneously. In real life we tend not to view them as separate projects, but rather, as a part of a single process. It is useful, especially for analysis, to view them as distinct processes in order that we may discover the particular challenges in each.

One of the goals of this training workbook is to increase our efficiency in deploying and keeping people in the ministry. We do not propose to attain that goal by lowering our standards of expectation for ministers. Those standards are determined and monitored by General Assembly legislation, under the management of District Assemblies.

What we do propose is that we be more selective in admitting people to the process of preparation for the ministry, and more supportive to them as they negotiate the complex transformation from "laity" to "clergy." By doing this we will be focusing our resources on those people who have the highest probability of contributing to the

fulfillment of the mission of the Church of the Nazarene Canada. We intend to be very clear in our expectations of who a Nazarene minister will be, based on our mission statement.

This workbook will orient the candidate to the process of that transformation. It will direct them to the people, ideas, tools, resources and institutions which will help them make the transition. Ultimately, though, it is the candidate's responsibility to nurture and pursue their calling in response to what God has done and is doing within them. The Church and its professional ministry is the vehicle, not the destination.

The arrangement of the workbook is carefully chosen, reflecting our holiness doctrine and religious practice. The major divisions of the workbook reflect the stages or phases of development the candidate will go through in preparation for the professional ministry.

The capacity for accurate self assessment is an indispensable skill in the professional ministry. The habits and disciplines the candidate acquires in completing this section of the workbook will become increasingly valuable as the sphere of ministry activity increases over the years.

Assessment of the candidate's work, preparation and character will continue throughout the transition from lay ministry to Pastoral Ministry. It will be an ongoing reminder that the candidate is called to be transformed from what he or she is by nature, into what God requires in a full time leader of His Church.

Local Church Assessment

Local Minister's License

Following self assessment, the candidate should begin the licensing process. The first credential is called a Local Minister's License. It may be issued by the board of the local church of which the candidate is a member, upon recommendation of the pastor.

In order to receive a local license the candidate must be actively and fruitfully involved in a ministry of the local church, and have sustained that activity and fruitfulness long enough for leadership potential to begin to emerge. Not all people who are actively and fruitfully involved in lay ministry should seek a Local Minister's License. Only those people who have sensed that God has called them to prepare for ordination should consider applying for a Local Minister's License. When it is granted, the Local Minister's License is valid for a period of one year; it may be renewed by action of the local church board if assessment warrants it.

To apply for such a license, the candidate is asked to meet with you to seek your approval of such a step. The candidate should have completed the "Lay Ministry Service Log" and the "Declaration of Intent to Prepare for Ordination" (page 21-22 in the *Sourcebook*.)

The "Lay Ministry Service Log" should be up to date and signed by the supervisor of the lay ministry activity. In meeting you, the candidate should be prepared to discuss the content of their supervised ministry record. They should also be prepared to explain why they sense they have been called to the Ministry.

The "Declaration of Intent to Prepare for Ordination" should be held in complete privacy. Only the candidate may authorize its release to anyone.

The answers on the "Declaration of Intent to Prepare for Ordination" will help you to assess the obstacles which the candidate will have to overcome to be ordained. If any of the answers are a source of embarrassment to the candidate, it is much better that they come to light now, in the security of a pastoral relationship, rather than later when others will, of necessity, be involved.

Pastor, you are responsible to give prayerful counsel to the candidate in dealing with the "Declaration of Intent" and giving them the best opportunity to enter into the kind of development program which will help them to get above past difficulties.

Only in the very rarest circumstance would past sins disqualify someone from future pastoral leadership. The Church of the Nazarene is highly optimistic regarding God's grace.

We cannot force the candidate to reveal any information which they find embarrassing but the discovery that they have failed to give full disclosure will exclude them from holding any credential in the Church of the Nazarene.

The Candidate and Pastor

An important factor that will influence the candidate's future in ministry will be the relationship developed with the pastor during the years of preparation.

If you are able, you should fit the candidate into your personal schedule, allowing the candidate to be present in many pastoral activities. Or assign the candidate to an assistant to undergo much of the on the job training.

If, for some unforeseen reason, you or one of your assistants are unable to provide this mentoring service, the candidate should ask your permission to have the District Superintendent appoint someone for the task.

Using the forms that follow, you are responsible for helping the candidate complete a "Ministry Development Plan" (page 13-14) and a "Spiritual Development Plan" (page 15). You may add additional duties to benefit the candidate, but all ministry skills here must be addressed.

Preparation for Pastoral Ministry Development Plan

Cross Reference Manual Paragraph 400-401.5 (*Mentoring Pastor; please initial each box when satisfactory ministry has been accomplished.*)

AREA OF MINISTRY	ONE YEAR PRE LOCAL LICENSE	1 ST YEAR LOCAL LICENSE	2 ND YEAR LOCAL LICENSE
1. VISITATION	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism <input type="checkbox"/> New comers	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Prospects <input type="checkbox"/> Sick; at home & hospital	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Prison <input type="checkbox"/> Bereave <input type="checkbox"/> Dying
	<p>...on own</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors; general & on special days <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday School Class members, prospects & absentees	<p>...on own</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue all in previous column <input type="checkbox"/> Absentees from services	<p>...on own</p> <input type="checkbox"/> All in previous column
2. ADMINISTRATION	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Planning services <input type="checkbox"/> Planning for special occasions <input type="checkbox"/> Working on bulletin & other communications	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Be involved in planning; yearly, monthly, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Planning in area of finance/budget	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Observe chairing of church board <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with preparation of reports
		<p>...on own</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Chair some committees	
3. SPECIAL FUNCTIONS	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Assist pastor with communication <input type="checkbox"/> Be involved in appropriate district activities	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Dedication of children <input type="checkbox"/> Baptisms	<p>...with pastor</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Funerals <input type="checkbox"/> Weddings
		<input type="checkbox"/> House blessings <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving members	<input type="checkbox"/> Any in previous columns
4. PLATFORM	<input type="checkbox"/> Scripture reading <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Announcements <input type="checkbox"/> Introductions	<input type="checkbox"/> Lead worship <input type="checkbox"/> Lead service <input type="checkbox"/> Any from previous year	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue from previous column
5. SPIRITUAL ADVISING	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice good listening skills <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits ability to keep confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> With pastoral guidance, a few advising sessions <input type="checkbox"/> Learn when professional help is needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Some advising sessions with pastoral guidance <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion with pastor re many kinds of counseling situations, what to expect
6. TEACHING	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits approachability <input type="checkbox"/> Teach a children's or youth class	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach a class for new Christians Evangelical small group	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach an adult class <input type="checkbox"/> Teach a class for new Christians <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelical small group <input type="checkbox"/> Membership class with pastor

AREA OF MINISTRY	ONE YEAR PRE LOCAL LICENSE	1ST YEAR LOCAL LICENSE	2ND YEAR LOCAL LICENSE
7. PREACHING	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasional devotional approx. 10 minutes for a committee, board meeting or group	<input type="checkbox"/> Tag or team preaching with Pastor	<input type="checkbox"/> One sermon per month in own church or elsewhere
8. EVANGELISM	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to and invite someone to come to church. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice a personal evangelistic lifestyle : plan and work at leading people to Christ in all the stages of personal/friendship evangelism <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and carry out outreach and evangelism	<input type="checkbox"/> One sermon on own per quarter <input type="checkbox"/> Continue developing a personal evangelistic lifestyle <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and make specific attempts with people at all stages of personal evangelism <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and carry out several outreach and evangelism activities and/or events with a small group <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for & do altar work	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue from previous columns <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and carry out outreach and evangelism activities and/or events for adults and/or families and/or small groups.
9. INTERCESSION PRAYER	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal devotional life <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in corporate prayer times	<input type="checkbox"/> Fasting <input type="checkbox"/> Intercession Continue previous	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuation of all previous <input type="checkbox"/> Attend prayer summit or similar function
10. WORLD AWARENESS	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch and/or read news daily <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in NMI activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Involvement in compassion activities (church sponsored or otherwise) <input type="checkbox"/> Work & Witness, Youth in Mission Involvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban and rural ministry experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Visit other local churches & compare with your own
11. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendships in/out of church circles <input type="checkbox"/> Good manners <input type="checkbox"/> Good health habits <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate appearance <input type="checkbox"/> Time management skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Good family relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Hobbies and interests outside church <input type="checkbox"/> Accepts and gives invitations <input type="checkbox"/> Good financial habits <input type="checkbox"/> All previous	<input type="checkbox"/> Time management skills <input type="checkbox"/> All previous

Spiritual Development Plan

AREA OF MINISTRY	ONE YEAR PRE LOCAL LICENSE	1 ST YEAR LOCAL LICENSE	2 ND YEAR LOCAL LICENSE
1. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily personal devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Spousal devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Family devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Explore kinds of prayer, ie: petition, intercession, praise, adoration <input type="checkbox"/> Daily bible reading <input type="checkbox"/> Be part of group prayer weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in corporate worship weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily personal devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Spousal devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Family devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Experience kinds of prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Daily Bible reading <input type="checkbox"/> Be available to lead small group prayer meeting(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in corporate worship weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Begin to appreciate the aspects of worship	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily personal devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Spousal devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Family devotions <input type="checkbox"/> Practice all previous forms of prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Begin to learn the practice of contemplative prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Daily Bible reading <input type="checkbox"/> Initiate and lead group prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in corporate worship weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Worship corporately in some setting(s) where you have no leadership responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to assemble a library on spirituality*
2. PERSONAL SPIRITUAL EXPLORATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> Assemble a bibliography of spirituality* reading <input type="checkbox"/> Practice daily the discipline of reading on spirituality* <input type="checkbox"/> Begin to keep a journal of your spiritual life	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin to assemble a library on spirituality* <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a book on spirituality* quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to journal	<input type="checkbox"/> Read at least four books on spirituality* a year <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to journal
3. ACCOUNTABILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek to develop a relationship with an accountability partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue relationship with an accountability partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue relationship with an accountability partner

- *List of suggested books on spirituality can be found on page 16.*

Suggested Readings on Spirituality

- The Imitation of Christ, Thomas A. Kempis
- The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life, Hannah Whitall Smith
- Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan
- Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer, C. S. Lewis
- Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth, Richard J. Foster
- The Contemplative Pastor, Eugene Peterson
- The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoffer
- The Pastor in Prayer, E. M. Bounds
- In the Name of Jesus, Henri Nouwen
- The Cloud of Unknowing, Anonymous
- The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from St. John of the Cross, Rowan Adams
- The Interior Castle, Theresa D'Avila
- A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, John Wesley
- Prayer, O. Hallesby
- Bread in the Wilderness: The Entire Practice of Praying the Psalms, Thomas Merton
- The Pursuit of God, A. W. Tozer

See also Ministry Internship,
Nazarene Publishing House, Kansas City, Missouri
Phone: 1-800-877-0700

Assignment #1

Spiritual Autobiography

Name: _____

Date Begun: _____

The first time I was aware of the presence of God was: _____

I believed that God was telling me: _____

My response was: _____

I now think (about that experience): _____

(If you need more space use another sheet)

Assignment #2

Assessment of Suitability

Name of person questioned: _____

Date: _____ Kind of Relationship? _____

How long have you known each other? _____

Question #1. *I am considering the possibility of preparing to become a minister. From your personal knowledge of me, do you believe I have what it takes to become a minister?*

Question #2. *Are you aware of anything about me that you think would make me unsuitable to be a minister of the Gospel? If so, is it something that, with God's help, I can work on and overcome?*

Question #3. *Is there any advice you would give me about becoming a minister?*

Comments and follow-up _____

(If you need more space use the back of this sheet)

Assignment #3

My Pilgrimage With God

Name: _____

Date Begun: _____

Scripture reading this morning: _____

Scripture reading this evening: _____

Matters I am praying about: _____

Total time spent today in prayer and Scripture: _____

Matters that God is dealing with me about: _____

My response to what God is teaching today: _____

I need help in: _____

(If you need more space use the back of this sheet)

Form #2

Declaration of Intent to Prepare for Ordination

(Confidential - to be completed by candidate's pastor in interview)

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Local Church: _____ Email: _____

Pastor: _____

How long have you been a member at this local church? _____

If less than 2 years, where were you previously a member? _____

Pastor's Name: _____

What makes you believe that God has called you to prepare for the professional ministry?
(Answer in the space below in about 100 words.)

How long have you had this sense of God's call?

_____ years? _____ months? _____ weeks?

Have you talked with your pastor about your call? _____ yes _____ no

Are you married and living with your spouse? _____ yes _____ no

Have you ever been divorced? _____ yes _____ no

Are you presently employed? _____ yes _____ no

If yes, where? _____

Are you presently a student? _____ yes _____ no

If yes, where? _____

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

High School Diploma__ ; Some university work __ ; University/college degree __; graduate study __ ; graduate degree __ ; other _____
(check all that apply)

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? _____ yes _____ no

If yes, please write out the details in the space below.

Are you presently under investigation for illegal activity? _____ yes _____ no

Would you give consent to undergo a police check? _____ yes _____ no

Have you in the past five years been involved in any of the following activities:

Sexual immorality? _____

Abusive use of non-prescribed drugs/medications? _____

Use of alcoholic products as a beverage? _____

Gambling? _____

Practicing homosexual behavior? _____

Practicing abusive behavior? _____

Possession or viewing of pornographic materials? _____

Are you involved in any practice or activity which is not in harmony with the Ten Commandments? _____ yes _____ no If yes, please explain in the space below.

Are you involved in any practice or activity which is not in harmony with the General and Special Rules of the Church of the Nazarene? _____ yes _____ no.

If yes, please explain in the space below.

(Candidate's signature)

(date)

(Pastor's signature)

(date)

*Applicant: Complete this form and submit to your pastor with your "Lay Ministry Service Log"
Pastor: Keep these files in a secure place where they will not be seen by anyone.*

District Assessment

After the candidate has effectively and fruitfully served the local church for at least one year after receiving the Local Minister's License, they may be eligible to apply for a District Minister's License. (application form follows on page 26 and 27) The assessment process for this credential moves out of the scope of the local church, and into the District arena.

The District Assembly, upon recommendation of the District Board of Ministry and the District Superintendent, may grant a District Minister's License, which is valid for the period of one year. The guidelines for assessing progress as a licensee of the District are mandated by the *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, and applied by the District Board of Ministry.

In order to receive a District License the candidate may be given opportunity to be involved in effective and fruitful ministry outside the local church. They will also be required to complete the first year of a formal educational program for the application to be considered. The normal path to the ministry for the Canadian Church involves completion of a degree program in Ministerial Preparation at Canadian Nazarene University College, and the completion of a three year degree program at Nazarene Theological Seminary. The candidate may discuss alternate paths of formal education with the pastor and District Superintendent.

When the candidate can prove that they are involved in both the practice of ministry and the learning accompanying it, they may consult with you for information about the process of applying for a District Minister's License.

When the candidate holds a District License they are assessed as having the qualifications to serve in a ministry assignment outside the home church, but within the bounds of the Assembly District. For any ministry outside the local home church they are accountable to the District Superintendent and the duly elected district boards of the district.

National Church Assessment

Periodically, and on each Canadian District, the National Director will provide for the conducting of a Pastoral Assessment Center for people who are applying for District Minister's License. The content of the program will change from time to time, based on the perceived needs of the Church of the Nazarene Canada and the cultural/regional variations in each district. Participation in one of these assessment centers is the normal and expected requirement before a person will be granted a District License by any Canadian District.

Additional information regarding Assessment Center can be found on page 28 and 29.

General Church Assessment

(See *Manual Church of the Nazarene* par. 402-423)

At the completion of the candidate's formal educational program they will be encouraged to seek assignment in a local church, either as pastor, or as an assistant pastor with a specific role. After serving for at least two years in a full time pastorate, or a minimum of four years in an assistant or part time assignment, the candidate may be eligible to apply for ordination.

The application for ordination will be considered by the District Board of Ministry. The Board will assess the candidate's work in their ministry assignment and make a recommendation to the District Assembly regarding the application. If the Board's recommendation is favorable, the General Superintendent reserves the right to interview the candidate and their spouse, as the final stage in assessment. If the General Superintendent's assessment is positive he may approve the recommendation and the candidate will be presented to the District Assembly for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene, meaning that they are approved for assignment in a position of ministry leadership in the Church of the Nazarene anywhere in the world.

District Licensing Checklist

Please complete the following prior to applying for a district license.

- _____ Verifies the call of God

- _____ Supportive relationship with pastor

- _____ Complete “Lay Ministry service log” (page 7)

- _____ Completion of “Declaration of Intent” (page 21-22)

- _____ Read and understood the sections of *Manual* pertaining to Ordination

- _____ Filed “Ministry Plan” (page 13-14) with pastor

- _____ Filed “Spiritual Development Plan” (page 15) with pastor

- _____ Active and fruitful in “Ministry Plan”

- _____ Local License granted

- _____ Answered Questions on pages 40-68 with Pastor

- _____ Local License renewed

- _____ Attended Pastoral Assessment Center *(with your spouse if you have one)*

- _____ Police Check Completed

- _____ Pastor’s recommendation

(This form is to be completed and submitted with a copy of all forms listed above to the District Board of Ministry with your application for District Minister’s License)

15. Are there any physical irregularities in your family which would hinder your ministry? _____

16. Does your spouse support you in your commitment to fulfill your calling? _____

17. List your financial debts: _____

18. Are you behind on any debt or obligation? _____
If yes, explain. _____

19. If married, have either you or your spouse been divorced? _____

20. Details of said divorce must be submitted to the Board of General Superintendents for their review, in accordance with Manual paragraph 320.
Are you willing to do so? _____

21. If married, are you now living with your spouse? _____

22. If not, what are your reasons? _____
Date _____ Signed _____

A WORD TO APPLICANTS

The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene is specific in matters pertaining to the licensed ministry of the church. These sections should be read carefully and the necessary requirements met before application is made for a district license. List the paragraph numbers from the Manual indicating the portion you have read dealing with the "Call and Qualifications of the Minister."

Return this form to the district office.

APPLICATION FOR A MINISTER'S LICENSE

Name _____	(List Full Name)
Address _____	
City _____	Province _____
Postal Code _____	
Phone _____	
S.I.N. _____	
District _____	
Date _____	
Local Church Membership _____	

- Minister's License
- Renewal of Minister's License
- Elder Candidate
- Deacon Candidate

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE PERSONAL: Male Female

Birth Date _____ Birthplace _____
(m/d/y)

Marital Status _____ Date of Marriage _____
(m/d/y)

Name of Spouse _____ Birthplace _____
Birth Date of Spouse _____
(m/d/y)

Number of Children _____ Names and Date of Birth _____

EDUCATION: List schools attended and degrees earned.

School Name _____ Yr. Graduated _____

Degree _____

High School _____

College _____

Bible College _____

Seminary _____

Other _____

Major _____

Minor _____

Date of first local minister's license _____

by _____ local church.

What part of the Course of Study for Ministers have you completed?

- 1st year
- 2nd year
- 3rd year
- 4th year

Are you now enrolled or do you plan to enroll in one of our Nazarene institutions?

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

1. Describe your call into the ministry. _____

2. Describe your conversion. _____

3. Are you entirely sanctified? _____ Share your experience. _____

4. Have you had any spiritual lapses since your conversion and sanctification? _____
If so, explain. _____

CHURCH RELATIONS

5. RECORD OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Year _____ Church _____ Served as* _____

**State Sunday School Superintendent, church board member, minister of music, NYI President, teacher etc.*

6. Have you held a district license before? () Yes () No If yes, on which district most recently and when?

Date of first district license _____ by _____ district _____

(Before new license is granted, obtain a report & records from the district on which the license lapsed.)

7. RECORD OF LICENSED MINISTRY

Year _____ Licensed by District _____ Served as* _____ Place _____

**State: Evangelist, pastor, teacher, student, other. If other, explain*

8. Have you ever been involved in church troubles of any kind? _____

9. Are you in full sympathy and hearty accord with the standards, doctrines and government of the Church of the Nazarene? _____

10. Will you wholeheartedly support the church and its institutions? _____

11. What experience have you had thus far in preaching? _____

12. Do you sense the urgency of Christians being entirely sanctified, and does your ministry result in the sanctification of believers? _____
How many would you estimate were sanctified wholly under your ministry during the past two years? _____

PERSONAL

13. Are you in good health? _____ If not, state the particulars. _____

14. Are your spouse and children in good health? _____ If not, state particulars. _____

Pastoral Assessment Center

Pastoral Assessment Centre

Purpose: To provide guidance and encouragement to persons who sense a call to ministry. Especially to give guidance to those persons who feel called to professional ministry and to evaluate their suitability and appropriateness for such a call.

Prior to considering attending Assessment Center you must:

Sense a call to ministry
Completed the "Lay Ministry Service Log" (page 7)
Have received and held Local Minister's License for a minimum of one year
Have started a "Ministry Development Program" (page 13-14) under supervision of your local pastor and have demonstrated credibility in it

Prior to making application to attend Assessment Center you must:

Be recommended by your local pastor (or Board of Ministry). These persons will have determined to some level of satisfaction the authenticity and appropriateness of your request by considering the following:

- Is the candidate called?
- Does he/she exhibit leadership skills?
- Does his/her life back up his/her profession?
- Outline of the candidate's opportunities and record of service in the local church.

A written report should be sent to the District Superintendent by the local pastor and church board based on the "Checklist for Pastors Called to Full Time Ministry" (page 25) This report should also contain reference to any areas of concern that have emerged. Based on this information, the District Superintendent must approve continuance in the program. A personal interview with you may be scheduled at this time.

Apply for attendance at Assessment Center through your district office.

Prior to attending Assessment Center:

You will receive several forms from the National Board that need to be completed prior to attendance.
Your pastor will also need to complete a recommendation form.
Your district office may also send you forms that need to be completed.
You are required to read two suitable books.
Write out a testimony of your spiritual journey and be prepared to share it with the group.
Please note your spouse (if you have one) will be required to attend with you.

Formal Preparation Phase

**TRAINING AND
EDUCATION**

Formal Preparation Phase Table of Contents

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Part I

Introduction

For Whom is *The Pastor's Sourcebook* Written?

The Pastor's Sourcebook is intended to assist you in the process of helping lay people to discover and practice focused and effective ministries.

The task which you face when a person expresses an interest in preparing for official ministry is a challenging one. It requires a commitment of time and spiritual energy on your part if the person is to discover the call of God in that declaration of interest.

Too often in the past when pastors have encountered lay people who express a desire to become involved in ministry their first impulse has been to send them away to prepare for ministry. The *Sourcebook* presumes that the first steps toward effective ministry are taken in the local church and under the direction of the pastor.

It contains a suggested plan for interaction between pastors and candidates within the local church. This is not, of course, intended to be a substitute for your own Spirit led initiatives: they are merely suggestions of some of the issues which are crucial to the development of healthy, fruitful ministers. The goal is to assist you in guiding lay people and candidates into ministries that are consistent with our church's mission in Canada.

District Board of Ministry

The *Sourcebook* is also written for use by the District Board of Ministry. The District Board of Ministry is elected by the District Assembly to represent the assembly in evaluating the suitability, the preparation and the effectiveness of potential ministers. The Board has the responsibility of ensuring that candidates for licensing or ordination are appropriately prepared and actively involved in fruitful ministry. The Board acts, not in its own interest, but on behalf of the District Assembly. On the basis of its involvement with candidates, the Board makes recommendations to the assembly concerning the licensing and/or ordination of candidates.

The *Sourcebook* has sections that are written for the use of the Board in its interaction with candidates. Again, it is not the purpose of the *Sourcebook* to supersede the Spirit led inquiries of the board members; it merely suggests some of the issues which are crucial to the fulfillment of our mission in Canada in order to assure that those issues are a part of the examination of every candidate for ministry.

Assumptions

It will be assumed that all potential candidates for licensed or ordained ministry will have access, through you, to *The Candidate's Sourcebook*. A copy of *The Candidate's Sourcebook* should be given to all persons who apply for a Local Minister's License or a Lay Minister's License.

By the time a person applies for a district license (for any type of ministry) he/she should be thoroughly familiar with the portion of *The Candidate's Sourcebook* written for

lay persons. Before applying for a license the candidate should have begun to shape a set of ministry activities in response to that material, and should have a clear understanding of the issues that will be raised and discussed at the licensing interview. License will not be granted to people who have not begun to practice active ministry according to the priorities of the *Sourcebook*.

It will be assumed that all pastors in the district will become familiar with the material written for lay people and the material written for pastors.

Finally, it will be assumed that the members of the District Board of Ministry will be thoroughly familiar with both the *Pastor's* and *Candidate's Sourcebook* in their entirety. They will need to be comfortable with the material, see its relation to the effective development of our church's mission in Canada, and, most of all, see it as a means to bring lost people into the kingdom of God.

The purpose of the *Sourcebook* will only be accomplished as it is used consistently, to guide people into effective ministry, either as fruitful lay people or as fruitful licensed or ordained ministers.

The *Sourcebook* should not be understood as an examination to be passed or as an ordeal to be endured; nor should it be considered even to be a series of ideas to be memorized. If it is viewed and used in those ways it will succeed only in becoming a roadblock to be overcome, rather than as a guide.

The *Sourcebook* will fulfill the purpose only if it is seen as a map, designed to guide people along the road to effective, fruitful ministry. A map can guide people who have some idea about where they wish to go. It can alert a traveler to possible detours and dead-ends; it offers signposts and signals that, in themselves are encouragement along the way, letting the traveler know that he/she is on the right road. Most of all it shows the traveler the places where decisions must be made *in a particular way*, if the destination is to be reached.

The person starting out to become an officially recognized pastoral minister in the Church of the Nazarene in Canada is not following an uncertain road with an undetermined destination. There is a particular road because there is a particular destination. The *Sourcebook* clarifies that destination and marks out that road.

Some people who start down that road will find that the journey, or its destination, is not what they had in mind when they declared an interest in preparing for ministry. When that happens, as it will occasionally, it would be easy to blame The *Sourcebook*, saying it excluded them from pastoral ministry in the Church of the Nazarene. When that happens, we need to recall the words of Phineas Bresee, as quoted in the Los Angeles Times the week that the first Nazarene church was organized:

"We are not a mission but, rather, a church with a mission. We see our church as a denomination where the poor will be welcome and where entire sanctification will be preached."

Bresee was further quoted as saying that his church would have reason to exist as long as its mission existed but would be of no further use if the mission was abandoned.

The destination toward which the *Sourcebook* points is our Church's mission. Obviously, that destination is not the destination of choice for everyone in Canada who

might wish to become a minister. But people who wish to become ministers in the Church of the Nazarene in Canada will need to adopt the mission of the Church of the Nazarene Canada in order to function and prosper in the Church. The *Sourcebook* will help candidates and their examiners to make informed decisions concerning the candidate's progress toward the destination of becoming participants in that mission.

The *Sourcebook* is intended to be a practical response to the Report of the Commission on the Ministry. If the Church of the Nazarene in Canada is to be involved in effective ministry with the next generation of Canadians, it will need a different kind of ministry from what it has now. Different ministry comes from a different kind of minister: the purpose of The *Sourcebook* is to help shape that minister.

Part II

Ministry And Ministers

Introduction

The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene makes clear our understanding that the dispensation of the gospel is the responsibility of all believers. Christian experience throughout church history has shown that God uses people in all vocations and occupations to bring the reality of His mercy and grace into the lives of others.

The Bible teaches, in both the Old Testament and New Testament, that ministry is not always done by professional ministers. Throughout church history, too, we see that side by side with the official, public, professional ministry, others have worked, suffered and sacrificed to advance the Kingdom of Christ. The lines of demarcation between clergy and laity have often been drawn, only to become obscured, and later redrawn.

The relation between the professional ministry and lay ministry has always been problematic. Lay people who are active in ministry inevitably find they need information and skills beyond their current ability. They are driven to dig more deeply into study to gain those skills. Often they have discovered, in the process of gaining those skills, that they have heard God's call to full-time service.

On the other hand, people who aspire to become full-time ministers often find the process of becoming a professional so overwhelming that they lose touch with ministry activity. Ministers often live with much anxiety about their status as professionals in ministry. It is not unusual for ministers to live their whole lives wondering if they are doing it right.

Since its earliest days, the Church of the Nazarene has recognized this role-tension. We have emphasized that the difference between a lay person doing ministry and a full-time minister doing ministry is not a qualitative difference in their activity but a quantitative difference. It is more a function of time than of commitment.

Some lay people may be called to preach and yet never become clerics (*Manual* par. 408-408.8). Others may be called to full-time service yet not called to preach (*Manual* par. 403-406). Still others are called to preach full-time, but not to be pastors (par. 407-407.7); and still others are called to day-by-day ministry without any special role-category.

A Definition of Ministry

Lacking an adequate definition within our denominational tradition, we offer the following:

Ministry is best understood as the continuing of the works which Jesus demonstrated in His earthly ministry. It involves preaching the gospel to every person, teaching them to observe everything which He commanded; feeding the hungry, clothing the cold, attending to the sick, visiting the imprisoned, thus doing good to the bodies and souls of humanity.

Or, more simply,

Ministry is the 'doing of' all activity related directly to caring for souls.

We need to keep clear in our minds the difference between “doing” ministry and the “preparing to do” ministry. For example, learning the “Four Spiritual Laws” is preparing to minister; using the “Four Spiritual Laws” in a soul-winning encounter is ministry. Similarly, preparing a sermon is not ministry, while preaching itself may be.

A pastoral minister in the Church of the Nazarene should be understood to be a leader of people in ministry. He/she must be skilled in ministry and unceasingly involved in ministry. But beyond that he/she must have, in addition, the ability to lead other people into the skill and practice of ministry.

A person who combines ministry with the measure of leadership skills, social competence and ceremonial ability which are necessary to earn a living as a professional minister should be understood as a “full-time minister.”

The full-time minister should always recognize the distinction between ministry, on the one hand, and clerical activity, on the other hand. The full-time minister may make a living being a professional but he/she fulfills the call to ministry entirely by ensuring that his/her ministry is accomplished.

A person who earns a living by doing some vocational activity other than clergy activity is no less a minister. Such a person may fulfill the call to ministry as effectively as the full-time minister. The only difference is the kind of non-ministry activity that provides the income.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes that God calls some people to full-time, public ministry. We need to recognize that the preparation to do ministry and the preparation to be a professional cleric are not necessarily the same. It is entirely possible to be an effective minister without being a member of the clergy; similarly, it is possible to be a functional and competent clergy person and neither be involved in, nor capable of, significant ministry.

The focus of the *Sourcebook* will be two-fold. First, it will be to emphasize ministry as the basic pastoral skill in the Church of the Nazarene. Leading the local church in ministry is the pastor's first and basic responsibility. If ministry is not “done” (i.e. learned, practiced, refined and exercised) within the local church, it is not done at all.

Second, the *Sourcebook* recognizes that if a person is not involved in effective, fruitful ministry as a lay person in the local church, he/she will probably never develop the skill and practice as a minister. The local church is the recruitment territory, the training ground, and the primary field of service for ministry.

Holiness Ministry

The Church of the Nazarene has a set of values and priorities which we derive from our understanding of Biblical Holiness.

The Church of the Nazarene promotes the holy life. This over-arching purpose will reflect in the way we do our church work and how we will operate as leaders. It means that our values and priorities will be different, in a number of respects, from the values and priorities of other churches, even those who call themselves evangelical.

As a holiness church we are neither authoritarian nor liberal in our interpretation of scripture; we are neither congregational nor episcopal in our understanding of church authority; we are not legalistic nor are we libertarian in our ethics. We are a holiness church, committed to the view that every person has a responsibility to “work out your own [sic] salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12-13)

Consequently, the minister in the Church of the Nazarene forms his/her values and priorities on a set of assumptions which differs from other ministers.

Distinctive Values and Priorities of a Holiness Church

First of all, since we say we are to “experience” the holy life, we assume as a holiness church, that all entirely sanctified people have a right and obligation to “live in the Spirit,” that is, to make their life decisions in a context where they are immediately conscious of God’s personal presence.

To lead in the ministry of such a church, we expect our pastors to be clear and fresh in their own pursuit of holiness and that they will seek to model the spirit and atmosphere of holiness in their life and ministry.

Second, the Nazarene Church will “promote the holy life.” We anticipate that one of the top priorities of a pastor’s leadership in the local church will be the urging and encouraging people to seek and experience entire sanctification. This should be a constant and vigorous part of church life.

Nazarenes, therefore, seek to cultivate an environment in daily living and worship, in which God is free to influence His people directly. We believe that the church has a responsibility to maintain that immediate awareness of the presence of God as the normal condition of Church life. We believe that the church and, especially it’s Pastors, must continually invite people into the experience of heart holiness.

We therefore place a high value on ministers who have the gifts and skills to cultivate such an environment, yet resist the temptation to manipulate that environment for personal gain.

The questions which follow in the *Sourcebook*, have been designed to introduce the potential minister to the responsibilities and challenges of leading his/her church into the creation of this distinctive holiness environment and lifestyle. Taken in total, these questions confront the potential minister with the behavioral implications of being the leader of a holiness church.

Third, a holiness church assumes that local churches have a right and a responsibility to respond in and to, their own cultural environment. The issues which define holiness for a local church are, for the most part, local and personal, not global and ecclesiastical. The practical expressions of holiness vary widely, even within the boundaries of a particular Assembly District.

A significant part of a pastor’s leadership responsibility will be to guide the local church into a keen awareness of the scriptural principles of holy living. He/she will understand and exemplify the distinction between the unchanging principles of scriptural holiness, and the changing application of those principles. The pastor will demonstrate the ability to lead the lay people in working out a strategy which will win the lost and establish them in holiness of heart and life.

Nazarenes value highly the role and activity of local lay ministers and locally licensed ministers, in helping to establish the values and priorities of the local church. A holiness church is not clergy dominated, nor is it lay dominated.

Therefore, as a holiness church, we value highly the gifts and skills of a pastoral leader who can inspire and coordinate the lay ministry activities in the local church, yet constantly draw people forward, from mere personal and parochial interest, into the larger, global mission of the Church.

The questions which follow in the *Sourcebook*, have been designed to confront the potential pastoral leader with the conflicting responsibilities in that leadership role. the *Sourcebook* assumes that the appropriate answers to the questions it poses do not come naturally. They come only from a heart made holy by the in-filling of Holy Spirit.

As a holiness church we are convinced that there are particular answers to the questions the *Sourcebook* poses, which are mandated by our holiness mission. We do not contend that persons who answer them otherwise are bad people, or even bad ministers. We merely affirm that the answers we require derive from our holiness doctrine and are necessary to the fulfillment of our holiness mission.

Summary of Part II

Before a lay person even considers the possibility that he/she might be called to the pastoral ministry, he/she must be actively and effectively involved in lay ministry. He/she must have demonstrated the willingness to do the work of the kingdom and have shown some skill and success in doing it.

The pastoral minister is, first and foremost, a minister and only secondly a church manager. Ministry, for the pastoral minister in the Church of the Nazarene, is the calling; leading a local congregation is the way he/she supports him/herself in that calling.

Some pastors may find a ready made congregation that is able and willing to provide financial support for that calling. Those who do are indeed privileged people. Others, equally effective in ministry, may not ever have the opportunity to find a church which is responsive to their leadership and able to sustain them financially in full time ministry.

In preparing the *Sourcebook* we have come to the realization that it is important that pastors be leaders, but that being a leader does not fulfill the call of God. The call is to lead and to minister; to be a leader in the activity of ministry. The person who follows the *Sourcebook* will be confronted with questions that pertain to the mission of the Church of the Nazarene, the call of God, the relation between the two. The *Sourcebook* is the road map that will bring that person to the proper destination.

Part III

Questions for Candidates

Introduction

As a candidate is preparing for the ministry they are embarking on a new adventure. They are bringing the gifts, skills, training and experience they have gained up to now, to the District Church for review and evaluation.

The District Board of Ministry which will meet with the candidate from time to time over the next few years, is composed of experienced pastors. Most of these pastors have had a number of years experience in ministry. They have been asked many questions concerning ministry by many people.

They will meet with the candidate prior to the granting of a district license. When the candidate comes to that meeting, you are going to ask them a number of questions. Most of these questions are fairly simple; the candidate should have no trouble answering them. These questions are asked for a spiritual and a practical purpose.

The practical purpose is easy to explain. There is a personal relationship which ministers have with each other, that involves trust and confidence. That kind of relationship is similar to the relationship the candidate has had with his or her local church pastor up to this time. That relationship is expanded to include other ministers when the candidate meets with the District Board of Ministry. At your first meeting with this Board the candidate will begin to develop a network of life-long relationships that will, as time goes by, affirm and validate the call to serve God within the Church of the Nazarene.

The questions you will ask will help the candidate to understand themselves, their call, and the work that they are called to do.

The spiritual purpose of their questioning is a little harder to explain, yet even more important. Being licensed to perform ministry means that the candidate has changed. They are not yet what they will become, but they are no longer who they were before. Receiving a license means that the candidate is starting to walk a path that places upon him or her a whole new set of spiritual and practical responsibilities.

The questions you will ask in your meetings with the candidates will help them to adapt to the changes that will take place in their life as they prepare for ordination.

The path to the ministry is a spiritual path. It cannot be followed without careful, loving spiritual guidance. As ministers on the Board, you will work with the candidate to give him or her the care and direction needed as they prepare for the public, full-time ministry.

The questions we introduce here are questions which every minister eventually answers. We are confident that the most helpful time to introduce them is now, during the licensing process. These questions have been carefully chosen and developed. We ask you to think prayerfully about them.

Familiarize yourself with the following questions and be prepared to discuss them with the candidate according to the guidelines that follow.

Question 1 “Am I Really Called By God?”

Candidate’s Perspective

Every believer is called to do ministry. You have been involved in ministry in your local church as a lay person. You have shown yourself to be effective in ministry and have found some satisfaction in doing it. You are now wondering, “Has God called me to something more?”

You will need to become familiar with Part V in *The Manual 2001-2005* (pg. 168-207). *The Manual* describes in detail the meaning of “The Call,” “The Qualifications of the Minister,” and the type of characteristics expected of the minister. You will need to read these pages again and again, discuss them with your pastor, pray over them and make them your own. Only when you have a clear, personal conviction that your call is from God, will you be ready to receive a district minister’s license.

There can be no substitute for a clear understanding of this material. The Board of Ministry will question you many times on your knowledge of this material. You need to know it in your mind and your soul.

There are several things in Part V of *The Manual* that we especially need to emphasize.

First, “The Call” is always the call to obedience. The called minister is never a free person. The call is not a call to prestige and power; it is a call to simple obedience to the leadership of God, usually as it is revealed in His church!

The minister is called to a level of obedience that is above the level of obedience demanded of lay people. James 3:1-2 warns that “not many should desire to be teachers because those who teach are subject to more rigid judgment by God.”

Second, “The Call” is a call to faithfulness. It is a call to a lifetime of ministry, regardless of circumstance. As a lay person your faithfulness to God’s call has been demonstrated. You have, as time has permitted, done the things that your church has expected. You have worked with your pastor, submitted to his leadership, and created opportunities to do ministry. As a full-time minister, that faithfulness will be demonstrated in your full-time, lifetime commitment to serving God. “The Call” is a call to accountability to God. It is a call from Him, and a call to serve Him “no matter what.” At times you will be encouraged to follow Him; at other times you will be discouraged. At times people will be willing to follow you readily; at other times you will need to follow God alone.

There will be “triumphal entries” (see Matthew 21), when every human voice proclaims your leadership; but, just as surely, there will be “Gethsemanes,” where you struggle and pray alone.

The person who knows that the call is from God is not distracted by either the triumphs or the losses. The called minister has learned to find satisfaction in simply knowing that it is God who calls, that it is God whose opinion matters, and that it is God who must be served.

The person who will give his or her life to the ministry for a lifetime of service is a person who knows beyond any doubt that the call is from God. The called minister is not

a volunteer, even if he is not paid for his work. The called minister is under a conscious obligation to pursue his calling whether he is encouraged or forbidden, whether he is paid or unpaid, whether he is highly educated or almost illiterate (see Jeremiah 20:7-9).

Your first task as a candidate for a minister's license, is to develop your spiritual relationship with God to the point where you are sure that your call is from Him.

For example, when confronted with the difficult choice of "accepting a bad move" or leaving the ministry, the person who is certain of his call must stay in the ministry. He is compelled because of the call that burns in his heart! God never promised it would be easy, but He did promise that His grace was sufficient for the hard times. There is a ministry for those who do not have this kind of call; but the standard for the pastoral ministry within the Church of the Nazarene is this high calling. It is a spiritual calling, which originates within a person's spiritual relationship with God. It is a reality which makes professional issues, important though they might be, merely secondary.

It is easy to say that "God has called me." Many people who are no longer in the ministry started out professing a call. The test of the call is not in the professing, but in the faithfulness to the demands of the call.

Question 1 “Am I Really Called By God?”

Supervising Pastor’s Perspective

You are now familiar with the material in the above section. The candidate for the ministry whom you are assisting has read through it and probably is eager to ask you questions about it.

This segment of *The Sourcebook* is intended to help the candidate come to terms with his/her call to professional ministry. It has emphasized the importance of obedience and faithfulness as a prerequisite to licensing. If the candidate is not presently living obediently, faithfully and victoriously, it will be your first task to lead him/her into that level of spiritual living.

As the candidate’s pastor, you are the most vital link between him/her and God. You need to be willing to explore the issues of obedience and faithfulness in the candidate’s life and to discuss those with him/her. This is an exercise in spirituality, not curiosity. It demands some structured time, and a definite commitment from you and the candidate to spend at least an hour each week together. If the candidate cannot or will not invest that time, you have a strong indication that he/she is not suitable for the ministry. In order to explore the basic implications of the question of “The Call” you and the candidate will need to commit an hour each week for about three months. It is important that the hour be structured to allow for a sense of God’s presence to develop. You should prepare, and expect the candidate to prepare, for the hour to be a spiritual encounter.

You should plan, during the early part of the three month period, to share your testimony regarding your own call. As time goes on you will find opportunity to refer to your own experience as illustrative of things you are teaching the candidate. Prepare your testimony carefully, keeping in mind the various stages you went through in sensing, accepting, and affirming the call.

You should plan to explain the increasing importance of obedience and faithfulness in the life of the future minister. Obedience to the call is crucial, yet it is not a separate issue from the broader issues of obedience in the candidate’s life. Similarly, faithfulness to the call must be portrayed as merely one aspect of the total issue of faithfulness in all areas of the minister’s life.

By the end of the three month period, you should have gained a fair degree of spiritual insight into the candidate’s understanding of his/her call. You will probably have developed some sense of the candidate’s relationship to God, family and the church. You will probably come to an accurate understanding of the level of obedience and faithfulness with which the candidate is living in each of these relationships.

All of this insight will have been gained in the context of the deep, mutual spiritual commitment characteristic of the best pastoral relationships. It is insight which does not come easily or naturally, but which is absolutely essential if the candidate is going to mature spiritually while preparing for the ministry. That commitment and that insight will enable you, at the end of about three months, to make some informed pastoral recommendations concerning the candidate’s potential for the ministry. You will have the

freedom, the right, and the responsibility to either encourage the candidate to pursue a district license, or to delay that application until later.

It is important to remember that no one else within the denomination has the privilege, the opportunity, or the right to do this work. If you, the candidate's pastor, do not do it, *it will not be done*. The entire system of ministerial recruitment and development within the Church of the Nazarene rests on the assumption that the candidate's pastor has done this work of spiritual formation with the candidate.

The District Board of Ministry, acting on behalf of the District Assembly, will help you in your evaluation of the candidate's suitability. Members of the Board will provide an objectivity which you will surrender, to some extent, in your commitment to the candidate. Yet it is you, the candidate's pastor, who has the opportunity and responsibility to help him shape his response to God.

Jesus used the major part of his time in his earthly ministry working with a few disciples. He chose as his priority the shaping of their souls for future ministry. As a pastor, an overseer of souls, should your priorities be the same as His?

Question 1 “Am I Really Called By God?”

District Board’s Perspective

The District Assembly has elected you to represent its interest in guiding and preparing candidates for the ministry. The people of the district have an abiding interest in the quality of the spiritual life of people who offer themselves as candidates for the ministry.

Our representative system of polity places upon you the responsibility for the evaluation of candidates for the ministry. The members of the District Assembly have the right to ask questions of candidates before granting a license or electing them to elders’ orders. It has become the custom, though, that the Assembly forgoes that right in faith that the members of the District Board of Ministry have asked the questions which represent the lay people’s interests as well as the clergy’s interests. It is important, therefore, that you as board members ask questions of candidates that are the kinds of questions that lay people would ask if they were given the opportunity. As experienced ministers you are inclined to see the candidate from your own point of view. You are tempted to evaluate his potential on the basis of his acceptability to you, particularly, and other clergy, generally.

The only lay person in the meetings you conduct to interview the candidate is the candidate him/herself. As representatives of the District Assembly, you are not free agents. It is important that you remember whom you represent when you interview the candidate. In this role, you represent God *by representing the lay members of the assembly* (*Manual* par. 226-31.4).

Questions that you ask the candidate should be simple, clear, friendly and spiritually guided. They should be “leading,” open-ended questions that give the candidate the opportunity to express his/her spiritual aspirations.

The first issue which should be raised in every meeting with the candidate is his/her current spiritual experience: is this candidate spiritually active *now*.

What is God doing in your life today?

What did God do for you in your devotions this morning?

What did you learn? What did you feel? What did you do?

A second area of questioning should be past experience:

Tell us about your conversion.

Tell us about your call.

Tell us about your quest for the in-filling of the Spirit.

How have you been faithful in your ministry as a lay person?

Have you led anyone to salvation this year?

Who are the unsaved people that you are presently trying to see converted? (name them)

These questions, and many others like them, can help the candidate to recognize, right from the start, that being a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene means being spiritually and evangelistically involved in the lives of lost people.

Your responsibility as a board is to initiate and maintain the focus on “soul caring” and “soul winning” in the development of the candidate in the pastoral ministry.

Question 2 “Am I a Doer or a Thinker?”

Candidate’s Perspective

The biblical basis of the work of the Nazarene pastoral minister is the invitation and command of Jesus to “follow me.” Again and again in His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke these words. The call to the first disciples and to the most recent disciples is the same: it is a call to action.

As a candidate for the pastoral ministry, you are called to be a “doer.” You are called to be involved in action, not merely contemplation. Jesus said to the sons of Zebedee, and to Simon and Andrew, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:16-20). The story of the New Testament (and the Old Testament) is the story of people who were “doers.”

Of course, thinking and doing cannot be separated. You are not called to act without thinking. As a candidate for a minister’s license, you are going to be examined, not merely on the basis of what you think, but also on the basis of what you do.

Much of your formal preparation for the ministry will be directed toward helping you to learn to think clearly about people and their spiritual needs. You will study books, scriptures and other people’s thoughts and lives. You will be expected to successfully write examinations, complete courses of study, and learn to think in specific ways. Yet behind all these processes is a very basic assumption: these courses, books, and processes are not ends in themselves; they are means to an end. They are steps in sharpening your skills in the practice of ministry.

The District Board of Ministry has been elected by the District Assembly to oversee the preparation of your mind for ministry. It is responsible for helping you learn to think the way Nazarene ministers think. That involves learning scripture, learning doctrine, and learning about historic Christianity and how the Church of the Nazarene fits into the historic church.

This Board will exercise the right and the responsibility to guide your thinking so that you will be an informed representative of the Church of the Nazarene, capable of continuing the mission of that particular church. Of course, the Board cannot tell you what you have to think on any subject; but it can, and will, help you to know what you think; and it will assure that the only people who are licensed are people who understand Nazarene thinking and who have adopted it as their own.

The District Board of Ministry is elected, also, to oversee your development in ministerial activity. It has the task of helping to shape your ministerial activity to enable you to become an activist for the Christian Faith as practiced in the religious life of the Church of the Nazarene. The Board’s interest is not so much in what you think as in what you are doing in ministry. This Board will expect you to be involved in doing Nazarene ministry while you are learning about ministry.

When you are called to meet with this Board as a candidate for a District Minister’s License, the board members will be interested in both aspects of your development. First, and most important, they will want to know what you are doing in ministry. They will be looking for signs that you are an “activist”; a person who gets satisfaction from getting things done. They will want to know to whom you are ministering, whom you are evangelizing, and how you are doing it.

The second thing the Board will want to know is what you are learning. They will want to know that the things you are learning are structured to help you in your practice of ministry. In other words, they want assurance that your activity drives you to learn more about how to effectively practice ministry. The members of the Board have been in the ministry long enough to know that no amount of learning will ever cause a person to begin to minister. You will be expected to start with the activity of ministry, and then look for the cognitive knowledge to help you to minister more effectively.

Pastoral ministry begins in doing ministry. When the time comes for you to apply for a minister's license and, later, for ordination, the Board will be looking for assurance that you are practically prepared in ministry. No matter how good your academic records are, you will not be considered appropriate for a license if you have not an equally solid background in ministerial activity. You will need to show that you are actively and successfully involved in the practice of ministry, under the direct supervision of your Nazarene pastor (or a pastor appointed by the District Superintendent). The basic preparation for the pastoral ministry is the practice of ministry. It is an active involvement in doing the work that Jesus would do; it is being actively involved in the lives of others at a spiritual and personal level.

Question 2 “Am I a Doer or a Thinker?”

Supervising Pastor’s Perspective

It is very important that you get the candidate involved in active ministry immediately. As soon as a person declares an interest in becoming a minister, you should get him/her involved in ministry activity. This should take place as part of your personal discipling of the candidate, something you practice with the candidate.

If the candidate has been active in witnessing, calling, and/or visitation, you merely need to ensure that he/she continues. The temptation that every active candidate will face will be to assume he/she has to quit what he/she is doing now to prepare to do something different. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The basic activity of ministry is the same for ministers and for lay people. It is winning souls by active caring for souls. You will need to insist that the candidate spend even more time in active ministry while preparing for the pastoral ministry. Should the candidate protest that he/she does not have time to study and continue his/her ministry, you need to insist that the activity is more important than the study. If one or the other must suffer, the activity must be given priority.

If the candidate has not been involved in any kind of evangelistic ministry, your first job will be to get him/her into active ministry. The ideal would be, within an hour of when the candidate informs you of his/her call, for you to take him/her on an evangelistic calling assignment outside the local church. There is no time to lose! Your first contact after the candidate has declared that he/she is called, is vital. The person who has just recently accepted God’s call is very impressionable. His/her first impression from you should be one of the activity of ministry.

Don’t give him/her a book to read to learn how to do evangelism. That will immediately establish a bias away from action. Books, lectures, discussions, and sermons are all cognitive devices. They have their time and place, but this is not it!. Before a called person reads anything about evangelism, witnessing, or discipleship, he/she must be involved regularly in these activities under your direction.

No later than twenty-four hours after you know about a person’s call, you should arrange to take him/her into an evangelistic ministry situation. Your instructions for the first time should be simple: “Be pleasant, be alert, watch, and listen. We will discuss what happened after we are done.”

After the first such visit, the candidate will have a desire to do more of the same. Discuss the call openly with the candidate; answer any questions he/she has; ask the candidate to recall the details of the visit for you. Judge whether or not the candidate has been spiritually sensitive, alert, and observant. Assure yourself that the candidate has understood what has happened in the encounter.

After several such visits with you, the candidate will be eager to be more actively involved in the evangelistic calling. Allow him/her to have an increasing role in the calls, as he/she matures spiritually. As the candidate learns to be more comfortable in this context, you can make some directed attempts to have him/her participate more actively in the visit. First, a short prayer, later, a carefully prepared testimony, and later still, some active part in leading the conversation.

By this time, the candidate will begin to ask specific, informed questions regarding procedure and the interaction of evangelism. Only when he/she is deeply committed to the process of personal evangelizing and regularly involved in it, should you recommend any books on the subject. The point is, evangelization is action, not knowledge: it is “doing,” not “preparing to do.”

As the candidate works with you in this evangelistic activity, he/she will be looking for encouragement and feedback. He/she will want your approval and support, but also your guidance. Don’t deprive him/her of either. You must avoid a critical spirit, but avoid laxness as well.

When you have to correct the candidate, do it gently and lovingly and in a “spiritual context.” A spiritual context can be defined as a time and a place when you are both experientially aware of the presence of God. In that context, you can share your observations without any danger of doing spiritual harm. This must always be done in the debriefing, after the visit is completed.

When the time and place are right, you can help the candidate to shape a lifetime commitment to fruitful ministry, by gently, yet firmly bringing his/her need for growth into focus. Yet you cannot leave the spiritual context to chance. Your regular meeting with the candidate will provide the scheduled opportunity to create the spiritual context.

It is in your hands to shape the candidate’s ministry as a “doer.” If you do not expect the candidate to “do ministry” as part of his/her local church commitment, he/she will never become committed to activity. There is no one else in the denomination who has the right and the opportunity to have this influence on the candidate. If you don’t, no one will!

Question 2 "Am I Doer or a Thinker?"

District Board's Perspective

As you represent the assembly in interviewing the candidate, you will need to remember what it is like to think as a lay person. What are the concerns that lay people have that they expect pastors to be competent in addressing? What would they ask this candidate if they were here?

If you have been a pastor more than ten years, you will likely have much difficulty in formulating issues that are important to lay persons. Yet, as representatives of the assembly, it is your job to discover such issues and to bring them to the attention of the candidate. It would be helpful to interview assembly delegates to discover what they are looking for in ministers.

Question 3 “Whose Interest am I Serving?”

Candidate’s Perspective

As Nazarenes, we are committed to the principle that our ministers are called *by God*, not the church, to serve God and the church. As we have seen, the accepting of the call is a very personal response to God and is thus, unique for each person. No two people have the same relationship with God; no two people have exactly the same call.

Yet despite the uniqueness of each call, there are similarities among Nazarene pastoral ministers. We recognize that not all people who are called by God to be pastors are called to be Nazarene pastors. Our pastors are called by God to be pastors as defined and understood by the Church of the Nazarene

When we ask the above question, the simplest answer is, of course, “I am serving God’s interest. God has called me. I have accepted His call; therefore, whatever I do is for God.”

As a starting point in answering the question, that is a fairly good response. As you consider a lifetime of ministry, though, you will recognize that answer as incomplete. Unless your answer becomes more clear and better defined, you are predestined to a lifetime of frustration and inadequacy in ministry.

Particular people are called to serve very particular interests on behalf of God. There are different functions within the Church, all of which, at some level, are of use to God.

As a candidate for the Nazarene pastoral ministry, you must learn very early that you cannot serve all of God’s interests. You are, in fact, called to serve very few of God’s interests, and to serve them in a very specific way. You are called to serve God in these activities, to give your whole energy to them, to protect them from encroachment of other interests, to promote them actively and aggressively.

Many things will compete for your time and energy as you prepare to become a Nazarene minister. Many voices will compete for your attention, each saying “God wants you to be involved in this.”

God has many errands to be run in this world, and many tasks to be accomplished. No one person, or organization, is called, or equipped to do them all. God calls people and organizations to faithfully work in accomplishing particular tasks and errands. He has called the Church of the Nazarene and its ministers to do some things, and by implication, to not do others.

Many good causes will press themselves upon you in the course of your preparation for ministry and in your lifetime of ministry. Your ambition will make its demands upon you, but you will need to bring your ambition under the Lordship of the call of God.

Society will make its demands, as will para-church groups, political groups, intellectual groups, humanitarian groups, compassionate ministry groups, and others, too many to mention. You will need to be so sure of your calling, and the specific things which God wants you to do, that you will resist other pressures and do what God has called Nazarene ministers to do.

The pastoral minister in the Church of the Nazarene is called primarily to serve God by leading the church in meeting the spiritual needs of the lost people of the world. As a Nazarene minister, it will be required that your daily activity and your preparation—spiritual, practical, and academic—focus on this interest *above all else* (*Manual, 2001-2005*, par. 401-401.4).

Other interests will, of course, require some level of involvement as time, preparation, aptitude, opportunity, and need arise. It is vital, though, that these other things be secondary. If they begin to command a significant portion of your time, they will do so at the expense of your calling to the Nazarene ministry. The Nazarene minister is called to save souls by caring for souls!

John Wesley's final instruction to his preachers as he sent them to their tasks was: "You have nothing to do but to save souls. GO!"

Question 3 “Whose Interest am I Serving?”

Supervising Pastor’s Perspective

As you work with the candidate, you will begin to recognize when he/she is finding it difficult to focus on the implications of his/her call. One of the things which will become apparent to the candidate is the focus of your own ministry. This can be very threatening to you, or it can become an opportunity for spiritual enrichment for both of you.

Share with the candidate your own passion for souls. Share with him/her your victories and your frustrations in fulfilling your call. Again, it is crucial that this type of sharing take place in a spiritual context (as defined above, “a time and a place where you are both experientially aware of the closeness of God”). Help the candidate to see the lines of connection between your activity and your calling. Of course, if you cannot see the connection, do not pretend; use it as an opportunity for growth.

It would be helpful to the candidate if you made a list of the demands that are placed on your time which are not related to your calling. Again, the spiritual context is vital; do not allow it to degenerate into a “pity-poor-me” encounter. Make sure you have personal victory over the situation before you try to help the candidate with this struggle! A simple listing of the para-church organizations which are asking for your support will speak eloquently; even a short list for a city church these days runs to about fifty organizations.

Help the candidate to see clearly that obedience to the call of God means on-going obedience, and that on-going obedience means daily choosing. The life of the ministry is a life of choosing “the best” when “the good” seems more attractive, and easier. The minister cannot do everything, but can, and must, do the most important thing with reference to God’s Call. For the Nazarene minister, that is finding lost people and helping them to connect with God.

Question 3 “Whose Interest am I Serving?”

District Board’s

Perspective

The goal of this section is to help the candidate to develop his/her ministry in a way which is consistent with our denominational mission.

Nazarenes are called to a particular ministry. It is our responsibility to use our questioning to help the candidate become “focused” for effective and fruitful ministry that contributes to the fulfillment of our God-given mission.

Question 4 “Why Should People Follow Me?”

Candidate’s Perspective

The Nazarene pastor is called to be the leader of a church community. That statement may seem self-evident, but it is worth emphasizing. The Nazarene pastor is called by God to be a leader in ministry!

There are many kinds of leaders, who have many kinds of followers. There are very few things that can be said about *all* leaders. Perhaps the only thing of value which can be said about all leaders is that *all leaders have followers*. If a person has no followers, he/she is not a leader.

What is true of leaders is also true of followers. Not every follower is the same. Very few things can be said about *all* followers. One of the only things which all followers have in common is that they follow a leader for some reason. While the reasons differ, the fact that there are reasons remains constant.

As you prepare for ministry you need to ask yourself the important question, “Why should anyone follow me?” If you are to be a leader, you will need to have established clearly in mind your reason for expecting people to follow you.

Social scientists tell us that people follow a leader for one of two reasons; they follow, either because of some unique characteristics of the leader as a person, or because of the characteristics of the office the leader holds.

Within the Church of the Nazarene, the expectation is that every minister will earn a following because of his/her *personal spiritual qualifications, character, and manner of life* (Manual par. 401).

A minister in the Church of the Nazarene is expected to develop the kind of life style and personal characteristics which make it reasonable for people to follow him, because of the kind of person he/she is. The Nazarene minister is called to be a very specific kind of person.

In the process of becoming a minister, you will undoubtedly achieve some other types of qualifications. You will become educated to some extent, you will acquire social and political skills. You will hold the office of pastor, or some other office within the church. You might “gain the world” in management skill or academic accomplishment; yet no matter how far you go in these, or fall short of them, your authority as a leader is rooted in your spiritual qualifications, your character, and your manner of life.

There will be times when you find that you are the pastor of someone who is smarter than you are, wiser than you, better educated than you, more articulate than you; you may even find people who know the Bible better than you do, who know church history, or theology better than you do. You will undoubtedly find people who have more power than you.

When confronted with such people, you need to know why people like this should follow you. They will not follow because you are the pastor, nor because you know better than they do; if they follow at all it will be because you are called by God and know God’s will for the church. The quality of your spiritual characteristics and your manner of life makes it easy for them to see that God is working in you and through you: you are not self-serving in your decisions; you are working for your Master.

As a Nazarene pastor, you are called not only to do some particular things, but also to be a particular kind of person. People who meet you know that you “march to a different drummer.” You serve God, not man or self. You are a leader because people sense God in your character, your life, and your action.

Question 4 “Why Should People Follow Me?”

Supervising Pastor’s Perspective

There are many temptations which the candidate will face as he/she evaluates his/her life as a potential leader. The first of these temptations is the assumption that because the candidate feels called, people will automatically accept the validity of that feeling and follow where the candidate leads.

We recognize the reality of the call of God, but we realize also that many people feel called who will never develop the skills and character necessary to be a leader. As you work with the candidate you will need to emphasize the fact that potential leaders have to earn the right to lead by developing the characteristics of spiritual leadership outlined above. Holding the office of pastor will not provide a sufficient mandate of leadership for a person who has not developed the characteristics and lifestyle of a spiritual leader.

A second temptation will come in the tendency of the candidate to assume that “being spiritual” is enough to deserve a following. The candidate must be in the process of becoming a spiritual person, but he/she must at the same time develop leadership skills by action and by cognitive learning. The pastoral leader who will earn a following will have the kind of personal characteristics which inspire spiritual confidence, but will also develop the skills and knowledge about leadership which give form to his/her maturing spiritual competence.

A third temptation will be related to an assumption that spiritual maturity comes in a momentary, instantaneous experience of grace. You will need to give direction and supervision to the candidate to help him/her to understand, our doctrinal position: purity comes in an instant; spiritual maturity comes as the product of a lifetime of spiritual commitment to obedience.

Be prepared to discuss, to explain, to direct the candidate to the word of God to help him/her understand the distinction between purity and maturity. If you do not patiently and pastorally guide the candidate into this practical application of holiness doctrine, he/she will probably never understand it.

Question 5 “How Do I Persuade Followers?”

Candidate’s Perspective

There are four basic means of persuasion available to leaders who wish to increase their number of followers. A leader may attempt to persuade others by means of authoritarian persuasion, rhetorical persuasion, intellectual persuasion, or spiritual persuasion. Each of these has the potential to influence people to become followers.

There are times when every leader will resort to each of these means of persuasion. Sometimes, in a variety of situations, leaders will depart from their normal means of persuasion, and slip unconsciously into any of the other patterns. The point we would make, though, is that every leader develops a means of persuasion which is normal for him/her.

Authoritarian persuasion may take one of many forms. It may underlie any of the other forms, almost as a basic assumption. Ministers, generically, seem very prone to using this form of persuasion.

In some churches, authoritarianism takes the form of raw political power: “might makes right.” In its most blatant form, it asserts: “Salvation comes through the church; we are the church; you do as we say, or we will withhold salvation.”

In other churches, authoritarianism can take the form of Biblical literalism: “Salvation comes through the Bible; I understand the Bible better than you do; therefore you must do as I say.” The ingenuity of individuals in adapting authoritarianism to particular situations is one of the constants in church history.

Rhetorical persuasion involves persuasion solely on the basis of emotion. Lloyd Perry states that this form of persuasion is rooted in “an appeal to the emotions, biases and opinions of the follower.” Evangelistic preaching and methods are often assumed to be rhetorical, especially if they include emotional elements.

Intellectual persuasion is based in the belief that followers are, or should be, obligated to follow that which makes sense, and is rational and logical.

Rudolph Otto has suggested that above and beyond these categories is spiritual persuasion. It is, in essence, unlike any of the other forms of persuasion. It operates specifically within the relationship between individual people and the Holy Spirit of God. It is totally unlike any other forms of persuasion, both in its mood and its motivation.

Spiritual persuasion recognizes the specific work of the Holy Spirit as revealed in John 14-16. It affirms that ultimately, in the Church, it is the Holy Spirit who persuades. This is persuasion which eschews the lower forms of persuasion, convinced that the appropriate spiritual qualifications, character, and manner of life in the minister will create a sense of God’s Holy presence. It is this presence of God which causes people to follow.

In preparing for pastoral ministry, you need to be constantly growing as a person who persuades others spiritually. It is not something you can pretend to have; it is not something you can gain quickly or easily. It does not come from a book, nor does it come to you through your mind.

The ability to persuade people spiritually develops slowly, as the unconscious product of your close fellowship with God. Other people will probably recognize it in you before you do. Spiritual persuasion is the by-product of your relationship and fellowship with God. It is a reflection of spiritual maturity. It exists only in proportion to your level of spiritual maturity.

Your meetings with the district boards will be some of the best early indicators of your growth in spiritual maturity. The Board of Ministry will question you concerning your knowledge of ideas; the Board of Ministry will be interested in knowing about your growth in spiritual maturity and activity. Doctrinal issues will increasingly become part of their inquiries. The church teaches, and you will be expected to teach, that purity comes in a moment, but maturity is a lifetime quest. You will need to know, and demonstrate in your own personal life, the reality of the distinction.

As a pastoral minister, you will need to demonstrate continually that you are a leader in spiritual maturity. Your ability to persuade spiritually is dependent upon that kind of leadership. You are called to spiritual maturity so that you may lead others **to spiritual maturity in Christ.**

Question 5 “How Do I Persuade Followers?”

Supervising Pastor’s Perspective

The observations and recommendations in the earlier section on leadership, are important here as well. The issues pertaining to leadership and to persuasion are related closely to one another. One of the pressing issues which recurs again and again in the ministry, is the issue of tools of persuasion.

As the candidate’s pastor, you have the unique opportunity to help shape the means of persuasion which the candidate develops as a basic style. You need to become conscious of your own persuasive techniques and assumptions. You can ask the candidate, and others, how they see your leadership. Listen carefully! There is much to learn about persuasion if you are to assist the developing candidate to become a persuader for the gospel.

The importance of this section in the development of the candidate cannot be overemphasized. The spiritual development, formation, and commitment of the candidate will have life long influence on his/her competence as an evangelistic minister. Evangelism means persuading people to follow Jesus. How that is done is crucial!

Question 6 “With What Do I Work?”

Candidate’s Perspective

We have established the fact that ministers are “doers” of a particular kind of activity which we have defined as ministry. We have proposed that professional ministers are not only “doers” of ministry, but also leaders of others in ministry. In short, we can say that ministers are called to be workers as well as leaders.

Every worker works upon something. A carpenter works upon wood, shaping it, forming it, joining it with other materials until it is useful for some particular purpose. Working with wood is the carpenter’s trade. In the same way, tailors work upon fabric, accountants work upon financial records, and physicians work upon people’s bodies.

You, as a candidate for the ministry, need to ask yourself, what do ministers work upon? Until you think seriously about it, you may think the answer is obvious, yet the more you consider the question, the more you realize the need for a consciously developed answer.

At the most practical level, in your day-to-day activity as a minister, this question presents itself relentlessly and insistently. What are the raw materials of your trade, the things which you fashion and shape into new and useful form?

Because of the nature of the activity of ministers, the options are almost limitless. You can work today with books and apparently be doing your work. Ministers must read! You can work with ideas or thoughts and assume that you have done your work. Ministers must think! You can find yourself totally occupied with church structures and programs and, at the end of the day, feel that your work is progressing successfully. Ministers must administer!

As a minister, you can find many things to work upon. We cannot even begin to list them all. The nature of life in the ministry is such that no one can choose for you the things which you will work upon. You must choose, and in fact, will choose daily.

The pastoral minister in the Church of the Nazarene is not free to choose arbitrarily his/her day-to-day activity. The responsibility and activity of the pastor are outlined clearly in *The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*. Part V-II-J of *The Manual* covers all the responsibilities of the pastor in the discharge of his/her duty. It is absolutely vital that you know this section of *The Manual* thoroughly.

While *The Manual* leaves to the individual pastor, the development of an appropriate balance of the mandated activities, it does presume that the pastor, above all else, works upon the souls of people.

The Manual makes it very clear that a Nazarene minister is called by God to the day-by-day care of the souls. The pastor who has a ready-made congregation has the primary responsibility of care for the souls of those people who make up the congregation; but equal to that obligation is his/her responsibility to the lost people who are not yet redeemed and part of the Church of Jesus Christ.

In order to care for souls, the pastor must expend some energy in the maintaining of various levels of the church organization. Souls are not adequately cared for until they are integrated into a community of believers. Yet maintaining the church organization is merely a means to the end of caring for souls.

If the pastor neglects the direct care of the souls of the “lost” and the “found” he/she is not fulfilling the call of God for a Nazarene minister. You are called to work upon the souls of people. They are the raw materials of your trade. If you do not shape them, form them, lead them, and transform them, you are not fulfilling your call.

Question 6 “With What Do I Work?”

Supervising Pastor’s Perspective

As you share your work with the candidate, there are several things which you will need to keep in mind. First, and most important, is the fact that your work habits and priorities will have more influence upon the candidate than any other factor in his/her ministerial development.

The things you do, the way you spend your time, the things you emphasize or neglect will all be interpreted and, to some extent, imitated by the candidate. If you are to have a positive influence on the candidate’s preparation it is very important that you understand clearly your own ministry and priorities.

If you learn to talk freely, again, within a spiritual context, about the things which you do well and the things you do not do so well, you can make significant progress in helping the candidate to become everything that God calls him/her to be. In so doing you can help him to understand the weaknesses in your own ministry, and even to transcend them.

The Gales Commission Report has highlighted the fact that the next generation of ministers will need to be different from the present generation, if the Church of the Nazarene is to contribute to the evangelization of Canada after the year 2000. As a front line representative of the former generation, you will need to prayerfully and honestly help the candidate to develop skills and priorities which are different from yours. This takes a level of spiritual maturity and selflessness which can only come from a fresh touch of God upon you and your candidate.

If you are already skillful and active in talking with people, both saved and unsaved, about their souls, you will need to share, visibly and regularly, that activity and priority with the candidate. If you are not skillful and active in this ministry, you will need to make a prayerful and concentrated effort to become competent. You cannot send the candidate out to try something in which you are not involved. Even if you are unskilled or not competent in this activity, you need to do it with the candidate.

Skill and competence come in response to the activity, not in response to learning about the activity. If you do not practice the personal care of lost souls in the presence of the candidate, he/she will never learn to do it. You are his/her pastor. If you can avoid talking with people who are lost about their souls, the candidate will do so as well.

Second, you need to recognize that people tend to become what they think they are expected to become. Your expectations concerning the candidate will be almost as influential as your example.

If your example is good and your expectations are high, there is no limit under Heaven to the work which candidates will attempt for God. If your example is weak and your expectations are high, you will be written off as a hypocrite. If your example is weak and your expectations are low, you will be judged irrelevant. There is no substitute for a willing example accompanied by high expectations. The candidate is competent in virtually nothing regarding ministry. Everything he/she does will require involvement in new activity for which he/she feels unsuited. Your personal willingness to attempt things in which you are not yet competent will be an example which will lead the candidate into the same kind of courage. Without that example, he/she will try to do little!

There are two types of influence which demand special caution. There is an increasing tendency for pastors to see themselves as scholars. It is almost inevitable, when so much of the preparation for the ministry has involved study, and so much of the pastor’s work is done in the study, that candidates for the ministry feel the need for scholarship.

You cannot afford to downplay the need for good study habits in the candidate. If the candidate does not become a good student, his/her ministry will be stunted and inadequate; yet study is not ministry! Study is preparation for ministry, but no amount of study at any level will make a person a competent minister. Ministry is action! You need to ensure that for every hour spent in study, the candidate is spending at least an hour in ministry.

The second caution is regarding administration. As a pastor, you need to administer the policies and programs of the church. You are the overseer of the local church, and are responsible to the district for the proper administration of the local church in accordance with the Church's mission. But administration is not ministry!

You need to take special care not to influence the candidate to become basically an administrator. Superintendency is a distinctive and important part of our polity. Every pastor has superintending functions to perform in the course of his/her duties. But the priorities of a pastor cannot be the same as those of a superintendent. The pastor must, above all else, be active in the direct care of souls.

Question 7 “Where Do I Work Today?”

Candidate’s Perspective

This question is related closely to the previous one, yet raises some separate and distinct issues. John Wesley’s vision of the world as his parish had clear implications in his day, yet those implications have been, for the most part, abandoned by ministers today.

For Wesley, as for the early Nazarenes, there was no boundary which defined and restricted the appropriate work place, for his preachers. Preachers were sent out to find lost souls, wherever they were, and to preach the gospel to them.

Ministers, including Nazarenes, have become conditioned to think of their main field of service as being defined by the boundaries of their local church and its constituency. There has developed, especially in Canada, a strong sense of territoriality, of reluctance to offend other denominations by offering a better ministry to their people.

Wesley, in his day, and Bresee a hundred years later, each faced the wrath of other churchmen who could not provide the spiritual service which they were offering, but were unwilling to let their people benefit from it. As an evangelistic Nazarene today, you will face the same kind of pressure.

The place of work of the Nazarene minister is not his office, his church building, nor even the homes of the few people who have accepted the Lordship of Christ and joined to form that particular local fellowship. Jesus sent His followers out to find the lost wherever they were. He sent the disciples into the towns and villages where people were starving for spiritual food. He ignored previous religious boundaries and announced that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Eighteen hundred years later, Wesley did the same; a hundred years after that, Bresee sent preachers on the same mission.

If you wish to be a Nazarene minister today, you will need to have the same vision. You will need to develop a passion for lost souls which leads you beyond the safety and lethargy of a comfortable office and a predictable congregation. There has never been a better time to go to the lost people of Canada.

Fewer Canadians are being spiritually fed than ever before in our history. The so-called evangelicals and professed non-evangelicals are locked in a power struggle for control of the reins of secular power. Neither group has grasped the immensity of the opportunity to feed hungry souls. Everywhere we look, there are lost people crying out for spiritual care without political strings attached.

As a Nazarene minister, you will encounter spiritually lost souls every day of your life. If you wait to get them into a church service or into your office to try to feed them, you will be as unsuccessful as every other minister who is using that approach. That is the approach of virtually *all* Canadian ministers of all denominations! It is not sufficient to call yourself an evangelical. It is entirely possible to be called evangelical, and to fit comfortably into the Canadian evangelical community and be totally passive in your ministry! If you are to be a Nazarene minister, you must become militantly evangelistic. You must be willing to go where the lost souls are, and persuade them to become followers of Jesus.

Question 7 “Where Do I Work Today?”

Supervising Pastor’s

Perspective

The care of souls within the church is probably second nature to you now. As a pastor, you have learned how to visit people in their homes, in the hospital, at the funeral home, in your office, and in those unexpected moments around the church. You have a valuable ministry within these boundaries which you cannot afford to neglect. But ministry within the church is only a small part of the total ministry of Nazarenes.

As you meet from time to time with the candidate, you will need to expose him/her to total ministry, not just ministry among believers. We have already suggested the importance of getting the candidate involved in evangelistic personal ministry as the first step in preparation. You need now to emphasize that personal evangelism is not just an entry-level activity which ministers outgrow. It is the very heart of the ministry, at every stage of life, in every kind of assignment within the church.

Personal involvement in evangelism outside the boundaries of the present church is an essential part of the fulfillment of God’s call for the lay person, the pastor, the district superintendent, the general superintendent, the college professor, the college administrator, and the missionary. You never outgrow the call to involvement in evangelism if you are a Nazarene minister.

Again, we need to admit, in all honesty, that Nazarene ministers have not modeled this very consistently in recent generations. We have not been good at moving beyond the church boundaries into personal evangelism. It can become very intimidating for you to suggest this lifestyle for the candidate if you are not practicing it yourself. There is only one appropriate solution: you need to become involved and lead the candidate into this ministry through your personal involvement. If we are going to produce change in others and in our institutions, we need to be open to change within ourselves.

Question 8 “What Did I Accomplish Today?”

Candidate’s Perspective

The work of the minister is very different from other kinds of work. Much of what you do is unseen by any human eye. Occasionally, Jesus likened it to planting seed and waiting for harvest. Some of your work will grow underground and only be seen after you have gone. If we emphasize this analogy, though, we miss the dominant imagery of Jesus in teaching ministry activity to His disciples.

Jesus called His disciples to be “fishers of men.” He spoke of “harvesting” more frequently than of planting. He spoke of “shepherding the flock,” and seeking those who became lost from the flock.

We know very little about the Biblical time frame for planting and waiting for the harvest; we have very little idea of how long it takes the crop to grow before it is ready for harvest. What is clear, though, is the time frame for harvesting that which God has planted, for catching the fish which is fully grown, and for finding the sheep who have wandered away. Jesus says the fields are ripe unto harvest *now!* The fish are in the sea *now!* The lost sheep must be found *today!*

For the Nazarene minister, the harvest time is today, and the time for review is daily. Have I fulfilled my call today? The essential effectiveness and value of your ministry will be assessed a day at a time, on the basis of what you did today.

A “once and for always” acceptance of God’s call is an essential step in your ministry, but it will not fulfill your call. Your life story will be written, not in terms of what you set out to do, but in terms of what you did each day of your ministry. To accept the call but neglect the work of the ministry is one of the very specific dangers of which Jesus warned. (See the parable of the two sons and the vineyard, Matthew 21:28 ff.). As a minister, you will be confronted daily with many things to do. You will find it impossible to do everything which purports to be necessary. Many things will seem urgent every day of your ministerial life. Some will be more important than others, but all of them will press upon you with an equal claim of urgency. In terms of your call, very few will be of eternal significance.

The greatest challenge you will face every day of your ministerial life will be to do what you are called to do, to focus your energy and talents on what God had called you and gifted you to do. As a minister in the Church of the Nazarene the primary activity of ministry is to care for lost souls and bring them to Jesus.

The Church of the Nazarene is seeking for ministers who understand this to be their calling from God. Those persons who know the call of God and who are willing to obey that call unconditionally will find themselves reviewing every day with this singular question: What did I do *today* to obey God’s call and bring lost souls to Him?

Question 8 “What Did I Accomplish Today?”

Supervising Pastor’s Perspective

The challenge of leading a candidate into focused, accountable ministry is before you. It is a challenge, for it involves, for most of us, a transformation of our own ministerial priorities. Changing the direction of our denomination will not come easily. It will not come without sacrifice, without a radical abandoning of our work to God.

At this point, it will be most helpful to deepen your own commitment to a daily review of your call. Ask yourself these questions, and openly, honestly evaluate your own ministry. You can best help the candidate by bringing to your ministerial relationship with him/her a spiritual transparency which shows you to be open to change. Within a spiritual context, talk about your call and some of the frustrations you have experienced in fulfilling it. Pray with the candidate and alone, in your most private devotions, that you can keep focused on the mission to which God has called you.

Question 9 “Who Am I?”

Candidate’s Perspective

The Church of the Nazarene occupies a very particular and narrow range within the spectrum of denominational emphases. We are not called to be everything to everyone, in the way which the catholic denominations perceive themselves to be. We have a very particular mission which is different from the mission of other churches.

Our pastors are not called to be a pale imitation, or, for that matter, even a bold imitation, of Anglican clergy, United Church clergy, or any other clergy. Our *Manual*, our doctrine, and our tradition make it clear that our ministers are, first and foremost, preachers, in the primitive Methodist tradition. Our activity consists of persuading people who are lost to become believers in Jesus and followers of His way.

Who is a Nazarene minister? A professional who is recognized for his/her adherence to all of the rubrics of the clergy sub-culture? A scholar who is known for his/her competence according to the canons of the academic world? An ecclesiastical politician who knows and pulls the strings of power within the church? An agent of social control who assists the government in enforcing the prevailing social mores?

As a Nazarene minister, you may be, to some extent, any or all of these things, but in essence, you are none of them. When asked, “Who are you?,” your natural answer should be something like this:

I am an activist for the Gospel, sent to the lost people of this world. I serve God by persuading the lost to become followers of Jesus Christ, and then to become part of the religious community I lead. Within the community, I provide for their spiritual care. I teach and train them to become effective and fruitful members in the Kingdom of God.

Question 9 “Who Am I?”

Supervising Pastor’s Perspective

One of the objectives of the Commission on the Ministry has been to influence the context within which the prospective minister is confronted with these questions, and to ensure that the answers offered are consistent with our mission as a church. We need to recognize that these are not open questions: There are “right answers” from the point of view of our mission as a church.

We need to recognize that people tend to become what we expect them to become. Prospective ministers do not make these decisions *ex nihilo*. They tend to respond in the way which they think they are expected to respond. Thus, whether we consciously influence their choices in order to accomplish our church’s mission, or passively influence them without regard to our mission, we are still influencing the way prospective ministers respond to these inevitable questions. It must be our conscious intent and motivation to assure that we fulfill our mission as a church in Canada and around the world. The effectiveness and the success of the church in fulfilling its mission rests, more than on any other human factor, in the hands of the people who will be its ministers in the next generation. God will choose them! We must be attentive to preparing them to continue the work He began in the Church of the Nazarene.

Course of Study

**ACADEMIC
PREPARATION**

Preferred Paths to the Ministry

The Church of the Nazarene since its very beginning has been committed to the concept of an educated ministry. In this regard Nazarenes are somewhat out of step with much of evangelicalism and, even, some segments of the Holiness Tradition. While we are not blind to the danger of reducing ministerial preparation to mere ministerial education, we recognize that to function effectively in Canada a minister needs both the best in ministerial training and the best in ministerial education.

It is thus assumed, that the normal path to preparing for the professional ministry in Canada will be for a young person to enroll in Canadian Nazarene University College, complete a degree program over a period of three or four years, and then enroll in Nazarene Theological Seminary to complete the formal educational requirements for ordination.

If the candidate is in their teens or early twenties and have not completed a university degree, it is expected that they will take the necessary steps to enroll at Canadian Nazarene University College and follow the normal path of educational preparation. Failure to do so will seriously jeopardize their potential usefulness in the Church of the Nazarene Canada.

For enrollment information contact:

**Admissions Office
Canadian Nazarene University College
610, 833 4th Avenue S. W.
Calgary, Alberta, T2P 3T5
Phone: 1-403-410-2000**

If the candidate is an older person, or is from a different cultural background, they could still benefit greatly from study at Canadian Nazarene University College. They should discuss this with you, or the District Superintendent, to receive guidance on this important issue.

Alternate Paths

Each of the Canadian Districts has currently in operation, programs for candidates for the ministry who do not fit into the above categories. If the candidate is a student whose native tongue is not English; or if they have sensed a call from God later in life; or one whose calling is to serve among people of another language or cultural group, they should contact the District Superintendent for information on such educational programs.

Candidate's Responsibility During Education

Whatever approach the candidate takes to pursuing academic preparation it will be their responsibility to remain active and fruitfully involved in ministry during the entire process.

If they are a young student at Nazarene University College with no previous involvement in ministry activity, they will need to become involved in the lay ministry of one of the local churches and prove their effectiveness and fruitfulness before they can be advanced in the ministerial preparation program. If the candidate has read this far in

this workbook and are not presently active in lay ministry, they should go back to the beginning page and start over.

If the candidate is a mature candidate and feel that they need to set their ministry aside while doing academic work, they must reconsider that feeling. **Academic work will only have significance as it is applied in the real world of ministry activity.**

Course of Study

In keeping with the action of the 1997 General Assembly as reflected in **Manual** paragraph 424.3, we have accepted the mandate that all ministerial preparation and other aspects of ministerial development will be evaluated on a behavioral outcome basis. The following table of competencies is the standard by which we will measure the adequacy of a persons progress in ministry development. It is important that the candidate continually consult with his or her mentor or course instructor seeking feedback on tangible evidence of competency in these areas.

COMPETENCY OUTCOMES (*Module Course titles are italicized*)

Old Testament History and Literature (*Telling the Old Testament Story of God & Tracing the Story of God in the Bible/Biblical Theology*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to identify the literary structure and main story line of OT
Ability to identify the books of the OT by genre
Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the OT
Ability to identify the main characters of the OT and their role in the story
Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the OT
Ability to chronologically order the main events and persons of the OT
Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the OT

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Specialized study in sections or individual books of the OT
Ability to discuss the significant issues in OT theology
Ability to identify and illustrate appropriate ways of relating the OT to the NT
Ability to use the OT in preaching, teaching worship and spiritual formation in theologically separate ways

New Testament History and Literature (*Telling the New Testament Story of God & Tracing the Story of God in the Bible/Biblical Theology*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to identify the literary structure of the NT
Ability to identify the genre and basic thrust of each NT book
Ability to summarize the significant life events of Jesus
Ability to summarize the significant life events of St. Paul
Ability to summarize the basic themes in the message of Jesus
Ability to summarize the basic themes in the message of St. Paul
Ability to describe the impact of the historical background of the NT on the message of Jesus
Ability to describe the impact of the historical background of the NT on the message of St. Paul
Ability to arrange chronologically the significant events and persons of the NT
Ability to identify and describe the major theological concepts of the NT

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Specialized study in a range of individual NT books and authors
Ability to discuss NT theology

Hermeneutics (Interpreting Scripture)

Minimum Competency

Ability to describe how the Bible came into being
Ability to identify the historical, literary and theological steps used in NT exegesis
Ability to accurately exegete a passage of scripture using the above steps

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to show how doctrine is developed from scripture
Ability to use exegesis to produce an expository sermon

Theology (Investigating Christian Theology I & II)

Minimum Competency

Ability to list and explain the Nazarene Articles of Faith
Ability to identify and explain the main characteristics of the nature of: God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the human person, sin salvation, the Christian life, the church, the sacraments
Ability to recognize and differentiate the major branches of theological endeavor
Ability to reflect theologically on life and ministry
Ability to demonstrate understanding of the sources of theological reflection, its historical development, and its contemporary expressions

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to demonstrate a biblically based and historically informed theology of worship
Ability to practice critical and constructive theological thinking
Ability to relate theology to cultural context
Ability to describe and illustrate the relationship between theology and philosophy

Ability to demonstrate acquaintance with systematic, historical, biblical theology,
Philosophical foundations of theology, philosophy of religion
Ability to demonstrate understanding of Christian apologetics

Doctrine of Holiness (*Becoming a Holy People & Exploring John Wesley's Theology/Wesleyan Holiness*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to articulate the distinctive characteristics of Wesleyan theology
Ability to identify and explain the doctrine of holiness from a Wesleyan perspective

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to teach the doctrine of sanctification: initial, gradual, entire
Ability to identify and differentiate the various Christian perspectives on holiness

Church History (*Examining Our Christian Heritage*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to describe the general story line of church history and the development of the major doctrines and creeds
Ability to identify and describe the significance of the major figures, themes and events major periods of the church history (Patristic, Medieval, Reformation, Puritan, Pietist, Wesleyan and Modern)
Ability to describe how the church implemented its mission in the various periods of church history

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Specialized study in periods and/or persons of church history
Ability to describe the life and practice of the church throughout its history
Ability to describe and explain the rise of Pietism, the Evangelical Revival, and the Great Awakening in the context of wider church history
Ability to describe and explain the development of North American church history including the rise of the Holiness Movement

History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene (*Exploring Nazarene History and Polity*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to identify the formative influences of the North American holiness movement and of the Church of the Nazarene
Ability to identify and explain the significance of the major persons and events in the development of the Church of the Nazarene
Ability to identify the directives of the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene that pertain to the organization and ministry of the local church and to the responsibilities of the pastor at the local and district levels
Ability to explain the governance systems of the church at local, district, and general levels

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to identify and explain the relation of the Church of the Nazarene to other Christian churches

Oral and Written Communication (*Communicating with Spoken and Written Language*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to communicate publicly through oral and written media with clarity and creativity for the purpose of creating understanding

Ability to write clearly and in a grammatically correct manner

Ability to speak coherently and cogently in the modes of discourse demanded in the various ministry contexts

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to deliver a quality presentation using multiple methodologies, media and materials

Administering the Local Church (*Stewardship of Church Management*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to develop and communicate a philosophy of ministry that will answer the question "why I do what I do when I do it"

Ability to provide spiritually disciplined leadership to a congregation using skills including goal setting, conflict resolution and administration

Ability to creatively manage ministry resources (human, time, financial, etc) in a way consistent with the church's mission, size and characteristics

Ability to articulate the purpose, mission, and culture of the Church of the Nazarene in a way which attracts and retains new members

Ability to develop team building skills, identify and cultivate the spiritual giftedness of volunteers, recruit volunteers, diagnose and intervene successfully in problem situations

Ability to appropriately manage personal and church finance

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to implement the essential elements in leadership theory: perception, Motivation, communication, organizational culture, problem solving, decision making, conflict management, power, change, effectiveness, situational leadership

Analytical Thinking (*Communicating with Oral and Written Languages*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to analyze, synthesize, reason logically to solve problems, live with ambiguity
Ability to analyze the validity of arguments and to identify their presuppositions and consequences

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to identify and differentiate the major philosophical projects,
i.e. ontology, epistemology, teleology, ethics

Preaching - Homiletics (*Preaching the Story of God*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to prepare and consistently preach sermons which successfully persuade people to become serious believers
Ability to prepare and consistently preach sermons which successfully persuade people to seek and find entire sanctification
Ability to organize, prepare, and deliver biblically valid sermons using skills and techniques in culturally appropriate ways
Ability to appropriately and consistently express pastoral care and concern for through a balanced and thoughtful preaching agenda

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to identify and differentiate various approaches to preaching such as deductive, inductive, narrative
Ability to organize and prepare sermons using various approaches

Pastoral Care and Counselling (*Shepherding God's People*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to appropriately and consistently express pastoral care and concern for individuals and families in times of crisis
Ability to appropriately and consistently express pastoral care and concern for individuals and families in the normal situations of transition in life
Ability to differentiate situations where pastoral counsel is appropriate from those which require other kinds of professional intervention and willingness to refer people when necessary
Ability to develop and maintain a network of contacts with professional counselors

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to apply the knowledge of basic counseling gained from the historic Christian perspective and appropriate modern models

Worship (*Supervised Ministry Experience*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to plan, lead, and participate in culturally and theologically appropriate worship services
Ability to plan and lead in culturally and theologically appropriate services for special occasions, (i.e. wedding, funeral, baptism, communion, etc.)

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to help a congregation to broaden its appreciation for Christian worship forms other than its own through teaching and explaining of Christian worship history
Ability to plan annually the worship and preaching agenda of the church to assure that all major areas of Christian doctrine are addressed, and appropriate attention is given to the Christian calendar
Ability to understand that special services (weddings, funerals, etc) are worship services and to plan services which are consistent with this understanding

Evangelism (*Declaring the Gospel of God*)

Minimum Competency

Ability and willingness to practice an evangelistically effective lifestyle which is consistently successful in persuading people to become Christians
Ability to develop a congregational lifestyle which makes disciples and assimilates new converts into the church

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability and willingness to engage in cross-cultural evangelism within the environs of the local church
Ability to teach and train congregational members in evangelistic activity

Christian Education (*Providing Christian Education for All Ages*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to envision, create and sustain a comprehensive Christian education program appropriate to the local church
Ability to recruit, train, deploy and motivate lay leaders in implementing the local Christian education program

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to understand and implement general educational theory as it applies to the Christian various age groups in the local church
Ability to engage in Christian education development in other locations and levels of the church, (i.e., District, National and General)

Personal Growth (*Becoming a Holy People/Doctrine of Holiness*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to articulate a personal philosophy of life ministry based on the *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development Canada*

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to demonstrate through bibliographical and personal spiritual journal record a continued involvement in spiritual development

Christian Ethics (*Living Ethical Lives*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to apply a basic understanding of the ethical commitments of the Christian Church, and especially the Church of the Nazarene
Ability and commitment to making theologically and biblically based ethical decisions, even in a complex and/or paradoxical situation
Ability to understand and commitment to practice the unique ethical demands which accrue to spiritual leadership in the church

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to foster personal ethical discernment in the life of the congregants to allow them to live the life of Christian holiness
Ability to foster collective ethical discernment in matters of social, economic and political morality

Spiritual Formation (*Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Way to Spiritual Formation*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to develop holy character by practicing faith formation and the classic Christian disciplines as means of grace
Ability to locate, understand, and use appropriate resources for individual and congregational spiritual formation
Ability and commitment to take responsibility for continuing spiritual development

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to identify major persons in the history of Christian spirituality
Ability to identify and explain the historical and modern movements of Christian spirituality
Ability to identify and differentiate the holiness movement's approach to spirituality from other Christian and non-Christian forms of spirituality
Ability to assist others in developing a plan for spiritual formation

Person of the Minister (*Exploring Christian Ministry/Introduction to the Ordained Ministry*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to demonstrate a realistic self-understanding including personal strengths, spiritual gifts, weaknesses, and character issues in need of further growth
Ability and commitment to maintain the practice of healthy self-care, including weekly day of rest, retreats, and appropriate vacations
Ability and commitment to practice faithful stewardship of personal relations including marriage and family, personal finance, and consistent professionally competent conduct

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies)

Contemporary Context and Social Environment (*Leading the People of God/Christian Leadership*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to identify and differentiate the culture of the local church from the wider culture of the community to affirm that difference in a constructive manner
Ability to identify and differentiate Nazarene church culture from other church cultures and to affirm that difference in a constructive manner
Ability to identify and differentiate Christian values from social, political, economic and other kinds of values and to affirm those differences in a constructive manner

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to constructively engage in the reforming of local church culture to make it more capable of engaging and influencing the broader community
Ability to explain the major themes, persons, and theories of modern sociology and psychology, and social anthropology
Ability to complete university level courses in literature, humanities, philosophy

Cross-Cultural Communication (*Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to describe and interpret the relationship between cultural behaviour and individual behaviour
Ability to accurately explain the general characteristics of cultures
Ability to identify and apply the basic principles of cross-cultural communication

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to accurately and compassionately communicate the Gospel to persons of another cultural background

International Understanding (*Communicating the Gospel in a Pluralistic World*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to identify the major issues and forces at work in the nations of the world at this time in history and, from a Christian point of view, discern the important from the trivial
Ability to relate the life and issues in the wider world to the life and issues of the local congregation

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to describe the human experience as expressed in literature, art, music, philosophy, culture religion and faith through the major periods of prehistory and history
Ability to identify and describe the significance of the major themes, events, and persons in the history of human thought

Missions (*Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*)

Minimum Competency

Ability to articulate and act upon the Mission Statement and vision of the Church of the Nazarene Canada as described in the *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development Canada*
Ability to motivate people to commit themselves to financially and prayerfully support the world wide mission of the Church of the Nazarene
Ability to understand and articulate the biblical, historical and theological basis for Christian mission
Ability to describe basic missiological principles and apply them to the life of the local church

Preferred Competency (all the above competencies plus those listed below)

Ability to portray the worth and attraction of Nazarene World Mission with a view to creating within young people a receptiveness to the call of God to a life in world evangelism
Ability to identify the key issues and trends in contemporary missions thinking and practice
Ability to understand the wide spectrum of Christian involvement in world evangelism and the unique role that the Church of the Nazarene contributes to that process

Curacy Phase

**LEARNING TO
PASTOR A
CHURCH**

Maturing in Leadership

Following the completion of the candidate's formal education, and before he or she undertakes any specialized role or category of ministry, he or she will be expected to serve a period of time as a pastor or associate pastor in a local congregation. During this time of maturing in ministry, their work will be carefully evaluated by a District Superintendent and District Board of Ministry to assure that the candidate is qualified for, and committed to, the global mission of the Church of the Nazarene.

During this time of curacy, the candidate will assume a much larger role in leadership in ministry. The District Board of Ministry will evaluate the candidate's development during this time, consult with the Superintendent and the mentor, and arrive at a decision regarding when the person should be ordained.

The minimum period of curacy is two years in a full time pastoral assignment. The Board reserves the right to extend that period of time as it deems necessary to be assured of maturity in ministry leadership. Candidates must not consider a delay in this timing to be arbitrary or in need of explanation.

The minimum period of curacy in a part time pastorate, or an associate ministry assignment is four years. Again, the District Board of Ministry is required by the Assembly, to have assurance of leadership maturity before it recommends for ordination.

The curacy period is not a waiting period. The requirement is explicit that the candidate will continue to grow and learn during this time, acquiring skills and knowledge "in the field" that cannot be taught in the classroom.

The agenda for this learning and growth is much more in the candidate's hands than ever before. The person must show the creative initiative to make the most of this time. The District Superintendent will be available to assist in surmounting particular problems, and to give occasional guidance and advice. But it is the candidate's responsibility as a pastor, to generate the spiritual energy to creatively sustain their own spiritual life, while having enough overflow, to lead the congregation.

Mentoring

At this stage in life and ministry, the role of a mentor grows increasingly important. It is crucial that the candidate develops a personal relationship with a mature pastor, who can help to gain perspective on the struggles being faced. A mentor is both a personal friend, and a professional advisor.

It is not reasonable to expect the District Superintendent to be the mentor. In some rare cases he might be, but that would be highly unusual.

Mentoring

Rev. Wesley G. Campbell
Canada Pacific District
Mentoring

MENTORING

In order to address the important matter of personal growth and development in a candidate who expresses a call of God to ministry, we suggest that strong consideration be given to assigning a mentor or spiritual director to each candidate. The task of the mentor will be to help guide the candidate in spiritual maturity and toward a better preparation for ordination.

MENTOR is from the name of the friend of Odysseus and the tutor of his son Telemachus. A mentor, by definition, is one who is an experienced and trusted friend and advisor.

It is the strong recommendation of the National Board Education Committee that at the time of granting a District Minister's License, The District Board of Ministry take responsibility to assign a mentor or spiritual director who will assist the candidate in the process toward ordination.

It is the desire of the National Board Education Committee that, during the early stages of solidifying and clarifying the call to ministry, the candidate have the assistance of a mature and gifted person who will take vital and personal interest in them.

THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR/MENTOR (Some Thoughts)

Richard Foster has observed, "In the Middle Ages not even the greatest saints attempted the depths of inward journey without the help of a spiritual director. Today the concept is hardly understood, let alone practiced, except in the Catholic monastic system ... the idea of the spiritual director is highly applicable to the contemporary scene." (*1)

What is the purpose of a spiritual director? Someone who is 'God's usher' leading another in God's way to discover God's calling and not his/her own. His/her task as a spiritual director is to lead another to their real DIRECTOR. He/she leads by the force of his/her own personal holiness. He/she relates as an advisor to a friend, the two are together learning and growing in the realm of the Spirit and in working out God's call upon their lives.

The relationship of the mentor/spiritual director to the candidate is just that – a relationship. A hierarchical or even organizational system is not essential to its function and is often destructive to it. (*2)

The spiritual director should be someone who has a comfortable acceptance of him or herself and exhibits a genuine maturity. He/she needs to be unjudging and unshakable. The care and love shown for the candidate as they work together must demonstrate itself in a 'tough love' that refuses to give approval to every whim or every excuse for low commitment. Yet they need to understand human nature enough so that they will not force the candidate to discouragement or defeat by being overly authoritarian.

"A spiritual director must be (themselves) on the ... journey and be willing to share their own struggles and doubt ... (each is learning from Jesus)." (*3)

PROCEDURE FOR MENTOR APPOINTMENT

- a. Board of Ministry reviews details of the person to be mentored (through a personal interview) at the time of granting of a district license.
- b. A suitable, gifted, available and willing mentor is chosen and assigned by the Board of Ministry at the time of licensing.

- c. This mentor should be one who has demonstrated not only gifts for pastoral ministry but who also exhibits ability to befriend, up-build and bring others to maturity through influence, instruction and modeling.
- d. This person needs to have a clear understanding of the role and responsibility of a mentor and be fully aware of the commitment and procedure required of both the candidate and him/herself.

PROCEDURE FOR MENTORING

- a. The mentor, when named and agreeable to the assignment, should proceed to inform him/herself as soon as possible, of the personal background and circumstances of the licensed candidate.
- b. At an initial meeting of discovery, a plan of process should be established and a covenant of responsibility and accountability entered upon.
- c. The expectation of the mentor for the candidate should center around four areas:
 - Personal devotional plan and habits.
 - Regular involvement in local church.
 - Progress in the prescribed course of study.
 - Active pursuit of practical ministry opportunities within the area(s) of the felt call.
- d. Regular bi-weekly or monthly meetings should be scheduled. These may be as informal or formal as mutually agreed. These meetings should be used for sharing by the candidate as to progress, for assessing progress in the process, and for direct personal guidance as deemed essential by the mentor.
- e. Semi-annual reports will be completed by the mentor and filed with the Secretary/Chair of the Board of Credentials and reviewed at mid-year and year-end meetings by the Board members in session.

As the process continues it is hoped that the candidate and the mentor will develop a significant relationship in which openness and candor will assist in bringing the one called to a higher degree of maturity.

While this overview of the mentor and mentoring process is not exhaustive, it may provide a platform for beginning that can be refined and expanded as it is applied.

While the intent of the Education Committee is not to overly complicate the life of the candidate and the mentor, it is our hope that, by following this process we can preclude the unfortunate drop-out and failure rate among those who initially expressed such enthusiasm for the call of God upon their life.

Copies of this suggested outline should be in the hands of all members of the Boards of Ministry on each Canadian District following approval by the National Board Education Committee and the National Board.

*1 Richard Foster, *The celebration of Discipline*, Harper and Row, New York (1978) p. 159

*2 Ibid. p.160

*3 Ibid. p. 161

Following are several sources for help in Mentoring, Spiritual Formation and Friendship.

Books:

- Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity. Eugene Peterson, Eerdmans Publishing company, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from the NT to St. John of the Cross. Row Publishers, 1978, San Fransisco.
- Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality. Kenneth Leach, Harper and Row Publishers, 1977, San Francisco
- The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life. Tracy, Freeborn, Tartaglia and Weigelt, Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, 1994
- Spirituality: God's Rx for Stress. Neil B. Wiseman, Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, 1992

Calling Distance

Cross Reference *Manual* Paragraph 401.5

A MENTORING NARRATIVE

By Kenneth Clair MacMillan

Chapter 1

Pastor Sam Duncan was at his desk shortly before noon on an October Friday. His office work completed, he was putting things away to head out for an afternoon of visiting. Just as he closed his briefcase the phone rang.

“Hello! Pastor Sam, this is Mike Wilson. I need to see you right away.”

“Hi Mike. What a surprise to hear from you today. I didn’t realize you were back in town. Is everything OK?”

“Yes, it’s never been better. But I need to see you as soon as possible.”

“Well, Mike, I’m heading over to the hospital to see someone in just a few minutes. Why don’t I stop by on my way and bring you along. I’ll be having lunch when I finish there. Let me buy you lunch and we’ll talk. Where can I meet you?”

“My new apartment is just across from the hospital. Why don’t I meet you out front when you’re done. Hospitals make me uncomfortable. We can go for lunch from there.”

“Sure,” said Sam. “I expect to be about forty-five minutes. I’ll meet you at the front entry to the hospital at twelve-thirty. See you there.”

Pastor Sam, as the people of the community had come to know him, had known Mike – or, more accurately, known of Mike – for just over six years. Mike had grown up in the church here in Hilburn, Ontario. His mother and father were lifelong members of the church, as their parents had been. Mike had caused his share of grief, both to his parents and to the church. Sam had vivid memories of long evenings praying, counseling and encouraging Bill and Kathy Wilson, Mike’s parents. It had been a relief to everyone four years ago when Mike had quit university in the middle of his third year and joined the Armed Forces. Now he was back. Why?

Sam Duncan was in the seventh year of his pastorate in Hilburn. He had come to this community of seven thousand residents, after serving four years in his first pastorate in Alberta. Most of the dreams which had fueled his activity in the earliest years of his ministry had been diluted with a giant dose of reality. At age thirty-eight he was already feeling he would never pastor a large city congregation, and be able to do the things for which his seminary education had prepared him.

Several of his seminary classmates already had made Senior Pastor at churches larger than this entire district. Two had been recently appointed as District Superintendents. The prospect of a move to a congregation that would advance his career seemed to dwindle each day he stayed in Hilburn, and the prospect of this congregation growing much larger than it’s current sixty-three seemed even more remote.

“Is this what God called me to?” he wondered. In his most private inner thoughts he found himself questioning it more and more. He feared talking about it with anyone, even – or especially – with his wife, Cindy. What would she think of him if she knew? ‘The Call’, and their love for one another were the only things that had not been shaken in the fourteen years of their marriage. Was he really doubting his call?

Inwardly he dreamed of getting more education. He felt that he needed to know more to work successfully, even in this little place. The problems in the church families, in the community and in the province were ever so much more complex than he had realized when he started. At thirty-eight he suddenly had more questions than answers. But the thought of going back to school, even part time was out of the question. It took every dollar he made to just get by from week to week. As his three children moved toward and into their teen years their education became more and more an urgent matter. At this moment, with these thoughts racing through his mind, it took all the spiritual energy he could summon to hang up the phone, close his briefcase, and prepare to go to the hospital for this visit.

Why was Mike back? Why did he want, so desperately, to see him on such short notice? Knowing Mike and his past, could it be anything other than trouble? Sam sighed, closed the office door, set the burglar alarm, closed the main church door and trudged to his car.

Sam looked critically at his nine year old Hyundai. It seemed to embody his whole life. It seemed as weary and dreary as he did. The broken shock absorber made the driver's side sag. He was trying to decide whether to get it repaired, or trade it in. Canadian Tire wanted six hundred dollars to replace the struts. They said it needed several other repairs to be licensed again. He and Cindy had talked it over. They hated to go ten-thousand dollars into debt again for a car, but, frankly, it was easier to come up with a three hundred dollar monthly payment on a new car, than to find six hundred to fix the old one. Money!

Forty-five minutes later, as he walked out the front door of the hospital, Sam saw Mike striding quickly toward him. Same old Mike. He'd recognize that smile anywhere! No matter how many hearts were breaking because of his shenanigans, Mike could always pull off the winning smile. Sam sized him up as he approached.

At six foot three, with his tanned complexion and shock of unruly blonde hair falling over his forehead, Mike was impressive. Military life had changed him some. The roll of fat that had crept around his middle during his undisciplined university years had disappeared. His shoulders no longer drooped, his beard was gone, as was his ponytail. His stride had a soldier's self-assurance to it. Same old Mike, yet somehow different.

Sam's mind flashed quickly back to their last encounter. At the station four years ago, as he boarded the bus for Toronto, Sam had watched Mike reject his father's hug and spurn his mother's kiss. When Sam had offered to pray at the departure, Mike told him to do whatever he wanted, but to leave him out of it! Then he was gone.

Sam had tried to keep in touch, first at Cornwallis, then later when he heard that Mike was transferred to Cold Lake, Alberta. He had written, as he did to all the young people from the

church who left Hilburn, but had never received a response. True to his promise, he prayed every day for Mike. But Sam had held little hope that his prayers would make any difference. Mike was bad news! He didn't even write or call his parents. But now, out of the blue a phone call, and a sense of urgency. The only thing Mike had ever been urgent about before was getting out of Hilburn. What could be up?

These thoughts flashed through Sam's head more quickly than it took for Mike to get to him. Sam, reflexively, held out his hand in greeting. Mike grasped it, and shook it warmly.

Mike spoke first. "I guess I owe you an apology for the way I acted the last time we were together. I could have handled that parting a little better, I guess."

"I guess you could have. But you know it was much harder for your mother and father than it was for me. Have you talked to them yet?" inquired Sam.

"Yeah," replied Mike. "I spent some time with them earlier this week. You probably noticed they weren't at prayer meeting Wednesday night. My bus arrived at five-thirty. By the time we had supper, it was too late for them to get to church, so we talked. We kinda patched things up then. It'll take time, I know, but I think we're on the right track."

They started walking side by side toward the A&W across the street.

"Well, Mike, what brings you back to Hilburn?" said Sam as they sat down in the corner booth by the front window. "When you left you made it pretty clear you wanted nothing to do with this place ever again. What changed your mind?"

"That's what I want to talk to you about, Pastor. God is calling me into the ministry. I've finally prayed through on it. I've been running from His call for years, so now I have come back so I can get started on the right foot. I guess I need your help to know where to go from here."

Sam couldn't have been more shocked if Mike had told him he had just returned from Mars! Mike Wilson called to the ministry? Impossible! Preposterous! Monstrous! What word would be right to describe such a travesty? After all he had put his loved ones through!

Sam 'bit his tongue'. Eleven years in the pastorate had taught him there are times when you don't speak your mind. This was one of them.

He answered. "Well, Mike, that's very interesting. How did this happen? I mean, I didn't think you were living anywhere within calling distance from God."

"I thought you might say that," replied Mike. "I do remember you saying a few things over the years. One of them is that God doesn't talk very loudly. The truth is, I've known for years that God was calling. I've kept Him at a distance because I didn't want to do what I knew he wanted me to do."

"What happened to make you change?"

“I guess I’ve had time to think, to grow up, if you will. The army has a way of doing that, you know. There was an accident on the artillery range. This young guy from Nova Scotia was a little too curious about what was going on. They warned us again and again that there were real bullets flying overhead. He forgot; he died, not two feet from where I was. I thought to myself, that could have been me!”

“I didn’t sleep for a week. I listened to God more during those days and nights than I have since I was in high school. I went to the chaplain first, then to my commanding officer. I told him I wanted to resign my commission. When I told him why, he granted it immediately. That was two weeks ago. I got home Wednesday evening and came to see you as soon as I got things on the right track with Mom and Dad.”

Sam was silent. He had never expected anything like this! With all his professed belief in God’s power to change the direction of people’s lives, he had never thought seriously about it applying to anyone he knew. Especially troubled young people – or troublesome young people like Mike. Where had he lost that, he wondered.

Mike broke into his reverie. “Well Pastor? Where do I go from here?”

Sam had prepared a thousand imaginary speeches for Mike since that scene at the bus station. He had thought out a dozen imagined scenarios in which they met again, and had a script prepared for each. Except this one! Mike Wilson called to the ministry?

“Well, Mike,” began Sam, “I guess the first thing is to get an accurate picture of where ‘here’ is for you. It has all happened so suddenly, I think you need to slow down and do some assessing of the entire circumstance. Where you go from here depends largely on where you are now.”

“I don’t understand,” responded Mike impatiently, “what do you mean by ‘where I am now’? I’m sitting across from you at a restaurant in Hilburn, Ontario.” Same old Mike, thought Sam ruefully. Always too quick on the draw for his own good.

“You need to be sure you feel that God is calling you, and not someone else. Second, if it is God, you need to get a clear idea of what he’s calling you to do; and third, you need to find out how to get to the place where you have gained the character and skill to be able to do what he’s calling you to do.”

Mike looked crestfallen for a moment. “You make it sound awfully complicated,” he faltered. “I thought all I had to do is surrender.”

“That’s the right place to begin,” continued Sam, touched by Mike’s sudden vulnerability. “Surrender is the hardest part spiritually; but it’s only the first step in a journey that covers many miles. It’s a step you have to take every day. Surrender to God’s will and plan must be renewed constantly if you are to survive in the ministry.”

Sam suddenly felt himself growing uncomfortable, as his words reminded him of his own thoughts as he left the office only an hour before. He breathed a silent prayer, then continued.

“Do you understand what I’m talking about, Mike?”

“Yes, Pastor, I think I do. I still get uneasy when you start preaching like that. What I was hoping is that you would show me what I need to do to take the next step. I have surrendered spiritually, and I know I have to go further. But I don’t think I can surrender for tomorrow until tomorrow comes. All I know is that the only thing I want to do for the rest of my life is whatever God wants me to do! Can you show me what I need to do today to make that possible?”

Suddenly Sam’s head was spinning. How long had it been since he, Sam Duncan, had been able to say with such conviction what this young prodigal before him was saying?

Mike took Sam’s hesitation as a sign of reluctance and continued. “For the past two weeks I have known God’s presence in a way that I haven’t experienced since the first year you were here as our pastor. Life for me was so simple back then. I had stopped believing I could ever get it back. But now that God is this close again I don’t ever want to run away from him again. Help me, Pastor, I want to do what God is calling me to do.”

Sam, moved by Mike’s earnestness, cleared his throat and responded. “I think we should go to the church and pray together. I have some things there I should give to you right away. Then I’d like for you to come with me while I go out to the jail and make a call. Let’s eat our lunch quickly and be on our way.”

An hour later they were driving into the church parking lot. Their talk over lunch had subsided into less serious matters. Sam, for the first time, was listening to Mike without preparing his next ‘speech’ to straighten him out. Several times as they chatted, Sam thought of himself at the age of twenty-four. Where had the enthusiasm, the simple faith, the love of God and love of life gone? Could he say today, that all he wanted to do in life was what God wanted him to do? He could rationalize all his priorities, his values and hopes and connect them to his service to God. But could he, in half-honesty, say that was his passion?

Their prayer at the altar of the church left Sam feeling even more uncomfortable. Mike prayed with fervor, lacking any degree of self-consciousness. Again, this time to God, he professed his total abandonment to what he perceived to be God’s will. Sam, on the other hand, prayed with caution, carefully choosing his words to try to make sure that Mike was unaware of the discomfort he was feeling within. Sam knew in his heart he had to spend some time alone with God before his prayer could be as simple, as unabashed as was Mike’s.

But Sam’s time at the altar was not wasted. As Mike prayed aloud, Sam’s silent prayer was probably the best he could have prayed. It considered two phrases: “Father, forgive me,” and “Please keep me from letting this young man down.”

When they went to the study Sam knew immediately what he needed to get Mike to do to take the next step to prepare to serve God. Sam suddenly felt inspired as he started to speak.

“Mike, I believe God has called you to serve him. When we met earlier, I wasn’t sure that He could use you – or even that I wanted Him to! I need you to forgive me for that attitude! Will you forgive me?”

It was Mike’s turn to be shocked!

“Of course,” he stammered, “I don’t blame you for being cautious.”

Sam’s voice faltered momentarily as he prepared to go on.

“We’ve all prayed so long that you would again listen to God. I guess I had given up hope that you would. I suppose I was being cautious. I was unbelieving, and I’m sorry. But I am glad that you proved me wrong. I have three things I think you should do to start to prepare for a life of ministry.

“Only three,” said Mike, excitedly, “what are they?”

“These are for starters,” continued Sam. “One of them you should be able to complete in a couple of days. The second will take you probably three or four years. The third will take you a lifetime. But it’s a start.”

Mike’s curiosity was piqued. Cautiously, he said, “Go on.”

“The first is fairly easy,” said Sam. “You could probably do it in a couple of hours, but I think it would be better not to rush. Take a couple of days and write your spiritual autobiography.”

“Spiritual autobiography?” queried Mike, bewildered. “You mean my personal testimony? I could probably do that in two minutes. Why take two days?”

Same old impatience, thought Sam, but this time not unkindly. That’s one he’ll have to work on. His words were more to the point. “I guess it’s something like a testimony – only more.”

“More? How, more?” returned Mike.

“I guess you could start with your first consciousness that God was speaking to you. Try to remember when it was, how old you were, what you believed he was saying. What did you feel, how did you respond, what was the outcome?”

“When you have finished dealing with your first encounter with God, go on to other meetings where you knew God was speaking to you. You might want to try to remember them all. It would be more helpful, I think, if you just choose ten or fifteen significant events.”

“Wow,” returned Mike. “I don’t know if my memory is that good. What if I can’t remember any? This seems pretty hard.”

“You’ll remember all right,” chuckled Sam. Then more seriously he added, “When you’re stuck, ask God to help you. He will!”

Suddenly Mike was more serious. After a moment of silence he asked, “This sounds pretty scary. There’s some stuff I’d rather not remember. Do I have to show it to you after I write it? I’m not sure I could do that.”

“No, Mike, you don’t need to show it to me, or to anyone else. God knows it all already. You need to write it so you will know how it looks to Him. I think it’s safe to say you’ve lived it all, but you’ve never looked at it as something outside yourself.”

Mike gulped. “How long should it be?”

“Just long enough for you to see who you’ve been, up to now, in your relationship with God. You need to see that just because you didn’t listen to Him, he didn’t abandon you. He has been there talking to you all along. You just weren’t living within calling distance.”

“Remember,” Sam continued, “when you were a kid and your mother would call you in. If it was for supper, you were always close enough to hear; but if it was to do your homework, or to do your chores, or to go to church, you always managed to be far enough away to be able to say, ‘sorry, Mom, I didn’t hear you.’ I guess you need to remember enough to see how you’ve done that to God.”

Mike, looking troubled, hung his head as he asked, “What is the second assignment. You say it may take three or four years?”

“I’m guessing,” answered Sam, “I really don’t know how long it will take. A lot depends on you and how you want to go about it. I’d like you to talk to a lot of people about what we’ve talked about today – about your becoming a minister.”

“That seems easy enough,” replied Mike, somewhat relieved. “Why should that take several years?”

“What I have in mind is this,” continued Sam. “As Nazarenes we believe that the Bible teaches that all people are called to do ministry.”

“Yeah, so you’ve been saying at the church for seven years. Too bad no one takes it seriously,” interjected Mike wryly.

Ignoring the interruption Sam went on. “As I was saying, we believe that all people are called by God to do ministry. That means laypeople and pastors. We also believe that God calls some people – like me, and, as you believe, like you – to be leaders in the church, to be pastors. We believe that the church’s responsibility is to examine people who profess to be

called by God, to see if that call is validated by gifts and usefulness. There are two stages in that validation process. The first is by the laity, in a local church. The second is by the people who are already pastors.”

“That makes sense,” replied Mike. “I had a sociology professor at university who used to say ‘a leader who has no followers only thinks he’s a leader’. Seems to me you’re saying the same thing.”

“I hadn’t thought of it in those terms, but I guess I am!” laughed Sam.

“So what’s the assignment?”

“I want you to go to a hundred people over the next three or four years and ask them what they think about your prospects of becoming a minister. Keep track of what they say, how you respond to what they say, and what you think you should do about it.”

“Whew,” groaned Mike. “I don’t think I know a hundred people. I’m sure I don’t know a hundred people who I’d trust to make a judgment on something this important. Gimme a break!”

“You’d probably be surprised how many people you know,” returned Sam.

“Our whole church only has sixty – on a good day! Where will I find a hundred?”

“God will provide the people. You just need to provide the will power to do it!”

“Where would I begin?” moaned Mike.

“I’ll print up a form on the computer before you leave. I’ll make a hundred copies and staple them into a booklet. Take it with you wherever you go. Just start talking to people: ask your family, your friends, people you used to work with, people you were in the army with. You have to talk to people about something if you’re going to be a leader. You might just as well start with this.” Suddenly, Sam was excited. “I think you’ll find, Mike, that once you get started you won’t quit at a hundred. I believe this is what God wants you to do.”

“What if people talk me out of my call?” worried Mike.

“I hate to say it,” answered Sam wistfully, after a moment’s reflection. “If they can, they should! If they can talk you out of it, the sooner they do it the better for you and for the church.”

It was Mike’s turn to fall silent. He hadn’t expected that response at all.

Sam, sensing the spiritual significance of the moment spoke softly. “Every day you live in the ministry of obedience to God’s will you will be faced with the temptation to take an easier way than what He’s calling you to. Sometimes it is not. Mike, you have to live with that fact. God

does not call us to cultivated opposition, but he does want to prepare us to be strong when it does come.”

“I’ll work at it. I think I see why I need to. What is the third assignment?”

“It’s a little less specific, but much bigger than the other two. I’d like you to make a commitment to spend your life learning everything you can learn about God and the way he works with people. This is a life’s work! Start tonight discovering everything you can in the Bible about God calling people. Buy a stack of note books. Come back in a week and tell me what you’ve found up to that point. We’ll look at your notes, discover the answer to your questions and look for more leads. Is it a deal?”

This assignment excited Mike. As much as he feared and dreaded the other two, he anticipated this one.

“Let’s put a booklet together for your assignments. Then we have a call to make!”

Half an hour later Sam and Mike were pulling out of the church parking lot, Mike grasping in his hand a newly made booklet. Inside were three sections, one for each of this first three assignments.

Chapter 2

Essex County jail always held a dreadful fascination for Sam. Something about the building, the façade, the fence, the gate – so open to outsiders and so closed to those most interested in it – had an almost hypnotic effect on Sam every time he approached. Something about the place made him shiver, even on a warm fall afternoon like today.

Mike had fallen silent since their initial brief conversation when they got in the car. In the thirty miles and minutes that followed he seemed lost in the inner workings of his mind. Sam was not offended. He cherished the moments he spent in the car, away from telephones, from unscheduled intrusions. He prayed his most lucid prayer in times like this.

Mike had been reluctant to come. His protests, that he didn’t know what to say in a jail, that he wasn’t dressed to visit, that the guards wouldn’t let him in because he wasn’t a minister yet, left Sam unmoved. Inwardly he was convinced that, if God was really calling Mike to the ministry, there was no time to lose in getting involved in ministry. The assignments he had made were necessary to get Mike’s mind moving in the proper direction; but Sam had been in the church long enough to know that ministry is not a matter of the mind. Ministry is activity, and no matter how well the mind is prepared to do ministry, it is the activity of ministry that gets things done for the kingdom of God.

“What would I say if I went with you?” pressed Mike. “I only told you two hours ago that God was calling me. Already you expect me to have something to say to criminals? That’s not fair.”

“Ministry, in essence, has very little to do with what you say,” returned Sam. “I don’t want you to say anything today. Be pleasant and friendly. If someone asks you something answer softly. I’ll do the talking. I want you to observe, to pray silently and try to get a feeling for what the prisoners are experiencing. Ministry is much more a matter of who and what you are than what you say.”

“Yeah, I’ve heard that line before,” sulked Mike, “What you are speaks so loud that I can’t hear what you say. That’s what bothers me. I know what I am! I’m not sure I want other people, especially prisoners to know! God has a lot of work to do on me before I’m ready for people to see the real me.”

For the second time in just a few hours Sam sensed the spiritual significance of the moment. He spoke gently, but decisively. “I know your fear, Mike, and I understand it fully. It’s a fear – or a temptation – you’ll have to face every time God wants you to do something for Him. The closer you get to God, the more you will realize that you will never be ready to do ministry if you wait to be content with yourself before you do it. Every fault and flaw that the enemy can bring to your mind, he will use to delay your practice of ministry. There is no better time to confront it than today.”

Mike dug his heels in deeper. “Why can’t I wait until tomorrow,” he protested. “There are people I can see and talk to then. Let’s go back to the church and pray some more. I’m learning to be comfortable doing that. What’s the rush?”

Sam was immovable. He knew the battle that Mike was fighting. If he lost it today, he would have taken the first step in developing a habit.

“The rush,” returned Sam, “ is simply that you have professed that God has called you to be a minister. He didn’t call the person you might be tomorrow, he called the person you are today, to do, under Him, what you can today. Whatever your preparation will be in the future, this fact remains constant: your activity must drive your learning, not vice versa. God called you, as you are, to do what you can now and to prepare to do better tomorrow. If you don’t do what you can today, more learning will be wasted.”

Mike fell into sudden silence for a few minutes. Sam was worried that he had pushed too hard. Would he be in the ministry today if someone had pushed him this hard the day he professed his call? Who knows?

Mike broke the silence. “I know you’re right. My football coach used to say the same thing. He’d look us in the eyes just before a game and tell us, ‘You don’t know everything you should know about this game. You don’t even know all you could know. But you won’t be tested today on what you don’t know, you’ll be tested on how well you do what I’ve taught you to do today! Just go out and do it.’ I guess I never connected what he said with anything in real life.”

Sam looked kindly at Mike, sensing the struggle that was going on within. He breathed a silent prayer, then turned to him and said, “You’ll do fine.”

Those were the last words that passed between them before they came over the crest of the hill and caught the first glimpse of the jail.

Mike gasped, then shuddered. He had never seen a prison this close before, had never even thought of walking through the doorway of one!

“Is this what ministers have to do?” he stammered. “How often do you come to places like this?”

“Today is fairly routine,” answered Sam. “I’ve been visiting this particular prisoner for over a year. His family is from the church I served back in Alberta. When he was arrested in London and sent here his father called and asked me to come and see him. I’ve called every week since. We’ll be here about an hour.”

“What did he do?” asked Mike, wide-eyed.

“It wouldn’t be appropriate for me to discuss that,” responded Sam. “If he wants to tell you, let him bring it up. It’s best not to be too curious in prison ministry. It is better to know too little than too much.”

“You say this is routine. I would have thought that going to the office and preparing sermons was routine! This seems, like, really heavy! Do you come here for other things too?”

“Our outreach group from the church helps with the chapel service when our turn comes up. That happens about three times a year,” answered Sam.

“Why bother,” pursued Mike, offhandedly, “you do the crime, you can do the time. I don’t have much patience with them. They’re getting what they deserve, if you ask me.”

Sam pulled the car into the parking space reserved for visitors. He turned to Mike, ignoring his last comment and said, “We should take a moment to pray in the chapel before we go up to see Nathan. He’s fighting a difficult battle today. We need to be prepared if we’re going to be able to help him.”

In the chapel Sam opened the large desk Bible to Matthew 25 and pointing to the text he asked Mike to read aloud from verse 31. In the unfamiliar phrases of Elizabethan English Mike read, first uncertainly, then with growing confidence,

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto

them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

As the last word reverberated in silence in the hollow space of the bare chapel, Mike sensed something he could not put words to: a sense of awe, reverence mingled with humility – something new and foreign to his being. Why had he never heard these words before? He had read the gospel often enough, but right now it seemed as if someone else were speaking the words to him, rather than through him.

Sam touched by the closeness of God’s Spirit, prayed more briefly than ever before. “Father” he began, “use us just as we are to help Nathan just as he is today. Amen.”

An hour later, as they headed back toward the main entrance, they walked in silence. Nathan had been so glad they came. Sam had hardly finished introducing Mike, when Nathan began to empty his heart before them. There was no awkward moment of questioning who Mike was and why he was here; Nathan simply accepted it and went on. Mike listened and prayed silently, still basking in the glow of God’s touch. Sam was compassionate and understanding. His words were gentle, full of forgiveness and mercy. Mike found it hard to reconcile this Sam with the image he had of a preacher, decrying sin and raging for justice. Is doing this a part of what God was calling him to do? How could he, hard-hearted Mike Wilson, learn to speak so tenderly to a criminal? God would have some real work to do on him if it was ever to happen. The humility he felt in the chapel returned, full force.

As they passed a cell-block in the West-wing, Mike, lost in his thought, was startled to hear his name called. He jumped, almost knocking Sam down.

“Mike Wilson?” the voice queried.

Mike looked into the cell at his right, where the voice seemed to come from. He stepped back in surprise.

“Stere? Is that you?”

“Yeah, Mike, it’s me. What are you doing here? I thought you were in the army or the air force, or something like that.”

“I was,” returned Mike, “until two weeks ago.”

“Well what brings you here, to the jail? You’re the last person I would ever have thought of seeing here.”

“Hi, preacher,” he continued, “I didn’t mean to ignore you. I just noticed Mike before I saw you.”

Mike hadn’t seen his friend, Stere, since he had left for university – it seemed a lifetime ago. Mike James, known to Mike Wilson and his friends as Stere, had been Mike’s best friend throughout

school. They had met in preschool, their friendship continued in grade school, junior high and high school. They were always together.

The nickname 'Stere' had come sometime in junior high. Someone had seen them coming and quipped, "Here come the two Mikes." Someone else had added, "Just like a stereo – two mikes." Everyone laughed and the name stuck. Mike Wilson, the larger and more popular of the two was Mike; Mike James, the side-kick, was Stere – short for stereo.

Later, when they played football, Stere started to use a performance enhancing drug. He called it his equalizer – it made up for his lack of size. The name took on a double meaning, Stere, short for steroid, and stuck. Sam never knew he had any other name when Stere was referred to in the church or community. He was the town bad guy.

"Hello Stere," he replied. "I hadn't heard that you were here, or I would have been in to see you."

"The old man has kept it quiet, I guess," answered Stere. "He always was ashamed of me."

Sam, not knowing what to say let the friends pick up the conversation.

"Well Mike," continued Stere, "what brings you here, if it's not to see me?"

When Stere had asked the first time a moment before, Mike was hoping he would let it drop, and not have to answer. No such luck. He swallowed hard and responded.

"I believe that God is calling me to the ministry. I'm here with Pastor Sam because he thinks I should be."

"You mean, God talked to you?" returned Stere amazed.

"Well, let's just say, I think that's what he wants me to do with my life," said Mike. "It's a long story. I guess I'm just checking it out."

Sam was pensive. Mike was taking his assignment seriously already. He breathed a silent prayer and remained still.

"I wish he'd say something to me," replied Stere, wistfully. "You always were the lucky one!" he added, just matter-of-factly, with no hint of bitterness.

"What do you mean?" inquired Mike. He was caught totally off guard. "Me, the lucky one?"

"That's just the way it was. Everybody knew it. Mike Wilson, born under the lucky star. Practically everybody in the school wished they were like you. It doesn't surprise me at all that God speaks to you. He always did, so it seems."

This response was completely unexpected. This conversation was not going where Mike had expected it to when he answered Stere's question. All he wanted to do was make a quick response

and a quicker exit. Suddenly he was in the middle of a conversation that made him terribly uneasy. Where could he hide?

He thought consciously for the first time of the assignment sheet that Sam had given him earlier in the day. What was the first question? It came to him.

“Stere,” he began, “I’m considering the possibility of preparing to become a minister. From your personal knowledge of me, do I have what it takes to be one?”

“You’re asking me?” returned Stere. “I guess I never thought you’d be anything else. Yeah, you have what it takes. All the guys knew you were better than us! Funny thing is, you’re the only one who didn’t think so. You worked so hard at being ‘ordinary’, while we worked so hard at being extraordinary, like you. I never thought of it that way until just now. That’s why everybody loves you! You were better than us, but didn’t act like you thought so!”

Sam stared in stunned wonder! Could Stere be talking about the same Mike Wilson that the church people thought they knew so well?

Again Mike was ‘knocked back on his heels’! Another answer he hadn’t prepared for. He continued with his second question.

“Are you aware of anything about me, Stere, that would make me unsuitable to be a minister of the Gospel?”

“You’re really serious about this aren’t you? I mean, about asking my opinion. I’m not qualified to comment on that Mike.”

“You have been my best friend for years,” answered Mike, moved by Stere’s earnestness. “I value your opinion.”

“Remember the year we won the county football championship?” began Stere, seeming to change the subject.

“Could we ever forget?” laughed Mike. “Great days!”

“Remember what happened after we won Essex County? How Coach Johnson set up the game with the city champions from Windsor? We went into the game as champions and came out as whipped puppies! We weren’t in the same league! We never should have played them. Coach Johnson said as much on the bus, on the way home. We should have finished the season when we won our league. We couldn’t compete at that high of a level.”

“That was a downer, wasn’t it,” answered Mike.

“You may not know it, Mike, but you’re like that. You’re in a different league from the rest of the guys that were our friends. You had fun with us, you played the games with us, you were one of us, up to a point. But you never got dirty!”

Stere paused for a moment, thinking. Neither Sam nor Mike hurried to interrupt his muse. Finally, he continued.

“You had a nick-name too, you know.”

Mike didn't know! He remained silent while Stere continued.

“One day when we were about fifteen, you were at our house. After you left my Mom got on my case real bad. ‘Why can't you be like him?’ she said, referring to you. ‘Mike this and Mike that,’ she was always saying. She used to say you were like Pat Boone, this singer from the fifties. Some of the guys heard about it and used to call you Pat behind your back. One day Mom said that Pat Boone had left singing to become a minister, and that you'd probably do the same someday. You might start out doing something else, but eventually you'd come to it.”

“You ask me my opinion,” concluded Stere, “this is it. There's nothing in the world you're more suited for! You're a natural.”

It was all so unexpected, Mike hardly knew whether to continue the conversation or get out. How could Stere, his best friend for so many years, have thought this way, and given no hint to him about it? Had he, Mike Wilson, been so self-centered that he didn't know how his friend was thinking and feeling?

One more question he thought, then I can try to change the subject. “Is there any advice you would want to give me about becoming a minister?” His voice was quiet, thoughtful.

Stere paused for a moment, before he answered. “I was never very good at taking advice. Maybe that's why I'm here, on this side of the bars, while you're there. I guess I'm afraid to give what I never could take! There is one thing. I've wanted to talk to you about it for years, but the time just never was right.”

Mike braced himself. He'd been feeling pretty good about himself up to this point. What was coming now? He held his breath, almost, as Stere continued.

“When I was little I used to cry myself to sleep about it sometimes. Our home was so different from yours; our life, our world, everything about it was so empty, while yours seemed so complete. It's not that you were richer or anything. We had the biggest house in the subdivision, Dad made the best salary around, so I hear. We went to the biggest church, had all the right social connections.”

“I don't know how to put it exactly,” he continued, “but I connect it to your church life, your faith. We only prayed in church, and we only went there at Christmas and Easter. At your house it seemed you were always praying and always going to church. It was like God was part of your family. He was included in everything.”

“You may never know how I wished I could get in on it too! I wanted to pray, to know God, to be good – like you – rather than just obedient. For a long time, I just assumed that some people were born good, like you, and some were born bad, like me; that you were stuck with it.”

“You say you know God, that he talks to you? I have no reason to doubt it. Would you mind asking Him something, for me? I don’t expect you to know the answer yet. You’re just starting out! But when you become a full-fledged minister, perhaps you could ask Him if there’s a way for someone like me to change and become someone like you? If there is, come back and tell me about it. If there is a way, then become the kind of minister that shows people like me how it’s done.”

Mike was speechless with dismay. All this time, he had never known what was going on in Stere’s mind. Those years of emptiness that Stere lived, while he, Mike, was trying to escape the fullness of his own faith. God, forgive me, he thought, that I never, even once, shared my faith with Stere. I hoarded it, like a miser, despising it even as I had it.

It was Sam who seized the moment. Pressing a gospel tract into Stere’s hand he asked if he could pray for him right there and then. Just as he said amen, they heard the warden’s voice on the intercom announcing the end of visiting hours. Pledging to return next week Sam and Mike made their way to the exit.

Chapter 3

The drive back to Hilburn was far different from the ride to the jail. The first five minutes were like a stunned silence. It would be hard to tell who was more surprised by the direction the visit had taken, Sam or Mike.

Sam was confused. Everyone in Hilburn Church of the Nazarene believed that Mike Wilson was a wicked, hard-hearted reprobate! He had earned the reputation through a lifetime of rebellion against his parents, his church and his community. The thought that it could be otherwise had never occurred to Sam, or apparently to the church.

Mike’s friendship with Stere James, was confirmation enough to sustain the reputation. Everyone, inside and outside the church, believed that Stere was a drug addict, and probably a thief. Stere and Mike ran together, and enough voices had repeated the old ‘birds of a feather...’ adage, that it was taken as self-sufficient truth! Neither of them would ever amount to anything. But now, this!

Stere’s matter-of-fact statement that Mike was better than the other guys, that he never got dirty was given with such a simple conviction, it seemed undeniable. Had people misjudged Mike? Had he, Sam Duncan, misjudged him too?

Mike was confused. He had always felt that he didn’t measure up to people’s expectations of him. Sunday after Sunday he had gone to church and come away feeling guilty and dirty. He had felt the sting of church people’s disapproval since he was in junior high. He had never thought of where it had started, it had just always been there!

He had assumed that Stere, and the other people he had gone to school with had the same attitude toward him. They were always into mischief of some kind, and every escapade had left him with a deeper conviction of his own badness. Now to discover that Stere, and apparently all his high school friends, had thought of him in a completely different way seemed unthinkable! Had he, Mike Wilson, misjudged himself – or had they misjudged him? Who was he, really? The Mike he (and the church people) thought he was? ... or the Mike his friends thought he was? Suddenly, he didn't know, and the lack of certainty was unsettling.

To further complicate things, which Mike was God calling?

Sam broke the silence. "Well, Mike," he began, "what did you think of your first pastoral call?"

"I really don't know what to think," Mike answered. "I feel more uncertain about what God wants for me than I have in weeks."

"What do you think about what Stere said," returned Sam. "Does he know what he's talking about? I mean, do you think he speaks accurately for your other friends?"

"I don't know," said Mike slowly. "Stere always seemed to know what people were thinking. He paid attention better than most, I guess. We used to joke about that a lot. Stere never said much, but when he did say something, people were amazed at how quickly he got to the heart of a matter. I don't know what to think right now."

"How many of your friends still live in Hilburn?" inquired Sam. He had a brain wave.

"I've been gone for almost four years," returned Mike, "I wouldn't have any idea!"

"Can you find out?" pursued Sam. "Earlier today you said you didn't know a hundred people. How many were on your high school football team? Twenty-five? Maybe thirty?"

"Actually," answered Mike, "there were forty-four. Not a big team, by some standards, but pretty good for a small town."

"How many people were in your graduating class?" continued Sam.

"A hundred and twenty-eight as I remember. What are you getting at?"

"You were the star player, both in football and in hockey, right?"

"Yeah, I guess you could say that," said Mike, a little flattered by the remembrance.

"How many teachers are there at the school?" Sam persisted.

"Something like thirty-five, counting the principal and office staff," answered Mike, somewhat uncertain what Sam was getting at.

“It would be a safe bet that most everybody in town would know you, or at least know about you back in those days?”

“What are you driving at?”

“I think you have some work to do, Mike. You seemed to be taken totally off guard by Stere’s answers to your questions. I have to admit, I was too! I was surprised that you even thought to ask them – I only gave you the assignment this afternoon. His answers make me believe you have a lot to learn about who you’ve been up to this point in your life. There’s no better place to start than with the people I’ve mentioned.”

“That’s the problem! I don’t want to go digging back into those relationships. There’s a lot I’d rather forget. Stere was my best friend; he might be a little prejudiced in my favour. I had some enemies too; they might have a different set of answers!”

“I have no doubt of that,” replied Sam, “that’s life; especially public life! A minister is a public figure, and every public figure has both friends and enemies. Some of your friends and enemies arrive quite late on the scene – you pick them up as you do your work. Some you earn, others you inherit. That’s part of living in the public eye.”

“Every child, every youth,” continued Sam, “makes a lot of mistakes. I did. You did too. Many of these mistakes are trivial, or seem to be. Some mistakes, though, may have had painful or devastating effects on people around us. I guess the best time to discover them is when they happen. The second best time is now! It’s better to dig them up now and make restitution, if possible, than to have them come up later, when they would be an embarrassment to you, your family and, if you’re a minister, your church. The best place to start is at home, with the people who know you best.”

Mike grew quiet and pensive. Stere was right, he thought. I never got into anything real bad. There’s nothing I can’t handle.

Aloud, he responded. “I’ll start tomorrow. I know God is leading me, so I can’t fail. I need your help, though. I never would have come with you today if you hadn’t insisted. Do you find that happens a lot?”

“What?” answered Sam, not following the connection Mike had made.

“You seemed to know that God wanted me to go with you today. I did go, and now I know it was what God wanted. Does that happen a lot, when you’re a minister?”

It was Sam’s turn to grow uneasy! In his heart he knew that the real reason he insisted was much more petty than Mike gave him credit for. At least part of his motivation was that he had wanted Mike to realize at the start, how hard it was to be a minister. It’s not all glory and power and prestige! It’s doing a lot of things you’d rather not do, just because they had to be done! What

better way to show him, than in a jail visit! It had never really occurred to him to question whether it was what God wanted. His answer was modest.

“I guess it rarely happens looking ahead. Things like this always become evident looking back. I didn’t know ahead of time how dramatically God would show that I made the right choice. I just felt, for a lot of reasons, that you had to get started in pastoral activity right away. I knew the only way to be fair to you was to include you in what I was doing. I had to make this call today – it’s not my favourite part of pastoring – I had made a commitment to do it. So the only way to do both was to have you come along. Turn’s out, looking back, it was God’s appointment. That part always happens!”

“I remember once you preached on that,” replied Mike, “from somewhere in Romans, I think. You said that ‘all things work together for good for Christians’ or something like that. I was impressed, and believed it! For a while it seemed to work that way. Then some things went pretty bad for me and I quit thinking about it. Perhaps I should take a second look now.”

“Romans 8:28.” offered Sam helpfully. “Read it again tonight and let’s talk about it tomorrow.”

The trip back to Hilburn had passed so quickly it seemed like only an instant. Sam pulled into the parking space in front of Mike’s apartment building as he gave the scripture reference.

Mike scrambled for a pencil, scribbled the reference on the top of the first sheet in Assignment #3, and turning to Sam asked, “You can make time for me tomorrow, then? I sure would appreciate it if you could! I have so much I need to learn.”

“Why don’t you stop in at seven-thirty in the morning and join me in my prayer time. I’ll be in the office. We can try to make some plans then.”

“Seven-thirty! I’ll be there,” said Mike, opening the car door. “See you then.”

Sam had issued the invitation before he had really thought about it. He had the feeling that he was being drawn into something which would lead he knew not where. Was he prepared to accept the implications of that?”

He liked to have control over his schedule. His seven years of pastoring in Hilburn had allowed him to develop a fairly comfortable routine. He worked efficiently and got a lot done by planning his days carefully and ruthlessly protecting his hours. Open-ended meetings, even with boards or committees were out of the question. Sam had worked out a timetable for all kinds of sessions, right down to his prayer life! The cornerstone of his life (after the Bible, of course) was his appointment book! How much time would Mike demand?

The sun was setting as he pulled into the driveway at the parsonage. He was a few minutes late for supper. Cindy would be understanding, especially since it was such a rare occurrence. He lived by his timetable. How would today’s events fit that schedule, or perish the thought, change it?

Chapter 4

When the children had gone to bed and were finally asleep, Sam and Cindy finally had a chance to talk. Cindy was in the living room, curled up with a book on the end of the sofa when Sam came in carrying two cups of coffee. Their evening treat, when the house had fallen silent and the busyness of the day had ceased, was to share the final moments of the day with coffee and solitude.

Cindy had been unusually quiet during the evening, as if something were troubling her. Sam had, to her seemed preoccupied and, perhaps, even troubled. Becky and Mark, at seven and nine years didn't seem to notice but Sarah, at twelve sensed the tension.

As Sam tucked her in after her story and prayers, she had asked if everything was okay. Sam kissed her lightly and assured her that it was.

"Just Friday," he had explained, smiling warmly. "Your work week is finished. Mine doesn't wind down until Sunday night. I didn't get everything done today that I needed to, so I guess I'm a little on edge. It's nothing to worry your pretty little head over!"

Sarah had accepted his explanation without further question and settled down to sleep. Twenty minutes later the coffee was brewed and Sam was bringing it to Cindy. Their time of day!

"I hear that Mike Wilson is back in town," began Cindy after her first sip of coffee. "I heard he spent the afternoon with you. Trouble?"

Sam was startled! How could Cindy have heard that? And who would have planted the idea that because Mike was back, there was some kind of trouble?

"Is that what was worrying you at supper?" asked Sam.

"Partly, I guess," answered Cindy, "but partly, I was concerned about you. You seemed so preoccupied, I thought there must be something to it. Is there?"

"Well, Mike is back, and yes I spent some time with him today; but I don't think it means trouble that he came to see me this morning."

"Mrs. Moors called about mid-afternoon. She said she saw you pick Mike up in front of the hospital at lunch time, and that her sister, out on Country Road 41, saw him with you when you went by on your way to the jail later. She said she knew you were on your way to the jail, because that's where you go every Friday afternoon. She said that Mike was with you because he got kicked out of the army for some criminal act, and was being sent to jail for it, and that you volunteered to take him. Oh Sam, what will Bill and Kathy do! He's caused them such grief already!"

Mrs. Moors, again! Unbelievable! Sam roared with laughter, almost spilling his precious coffee into his lap!

He caught his breath and turned to Cindy. "I'm sorry, Hon, but that is so like Mrs. Moors! One part observation to nineteen parts speculation! The only exercise she gets is jumping to conclusions! Yes, she saw Mike and me in front of the hospital, and, yes, her sister probably did see Mike with me on the way to the jail but it's nothing at all like she said."

"Why don't you do something about that woman," said Cindy with disgust. "She's always watching, but never sees anything the way it really is. We can hardly make a move in this town without her or one of her cronies, seeing it and twisting it up to make it seem like something that it isn't. I'm fed up with her!"

"She can be a bit of a pain sometimes," admitted Sam. "But she's really not all that bad. Sometimes she is very helpful – and she does almost worship the ground you walk on!"

"Why can't she just ignore me, like most people do," continued Cindy, "My life isn't all that interesting. I just get annoyed with the way she's always spying on you too."

"It isn't exactly spying," laughed Sam. "She is very supportive in the church, and I really do find her information helpful at times. That night the Thompson boy was in the accident. I knew nothing about it until she called; said she saw the ambulance pull in at the hospital. I managed to get to the emergency room before Jim and Brenda Thompson got there. You've heard them say often enough how much that meant to them. They've never missed a Sunday since! I wouldn't have heard about it until the next day if Mrs. Moors hadn't been 'snooping'. We've got to take the bad with the good; and there is more good than bad with her."

"I know," pouted Cindy. "I should be more tolerant. What's Mike doing back here, then?" said Cindy, returning to the original subject. She was somewhat relieved, but still a little perturbed that her afternoon of worry had been for nothing.

Sam told his story, starting with Mike's phone call that morning and concluding with the promise to meet for prayer the next morning. Cindy listened, wide-eyed and disbelieving. Mike Wilson called to the ministry? What kind of joke would that be?

As Sam reached the ending of his tale though, he became more serious.

"God is in this, Cindy. I have no way of knowing yet whether Mike will pay the price to do what God has called him to do; but I'm sure he has a call! Something deeply spiritual is going on within Mike Wilson. It seems bizarre, but it's real, none the less. I couldn't be more sure!"

"How can you be so sure after just one day," protested Cindy. "The fact that he's back here is proof that he can never stick to anything very long. First university, then the military; what makes you think he'll not drop out as soon as something doesn't go his way?"

"I pushed him pretty hard today," confessed Sam. "I was just as skeptical as you are when he called; but something is going on, and I think that God is in it."

“You’re taking this seriously aren’t you?” responded Cindy, all stridence gone from her voice. “Tell me why?”

“You remember last week when we were talking about some of the problems we have here in the church?” started Sam. “We were wondering if it was time to think about leaving Hilburn and accepting a church elsewhere. We agreed that we didn’t really want to go, but we both recognized there are signs that a change might not be bad, both for us and the church?”

“How could I forget,” answered Cindy, “I haven’t slept straight through a night since. You know how much I hate change.”

“That night,” Sam continued, “we asked God to give some clear indication about whether we should stay put. We talked about what ‘clear indication’ might mean, and agreed on a few things. Do you recall what they were?”

“Of course,” retorted Cindy. “The first was some sort of relief for our financial troubles; a salary increase, a rich uncle dying and leaving some money, a miraculous healing for our car... that kind of thing. I’m not holding my breath.”

Sam chuckled at the grim humor of it. Neither of them had any uncles, to say nothing of rich ones! No sense praying for your ‘ship to come in’ if you haven’t sent any out.

“The second,” she continued, “was an opportunity for you to take some continuing education without having to lay out any money. The third was some new project arising in the church or community that would give you a definite sense of accomplishment; some kind of proof that you are not just spinning your wheels.”

“We also thought about the other side of it,” continued Sam. “Some indication that we should move. We agreed that an unsolicited call to another church might be a sign we should leave. We pretty well left it at that, didn’t we?”

“Does Mike’s return seem like any of those things to you?” asked Sam after a few minutes of silence.

“It could be a new opportunity in the community,” returned Cindy. “It would be stretching to call it an opportunity in the church; I doubt that they’ll be waiting with open arms to take Mike back in. They aren’t ready to receive a returned prodigal, especially if it’s Mike Wilson.”

“Well, perhaps that’s the point,” answered Sam “I’ve thought for a long time now that the greatest hindrance to growth in this church is its unforgiving spirit. Perhaps God has brought Mike back, with this call on his heart, to force the church to make a change in its attitude.”

Cindy grew thoughtful. They fell silent again for a few moments before she spoke.

“This whole thing could mean trouble, you know. Bill and Kathy will be pleased, eventually, if it all works out to be God’s plan. I hate to say it though, but a lot of people won’t want to believe that their dire predications about Mike’s future are wrong. I don’t want to be a pessimist, but there will be trouble either way! Are you sure you want that?”

Sam hesitated, choosing his words carefully. “The only thing I’m not sure about right now is if I’m ready to make the changes necessary to be able to help him. It will mean changing the way I do things, changing my schedule, changing my work habits to make time for Mike. Having a disciple is a time consuming activity. He’ll never make it without help. I’m not sure I’m up to it.”

Sam lapsed again into silence. Cindy waited a moment before speaking.

“I guess no one can make that decision for you. If you believe it’s the right thing to do, I don’t see that you have a choice. That’s your calling, isn’t it, to help people to become what God wants them to become? If Mike can prove that what he’s doing is because of God’s calling, that he’s not just running away from another responsibility, I think you have to help him!”

“I know,” returned Sam, “But I’m wondering if it might be better for him to begin someplace else, somewhere where he doesn’t have a reputation, where people don’t know him and haven’t prejudged him. Perhaps the best way for me to help him would be to encourage him to go away to school and finish his degree. That way he would get a fresh start. I don’t think the church people will give him a chance.”

“Are you saying that because you believe it’s best for him or because it would get him out of your hair, and let you continue in your rut?” pursued Cindy.

Sam was startled that Cindy would put it so bluntly. It was her uncharacteristic frankness that hit him like a linebacker’s tackle! They had never used that word before, applying it to their life in Hilburn, but the starkness of its sound jolted him. Was he in a rut? Was he trying to avoid the opportunity to get out of it?

“Am I in a rut?” asked Sam, more troubled than hurt.

“You’re really good with words, Sam,” returned Cindy gently but firmly. “You used to use words to reveal your heart, your passion to people. When you spoke you would glow with the fire of the things you believed in. Your words would flow, and people would know what drives you, what makes you tick. The last couple of years, though, you seem to have changed. It’s like you are still good with words, but you use them to build a suit of armour to protect your heart from being hurt. You’ve started to hide your feelings in your preaching rather than reveal them.”

“You remember that picture of your grandfather,” she continued, “the one that was taken in the trench in France during World War I? We used to laugh at how much you looked like him; he was the same age in it as you were when we got married.”

“It was the day the war ended,” said Sam. “I couldn’t see the resemblance then as clearly as I can now. Yeah, I remember, but what has that to do with Mike and me?”

“Remember how he was laughing with the men in the trench, celebrating that the war was over? He had his hands outstretched like an umpire in a baseball game. He had scribbled the word ‘safe’ on the bottom of the photo before he sent it home to his mother. Sometimes, Sam, when I look at you in the pulpit now, I think of that picture. Your whole being seems to convey the message that you would rather be safe than open your heart to anything new. You guard your words to hide your dreams. You’re good at it, so most people don’t notice. But Sam...I think you’re in a ‘trench’ fighting to protect yourself from getting hurt.”

Sam was stung! Cindy’s words rang too true! Why had he not seen it before? Had it crept into his life so subtly, that he hadn’t noticed it? When had his dream faded? He couldn’t remember exactly, but he could recognize now, that it was gone.

“I believe that the church people will change their minds about Mike eventually, as long as he proves that he deserves it,” continued Cindy. “I hate to say it, but being a leader is not at all like being a Christian. Being a Christian is a matter of grace, without works; being a leader is, for the most part, works without grace! You have to earn the right to lead, you have to prove yourself each step of the way. Mike has a lot of earning to do, just to get back to ‘square one’ with the church people.”

“I guess I’ve never heard it put that way,” answered Sam defensively, “but you are right. Maybe that’s why I’ve become so cautious.”

“If he works hard at it,” Cindy continued after another pause, “I think there is enough grace in their hearts to give him a chance. The question is, Sam will you? Are you willing to take that risk, to change your priorities and schedule, to help him to become what you think God is calling him to? If you aren’t, he won’t make it; it’s that simple!”

“That’s putting a lot of responsibility on me, isn’t it?” replied Sam, somewhat defensively. “If God called him, it’s God’s job to prepare him. I can help, but I won’t take responsibility for him.”

“I don’t think you are responsible for him exactly,” said Cindy, “but I do think you have a responsibility to him. There is a difference. It seems to me that you already started to act on that responsibility when you made the assignments and took him with you to the jail today. What you’re questioning now is whether or not you will follow through on it. Only you can answer that. Will you pay the price to help him?”