

A PHILOSOPHY AND STRATEGY FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is designed to describe my personal philosophy and strategy of ministry in light of my calling, current ministry responsibilities and in anticipation of completing academic requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Biblical Studies (New Testament concentration) with Global University. This is a personal reflection representing the accumulation more than 20 years of pastoral ministry experience, over 30 years of preaching ministry and 26 years of academic pursuit. The journey began at the age of 14 with a call from God on February 6, 1972 to preaching ministry.

These reflections also represent my core ministry values, ideas, procedures, approaches and ambitions with respect to God's will for my life and ministry. They are connected to the roots of my original calling, what I have done to prepare for and pursue ministry, and with the shape and nature of my ministry as it is currently. My ministry now is the result of how the past has shaped my experience of God's will, and how the sense of God's continued leading influences the decisions I make today, including, but not limited to, how I intend to pursue continued personal and spiritual growth through further academic enrichment.

After engaging in preaching ministry on a more or less informal level after February 6, 1972, I was given the opportunity to attend undergraduate school in Greenville South Carolina. Accepting the invitation was the first formal step I took toward acquiring what would become one of the foundational principles of my philosophy of pastoral ministry, seeking the ability to independently, correctly and effectively interpret the Word of God with a view to living a godly life and communicating the Bible effectively to others for the purpose of teaching and encouraging discipleship. The decision to enter the United States to go to Bible school from the United Kingdom opened the door to full time pastoral ministry in a way that was not available in England at the time I left. From the time I graduated in 1983 I deliberately pursued ministry experience through pastoral assignment and further academic deepening through personal studies. Becoming aware that I needed more than I was getting through informal studies, I set my mind toward acquiring a graduate degree in an effort to shape the future, and in order to continue hardening the foundations of my present ministry.

My call to ministry came as the climax to a profound spiritual awakening which was the result of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit one summer, at youth camp in England. Nine young

people who had never heard of the Spirit Baptism before that summer, pressed their counselors to arrange a time for them to seek the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The result was that all nine went home profoundly affected by God. This experience in June 1971 led to my being asked to preach on the last Sunday evening service of *Youth Week* at my home church in Bristol, England, on February 6, 1972. In the words of John Wesley, during the process of preparation for that night “I felt my heart strangely warmed.” In the pulpit that night at age 14, the Lord spoke unmistakably and clearly to me in words that were almost audible, “Paul, this is what I want you to do with the rest of your life.” I will never forget this experience, and I have never had reason to doubt its validity as an expression of God’s will for my life.

As my ministry developed under the hand of several extremely influential ministers, including my own father, it became clear to me that the only way ministry could really be fulfilling to me personally was if it involved the deepest possible appreciation for the Word of God on a personal level, and an equally strong commitment on my part to share what I discovered with others in a way that would produce spiritual fruit in their lives. My preaching and calling was taking the shape of pastoral ministry.

My formal training began in 1979 when I left England as a naïve 21 year old, and headed for Greenville, South Carolina for Bible school. In 1981 I married one of the students, and after graduation we began pastoring a church in Garland, NC. This was a defining period for me. I entered the pastorate without either a philosophy of ministry or a strategy, a fact I would not fully appreciate until 4 years later. The church was in a rural southern town, with a tiny population of mainly older people. I was unfamiliar with the culture and way of life, and I had no clue about the demands and responsibilities of the pastorate, other than a few idealized notions based upon wholly inadequate ‘pastoral theology’ classes.

The whole venture was a colossal failure from my perspective. I made *all* of the mistakes young enthusiastic but inexperienced pastors make. I left after a major disagreement with my secretary-treasurer over the church roll book! In the mean time as things were going sour, I had been asked to return to England to pastor my home church, because the pastor, my former pastor, had died. I gladly accepted, with a sigh of relief. However, in England, sitting in the pastor’s office, where we used to pray on cold winter nights at prayer meeting, huddled around a two bar electric heater, I asked the Lord in my typically exaggerated way, whether I had “gone half way around the world, just to end up back here!”

These experiences were a low place in my life, and I could not understand why ministry had led me to such uncertainty and lack of enthusiasm for my current ministry situation. However, in the four years I ministered in Bristol, like Moses in the ‘backside of the desert,’ the Lord taught me how to be a pastor. I learned how to love people and form meaningful relationships with them as a pastor and friend. I learned how to take charge of and lead a church, to administrate it and to develop ministries and leaders. I learned the value of outreach and evangelism by making use of goals and strategies. I also set the pattern of formal study time and for reflection on the Word of God. I read more during those years than I had at college previously. In other words, the Lord began to develop in me a philosophy and strategy for pastoral ministry.

Pursuing a graduate degree has been like re-digging the foundations of my life and ministry to reinforce them. It has led to a clearer perception of how to interpret and communicate the Bible as the Word of God to this generation, and it has produced a greater and more confident expectation in me personally that the ministry will produce the fruit the Bible speaks of in terms of souls saved and disciples made. In this paper I will seek to describe the main elements of my pastoral ministry philosophy and strategy, as they are today, layout a five year plan for my ministry from a personal and church perspective, and formulate a broad strategy for being held accountable for progress and implementation of what has been entrusted to me through Global University.

THE TWO MAJOR ELEMENTS OF MY PHILOSOPHY MINISTRY

Biblical Interpretation

Successful pastoral and preaching ministries depend on interpreting the Bible accurately in order to first of all live it honestly before God, and then to be able to communicate it clearly and effectively to others. Whether it is teaching biblical principles to disciples or preaching the gospel to the lost, it is impossible to overemphasize how important it is for the pastor/teacher to have a clear understanding and growing appreciation for the Word of God. Although C. H. Spurgeon was probably the one who said it years before, I was warned by my father during the days I prepared my first sermon, that if the Bible never spoke to me on a personal level, it would be impossible to preach it in a way that it would effectively speak to others. Therefore, the first

pillar in my philosophy of ministry is the importance of developing and maintaining my skills for biblical interpretation, and my personal connection to God based upon obedience to his Word.

Robertson McQuilkin (1992) argues that the Bible is the literary result of a divine-human cooperation and is therefore capable of being interpreted using certain recognized principles, literary or otherwise (pp. 67-68). When it comes to hermeneutics the vast array of interpretive tools at the disposal of the student is bewildering. The scope of the task is mind-numbing to the point that unless a specific pre-eminent approach is adopted it would be impossible for a single human being to exhaust the possibilities for a single passage, let alone interpret the Bible as a whole. Sidney Greidanus (1988) speaks of atomism, the concentration by scholars on particular disciplines with respect to the Bible, in hopes that the cumulative effect of all of them will contribute to the pool of knowledge about it (p. 49). Atomism, however, is not and cannot be the pastoral task. It is certainly impossible for a pastor to become a scholar in every area of interpretation, and it is probably not useful to his ministry to be predominantly concerned with a single scholarly approach to the exclusion of all others. He must develop an interpretive strategy which is able to grapple with the major disciplines in the field of hermeneutics, and to use as many resources as possible to understand the text in order to be able to exercise a balanced approach to teaching and ministry. In the end the goal is to discover the intended meaning of the text in its original setting as a first step to applying it to the modern setting in his congregation, community and world.

Leland Ryken (1984) laments the neglect of a thoroughly literary approach to the Bible (pp. 17-18). Paying only lip service to the idea of the Bible as outstanding literature, few scholars have taken a serious, systematic and persistently literary approach to biblical interpretation. Other approaches to the Bible, by virtue of historical seniority, overshadow this relatively new concern with the Bible as literature. The complexity of the issue can best be understood in light of the numbers of disciplines that have arisen with respect to biblical studies; these include, but are not limited to, language mechanics, Hebrew and Greek grammar, linguistics, historical and cultural studies, textual disciplines in both lower and higher criticisms, and theology, both systematic and biblical approaches. Some of these have the advantage of a sort of scientific aura which surrounds them, making them much more appealing to a modern world. (Greidanus, 1988, p. 49). Even more recent scholarly disciplines, like anthropological, existential and

structuralistic studies have been widely accepted, because of their apparently scientific approaches. Yet at the same time a literary approach remains largely untested.

A literary approach to the Bible underscores a fundamental problem in biblical interpretation not addressed by many of the other disciplines which do not view the Bible as a finished product or work. While the Bible's basic message is relatively simple, it is often theologically and even philosophically profound (Elwell, p. 565). Literary criticism or approaches to the Bible, therefore, seek to interpret the ways in which human beings express complex ideas using language, expressions and devices. This interpretive complexity is compounded in that the biblical scholar must make the leap from one culture to another and from one time to another, in order to understand and interpret the language conventions (of which there are no living examples). Ordinarily reading and understanding is on some level instinctive, however, nuanced understanding can be much more complex and requires effort and time.

This is all certainly true of the Bible, and since the implications of what the Bible actually says about God, life and salvation range the spiritual depths and heights of the human experience and consciousness, the biblical interpreter finds himself engaged in the interpretive task for a lifetime. It never comes to a complete conclusion, nor can it arrive at its final destination or produce a finished product.

Since, then, the pages of the Bible do not contain mathematically precise formulae, the interpreter should not expect them to be fully unlocked by empirical scientific approaches or by objective experimental research and observation alone. The Bible lives and breathes, pulsating with the emotions, aspirations, desires, disappointments, curiosity, bewilderment, certainty, insecurity, hopes, fears, joys and sadnesses, and as one might expect its message is couched in a full range of emotional and mental expressions involving human language and which are native to the human spirit (Ryken, 1984, pp. 17-18). Leland Ryken in his two works, *How To Read The Bible As Literature*, and *Words of Delight*, calls this incarnational (cf. 1984, p. 13; 1992, p. 13). By *incarnational* we mean that the Bible embodies the human experience in its literature. Although the Bible contains some propositional prose, it often communicates truth through relating the human experience of God in a variety of historical, figurative and poetic ways. Even historical accounts can be read in terms of their theological implications and message as narratives, and are clearly designed to be interpreted. It is a theological axiom that God has revealed himself to humanity in the course of its own history, principally by selecting a nation

with which he established a unique and special relationship. So we learn about God, his nature and intentions, through the history of his involvement with humanity as it is recorded in the Bible. Indeed, the Bible and its history is the only reliable way we can know anything about him. In other words understanding the Bible as literature is clearly of primary importance to the interpreter.

If careful attention is paid only to geography, grammar, theology, textual issues and history, then interpretations of the text are probably going to lack a certain depth of perspective because they ignore the human component in the text as a finished product, and interpretations are more liable to be skewed by the prejudices of the interpreter. In other words, the interpreter will fail to seriously take into account what the writer originally intended to say. By placing the Bible beneath the literary lens, the interpreter is seeking to discover God communicating his word through human beings to other human beings intentionally. This means that the interpreter must come to grips with the qualities of a given written work, that it is the deliberate result of choice and craft. In this case a literary approach is likely to reveal a great deal, maybe more than one might think at first, of the author's original intention, assuming a writer ordinarily crafts his work to effectively communicate the meaning he intends for his readers to understand. Without a proper appreciation for how the work is crafted, in the literary sense, it is nearly impossible by parochial and insulated investigations of cultural, historical and text-critical issues alone to gain an accurate and full understanding of what was actually meant by the author, as important as these may be in the end to the interpretive process.

As a result of this conviction my approach to the Bible is to pay attention to it as literature, to see it and its elements as a serious attempt by human beings (albeit divinely inspired in the traditional, orthodox and evangelical sense) to communicate with other human beings. The cultural, temporal, geographical, theological, text critical, redactional, historical, anthropological and other approaches should, to my mind, be fully integrated into a literary approach to the Bible if we are gain an accurate view of the writer's attempt to communicate his message in written form. This does not imply that a literary approach is the sole or predominant approach for interpreting the Bible, or that it is the filter through which all other attempts should be viewed, but rather that for me it forms a sort of framework for a thorough investigation of the text involving other disciplines.

The Missio Dei: An Underlying Biblical Theme

For many scholars, research into the history of the Bible has led to the conviction that there is no unifying center in the Old Testament, and it is therefore a collection of disparate religious musings and fables. But to miss the fact that the Bible claims continuity for itself is to ignore or dismiss the words of New Testament writers who claim to stand in direct line to an "...accumulation of both promises and threats and persons and programs which preceded them" (Kaiser, pp. 24-25). It is to ignore the biblical characters themselves who also claim to stand in direct succession to the purposes of God, notably the patriarchs, the kings of Israel and the prophets. If their claims are taken seriously, then the search for a unifying center must begin with the history the Old Testament, which records the activity of God with respect to humanity (Kaiser, pp. 24-25). It is the Bible's verifiable claim to God's consistent involvement in human affairs (over a period of about 1600 years) in order to accomplish his own purposes as they are traced by the writers (around 40 of them) in the text, that confirms his very existence and activity, making him personally available to faith, precisely because of the flawless unity of its message (cf. John 17:3, 8).

The Bible as literature does, as implied above, contain evidence of structure, a structure, as it turns out, based upon the history it reports about the Creator and his divine plan for his creation. John Stott says that "...history is not a random flow of events. For God is working in time a plan he conceived in past eternity and will consummate in a future eternity" (Stott, 1992, p. A-13). If historical structure exists, it is reasonable to assume that it will form the basis of the literary structure of the text. Certain themes and ideas will be highlighted and accentuated by the writers' deliberate use of conventional literary devices to report this history in a way that it underscores the very ideas and themes which communicate the message about God, God's plan and his involvement with humanity. In this way we can expect the writers of the Bible to show us how God is intimately involved in human history. The resulting confidence, that God is at work in humanity, perceived from an accurate and inspired text, structured around real history is the basis for faith in God, and that he is indeed offering reconciliation to men as the Bible claims he is. Faith then is based upon the accurate message the Bible contains about the activity of God.

Judging by its content, we find the Bible is in fact largely a book of history. Discovering a unifying center is a key not only to biblical study, but to faith itself because it supports the evidence and record of the consistent and purposeful involvement of God in the human condition

and in human existence. So the question of verifying the essential unity of the Bible is a matter of vital importance to faith, especially since the New Testament claims that God has been and will remain involved in human existence until the end of the age.

What is the nature of God's unifying involvement with humanity reflected in the text? Philip Steyne (1997) says that God's most urgent mission is to reconcile men to the relationship that God created them to enjoy before the advent of sin (p. 27). If it turns out that the unifying center of scripture is this *missio dei*, this discovery confirms the involvement of God in his creation that the Bible claims, particularly with respect to mankind, and is in and of itself, the basis for faith and confidence in him for personal redemption.

Missio Dei: The church's mission

If there truly is an accurate historical basis for faith based on the involvement of God in the redemption of mankind, the evidence for it can only be found in the Bible. Therefore, an underlying thematic and consistent unity in the Bible involving redemption provides the only basis for the existence of the church as God's vehicle for proclaiming the good news about God's purpose and desire. The church cannot claim an independent rationale for its mission and existence if it owes its very origin to the Bible and the underlying premise that God is involved in reconciling men to himself through faith in Christ. The church's mission may involve charity, social action against injustice, and moral persuasion, but none of these is her primary mission or reason for existence. That reason is God's redemptive mission as it is portrayed in scripture.

The church is a community of faith. It is composed of those who have put their faith in God for salvation because they have accepted as true the Word of God which claims that God has provided redemption through his involvement in human history. It is a community within a greater global community. It is set apart from the world by its faith because it claims to have begun to participate in another age, an age which has yet to fully materialize, but which is in competition to the present age, according to the Bible. Proof of inaccuracy, mistaken religious zeal on the part of the writers, deliberate misrepresentation or the refutation of historical events in the Bible would falsify the claims of God's redemptive involvement in the world. Confidence that God has been at work in human history seeking to provide redemption depends upon an accurate, true and verifiable text. This calls for an apologetic dimension to the task of hermeneutics, and is beyond the scope of this paper. However, our point is that the church's

mission depends upon what an accurate and true text says about God's mission, because ultimately they are one and the same, the one being an expression of the other.

It is not too much to say, then, that the existence of the church depends upon the truth and integrity of the text that reports God's involvement in human history. This is precisely what New Testament claims to do. It verifies the Old Testament record in terms of the fulfillment of God's covenants and promises through the life and ministry of Christ made hundreds of years earlier. It does so on the basis of eyewitness accounts by those who saw and participated in the unfolding of the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ, his mission and ministry. The church's present mission, its reason for existence, is found in God's original mission as it has come to fulfillment in the Christ-event, which is verified by the eye-witnesses of Christ's ministry, and by their experience of the promised Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that there was adequate witness in the Old Testament that he had been sent by God on a redemptive mission according to God's *prior* plan. If the Jews of his day were to really understand his mission then they would have to read the scriptures which spoke about him (John 5:39). In other words Jesus claimed continuity with the Old Testament and the redemptive mission of God expressed there. He and his mission were the fulfillment of what God began at creation. From Jesus perspective the plan of God, of which his own mission was the climactic movement, is the unifying center of the Old Testament.

Jesus was continually reaching back into the Old Testament for an explanation of his origin and mission. For example, Jesus claimed to antedate the patriarch Abraham to whom the plan of God was first revealed in Genesis 12:1-3. The Jews took up stones when Jesus claimed to have personal knowledge of Abraham's rejoicing at the prospect of his coming as Messiah (John 8:56-59). This is an important point, because God revealed to Abraham his plan to bless all nations in the Messiah. When Jesus looked into the Old Testament he found that his mission was rooted in that very plan. He was personally the fulfillment of the promise and covenant made to Abraham, something that Paul also underscores (cf. Gal. 4:1-7). Jesus claimed that his mission was directly derived from and intimately bound up with God's original mission as it was expressed in the Old Testament to the great patriarch.

In this way Jesus defined his own mission in terms of his cooperation with the original mission of God. Indeed, he was present at its inception, before God articulated it to Abraham (John 1:1-2, 18; John 8:58). Since this plan is carefully laid out in the Old Testament in such a

way that the scriptures themselves give justification to Jesus' claims, he is able to claim that he is indeed the fulfillment of the purpose and promises of God (John 5:39). He can be found there. Jesus' theological position, if we can put it that way, was that the God of the Old Testament was working according a plan which he had already articulated in his Word, and which he was even then executing through Jesus and his redemptive mission.

Jesus claimed to have been sent from the Father in the sense that he had a mission to accomplish (John 8:42). Jesus mission was totally dependent upon his relationship to God. He did not act independently of God but performed only what God had told him (John 5:19a, 30). Jesus went even further than this and said that his mission was actually one and same as the mission of God (John 5:19). He claimed continuity with the original purpose of God and claimed to be the channel for the climatic moment when God's mission would unfold its final redemptive movement in the world (John 5:20-24). The mission of Jesus, therefore, was directly related to the mission of God as the outworking of God's original purpose to redeem humanity through the sacrifice of the life of his Son as a substitute for those who had sinned against him (cf. John 3:16). His mission and God's were one and the same.

The power of the Son to provide eternal life is a direct result of the fact that the redemptive mission of God in this world was enacted by him (John 5:25-27). Christ went further than this. Jesus made acceptance of the truth about his role in God's mission the condition for receiving eternal life (John 5:24). Faith in Christ and acceptance of his part in the mission of God is still the condition upon which eternal life is granted. The gospel which has the power to grant eternal life, found in the Bible, is the good news of God's redemptive mission fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. So all who believe on the unified testimony of the Word of God about Christ, even though they are not personally eye witnesses, will also be saved (John 20:29-31).

Paul the Apostle also claimed that God is working to a plan. God's activity in human history Paul called *oikonomia*, or the wise management of his purposes (Eph 1:1, 5, 9, 10; 3:10). His aim is to produce the outcome he desires (Eph 1:11) (Snyder, 1992, pp. A-134-135). God's plan is to eventually reunite all things to himself in Christ, to accomplish a total and complete reconciliation (Eph 1:10; Col 1:20). The salvation of individuals, no matter how important, is not the sum total of God's purpose.

This reconciliation is a process rather than an event, and it has clearly begun in that God is already reconciling men to himself through faith in Christ. One of the most important goals of

the process of reconciliation is to present human beings holy and blameless to God (Col 1:22). The ground upon which this reconciliation takes place is found in death and resurrection of Christ. However, it requires steadfast faith in God and an untiring grip on the hope found in the gospel, the hope that one day God's design for creation will come to full consummation in Christ (Phil 1:6; 2:12-13; 3:12, 14; Col 1:23). So for Paul reconciliation was a work in progress, already begun in the lives of those who were turning to Christ for salvation, the basis of which is the historical death and resurrection of Christ. Although reconciliation's most significant work has been done through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, even now the process of reconciliation is unfolding its benefits in this present age, and will continue to do so until its final completion in Christ at the end of time.(Snyder, 1992, p. A137).

It is this process of reconciliation and redemption, particularly with respect to the salvation of lost humanity, to which the church and my ministry is called. It is a process involving preaching the message of reconciliation to God through repentance and faith in Christ, based upon the testimony of his Word concerning Christ's death and resurrection.

Forgiveness through Christ and his cross is available because God has disarmed the powers and authorities of darkness which have held men captive to sin, thereby releasing them to enjoy spiritual triumph (Col 2:13-15). Salvation for Paul meant an immediate rescue from sin, which is the power Satan uses to enslave men to his will, and it results in a blessed release into the kingdom of God (Col 1:13). Although believers await the consummation of their hope, they are enabled to participate immediately in the kingdom of God in this present age through reconciliation to God. In this way those who are saved and become part of the church of Jesus Christ also enter into the kingdom of God. The church is the starting point for God's reconciling purpose for all of creation (Snyder, 1992, p. A-135).

We conclude, then, that the purpose of salvation is to change the pivotal allegiance of the human soul away from the world, sin, evil and the kingdom of darkness, and to effect a transfer of the soul into the kingdom of God (Col 1:13-14) (Dempster, 1991, p. 25). When Jesus began his ministry, his message was that with his own arrival the kingdom of God had come (Mark 1:14-15). The promises of the Old Testament had come to fulfillment in him. He claimed to be the Messiah or the anointed one, the Servant of Yahweh. From a distinctly messianic passage in Isaiah, he announced to the Jews that the Spirit of God was upon him to preach the good news to the poor, to open the prison doors, to set captives at liberty, to heal the sick, that the kingdom of

God had finally arrived (Isa. 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-21). At that very moment, as the hearers listened, the scripture, Jesus said, had come to fulfillment (Luke 4:21).

Upon his ascension, Jesus turned this mission, the preaching of the arrival of the kingdom of God bringing reconciliation through faith in him, over to his disciples and thus to the church (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:45-49). Jesus commissioned his disciples to take up the mission his Father had entrusted to him, a mission of proclaiming reconciliation to God based upon God's own action towards them in Christ (John 20:22). He promised that he would endue them with the same power with which he had conducted his own ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8). Luke records how the church successfully embarked upon this mission through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, until the entire Roman Empire had heard of and had been impacted by the gospel message (cf. Acts 2-28).

Missio Dei and my ministry

What does this mean to me and my ministry? In the course of my studies at Global University I find that my own life has come under some intense scrutiny by the Holy Spirit. I am challenged to the very core. In this respect I have scrambled to come to terms with how God is seeking to impact my life concerning these and other issues that impinge upon my involvement in the mission of God.

It is not enough to gloss over this matter in a few words, to compose a paper that pays lip service to the task required. I have been *driven* to deal with the implications of discovering the mission of God in the scriptures in a full and open way, to lay it out in full view. I have felt compelled to expose my own life and pastoral ministry to the full blaze of a sun that has dawned ever so slowly at first, but which has now reached almost full noon in my life. I must respond to the implications of the mission of God, Christ and the church.

In order to comprehend the full significance of all of this, I first had to lay out the mission of God theologically from a biblical perspective for my own understanding. This I have done in the course of my studies (although a fuller understanding will continue to develop as long as I live). Two things stand out to me. First, that reconciliation of the lost is God's primary concern and that the preaching of the gospel is his only method for saving men. Secondly, God expects the church's and my own personal involvement in his mission to the lost, because the mission is still ongoing with respect to lost humanity. It is not enough for me to be an interpreter of the Bible if

I am not a proclaimer of redemptive truth. In other words if I am not involved in the mission to the lost, proficiency in biblical interpretation is ultimately useless. My study of the Bible must lead to involvement in God's mission to proclaim the good news of reconciliation to lost humanity, from the pulpit and in the course of everyday life.

MY STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY

What, then, does this all mean in terms of strategy? What shape will the ministry take in concrete terms as a result of envisioning this philosophy? Strategies imply calculated plans and approaches towards achieving specific and measurable goals. To implement the philosophy of ministry described above the strategy must involve a *personal* and *private* elements as well as a *ministry* element. My conviction is that any pursuit of ministry with respect to the study of the Bible and with respect to the mission must ultimately rest on a *personal relationship* with God, one that is real, maturing and obedient to his direction and leadership. It is not enough talk about ministry alone, because *effective* ministry is irrevocably bound to *personal spirituality* according to the New Testament. To separate the two would be hypocrisy, or outward religious practice without inward devotion to God (cf. Matt. 5:20). For this reason, my discussion of strategy for implementing this philosophy of ministry will begin with a strategy for personal devotion to God, something to animate the process of spiritual growth and to embrace the guidance and leadership of God in every aspect of my life.

To be effective any strategy must include a mechanism for accountability or evaluation. The progress of any implemented strategy must be subject some form of measurement if it is to be effective, and ultimately productive and successful. However, any measurement of the success of a *ministry* strategy must be sensitive enough to take into account the nuances of ministry and the philosophy behind it. Measurement or evaluation is bound take into account the unique subtleties which some aspects of ministry certainly do have. And yet at the same time evaluation of ministry must be robust enough to determine whether real progress is being made by holding the plan (the strategy) and participants accountable to stated goals and philosophies. For this reason our discussion at this point will break down into two broad areas, a personal strategy for Christian living, and a strategy for continued and rigorous study of the Bible and pursuit of the mission. It must be understood, however, that while we may make a distinction between them,

these things are in fact irrevocably bound to and intertwined with one another with respect to the execution of the purpose of God.

A Strategy for Personal Spiritual Development

As trite as it may sound, no ministry can rise above the high water mark of one's personal devotion to God. Therefore, personal spirituality and devotion to God are extremely important, even essential, to any successful ministry or strategy for implementing a philosophy of ministry. That is why in some sense my personal philosophy of ministry intertwines with my devotional and spiritual life, in that I expect a persistent in-depth study of God's Word to lead to personal implementation of the precepts and principles of holiness and spirituality that God requires in the Bible. So while we may speak of "reading the Bible" for personal enrichment, it is not a naïve, uninformed or unintelligent, indeed trite or glib, reading of the Bible that we have in mind. Reading the Bible as a serious student of the Word of God means that in-depth studies of the text inform Christian living, attitudes and spiritual perceptions. They shape our reactions to life, and our devotion and obedience to God under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Indeed such privilege leads the student on a personal level to seek the answers to vexing and difficult personal problems in and through a thorough investigation of the text as the Holy Spirit quickens its message on a personal level.

Therefore, the first and primary element in a strategy for implementing my philosophy of ministry is to design structure in my life in a way that it will maintain the *primacy* of my personal relationship with God. How important is such a structure? It is supremely important when we realize that a pastor like any other professional in his field is liable to lose sight of what is essential and important under pressure from what is urgent, immediate and often trivial. Such a strategy recognizes that ministry is emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually demanding and can lead to misplaced priorities and a gradual decline in personal closeness to God if the minister is not very careful. Such a decline inevitably leads to other personal problems including vulnerability to temptation, lack of proper financial restraint, emotional imbalance, tension in family relationships, and a lack of or declining sense of self-worth. Once our eyes are off of God, then everything else that has to do with ministry and our personal spiritual life becomes distorted and badly focused. The result is that priorities are turned up-side-down, relationships are strained or wrecked and emotional stability is often lost. In the extreme these things can lead

to ministry and/or personal moral failure. Therefore, a strategy of personal devotion to God is paramount when we speak of a philosophy of ministry.

Regular Times for Personal Devotion

The first element of my strategy for devotion to God is to establish and maintain regular times for the pursuit of personal time with God. By this I mean time to be alone with God in prayer and for the reading of his Word. Such time is designed to provide for two needed aspects to my own spiritual life and growth before God. The first is my need to talk to God in prayer and express myself to him, and includes personal and private worship, making personal requests and petitions known to him, seeking direction and guidance, expressing doubts, misgivings and fear, and seeking specific help for battles with temptation or adversity in my life. The second aspect of my personal devotional life is to place myself in an unhurried and sufficiently focused environment so that I can hear the voice of God as he speaks to me generally about moral and spiritual issues, and specifically about personal and ministry issues. In this way the Lord can redirect me, lead me, correct or discipline me and provide general and specific guidance. I anticipate that the Lord will speak through his Word quickened or made alive to my mind and heart by the Holy Spirit (a very personal experience) and through the less frequent, but nonetheless very real, direct impressions that come from the voice of the Spirit of God speaking consciously into ones heart and mind from time to time.

Therefore, I am committed to rising early enough in the morning (around or a little before 6 AM) every day (except Saturday) to eat breakfast and spend one hour in quite reflective prayer and Bible reading. It is my habit to take notes in the margin of my Bible, to occasionally write out prayers I need answered and to express in written form some of my feelings and attitudes about things I face, and how the scriptures are speaking to me about those issues. It is my habit to date these reflections for future reference, in order to chart progress and in order to celebrate and rejoice over victories and answered prayer. I am committed to reading approximately four chapters a day in order to read through the Bible in one year. This keeps my perspective on the Bible as a whole fresh, and protects my ministry studies from becoming doctrinally unbalanced or one sided. On Saturdays I take a regular day off and I relax my schedule and rise later in the day.

A Commitment to Regular Church Attendance

It may seem strange to include such an idea as regular church attendance in a strategy for the implementation of a philosophy of ministry for a fulltime pastor. While a pastor is not apt to “miss” much church, especially for trivial reasons, his attendance should include full participation in the worship, relationships and programs of the church. There is an important sense in which the fellowship of believers is an essential component is healthy personal spirituality. The provision of support, encouragement, prayer, and the sharing of material and spiritual resources is a key element to spiritual growth and power according to the New Testament (cf. Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37). Paul reiterates this kind of mutuality over and over again in his epistles (cf. Rom. 1:11-12; 12:9-10, 16; 14:1-21; 1 Cor. 12-14; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 8:1-15; Gal. 6:1-6; Eph. 1:3-14; 2:11-22; 4:1-16; 5:21; Phil. 1:3-6, 7-11, 22-26, 27-30; 2:1-11; 3:17-4:1, 2-3, 10-20; Col. 2:1-3; 3:12-14; 1 Thess. 2:17-20; 4:17; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:1-16; 2 Tim. 2:23-26).

It is very easy for a pastor or any ministry professional to begin to view church and ministry as “work” and so to engage in them by switching to a sort of “automatic pilot”. In that mode while he is physically present, the pastor or minister may not be fully mentally or spiritually present. My commitment to myself, to the Lord and to my congregation is that I will personally fully engage in worship, prayer, and ministry every time I go to church in the way I expect of others. I expect and anticipate that I will be blessed, enriched, challenged, convicted and renewed by church ministry and church events, even when I am responsible for preparing and leading them.

Accountability

Being accountable for personal spiritual development is a key to spiritual success. Accountability involves answering to someone for one’s spiritual progress and maturity. I am committed to personal accountability on three levels, if we leave out the obvious primary accountability every believer has first of all to God. The first level of accountability for spiritual development is to my wife, with whom I have a covenant of mutual spiritual support. We engage in regular conversations about personal spiritual matters and issues, which involve probing questions about our own spiritual walk with God. It is important for my wife to see me take personal time with God, and to ask about times when I may not be as faithful as I should about my devotions. We both engage in conversations about our own personal walks with God

and areas where we are struggling, frustrated, disappointed or hurting. By confessing my struggles and frustrations to Loala I am deliberately make myself vulnerable, giving her permission to speak God's word freely into my life, not just when I solicit it, but occasionally and spontaneously about areas where I may not noticed my own failure, spiritual drift or lack of spiritual enthusiasm. Although it is harder for me to accept, this sometimes includes "criticism" of how I practice my ministry.

I am also held accountable for my personal spiritual walk with God in the pastor's office by the presence of a secretary. How I order my schedule, conduct my business, behave under pressure, treat other people, act toward church employees and so forth is under constant scrutiny because I work closely with church staff. Since we have the habit of praying together from time to time, both for the church, its ministry, the business of the office and for one another and our families, the pastor is held to a high standard of spiritual and personal discipline at times when he is not under the scrutiny of his family and a larger portion of his church members.

The third level of spiritual accountability is provided by transparency to my congregation. It is easy for a pastor to be aloof and unapproachable, to appear to be larger than life. In my ministry I have attempted to cultivate, and continue to do so, real relationships with the people who I minister to every week. Although conventional wisdom in Bible schools has often warned pastors against forming close friendships with church members, I have found that genuine, respectful, warm and appropriate relationships actually work to the advantage of the church and the ministry. I develop these relationships through our corporate or joint experience in worship and ministry, through regular and crisis visitation, planned periods or times of interaction with young working families (i.e. shared family meals, restaurant visits, shared personal activities with the men (e.g. fishing, etc.), sharing spontaneous and genuine words of encouragement and affirmation, offering spontaneous and formal prayer, and by taking time to listen and share both formally in office during counseling, or informally before and after services, and at other times.

There are two advantages to this transparency. First, the people of the church perceive that the pastor models the truth he preaches and that it is real and can indeed be applied to real life (cf. 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 2 Tim 1:13; 4:10-17). If the pastor struggles with the same issues that his congregation struggles with and prevails through faith in God, tenacity, sensitivity and obedience to the Word of God and leading of the Spirit, they can too, because he is ultimately human. In this way what the pastor preaches is incarnated to some degree and the

people are close enough to perceive it and to be encouraged by it. Secondly, the pastor is held accountable for his own personal spiritual development and growth because of this transparency. Such transparency immediately shines full the light of God on any hypocrisy. In this way the pastor becomes not a cold and detached professional practitioner of ministry, but an integral member of the congregation with servant, pastoral and leadership responsibilities, accountable to other Christians for his spiritual life and development.

A Strategy for Ministry

Two statements must be made concerning the nature of God's calling on my life, if the strategy is to 'hang together'. From the beginning, as demonstrated above, my calling from God is to a preaching ministry. It is *fundamentally* a ministry of communicating God's word. Yet beneath that dome, involving now over 34 years of preaching, the Lord refined and directed my ministry to find its context in pastoring, which has since become a passion. To this in relatively recent years, some 20 years ago, the Lord has added a clear future vision and calling to a teaching ministry in the context of a Bible school or training setting for Bible students preparing for ministry themselves. The consciousness of God's calling, and the nuances of that call, affect my ministry plans, knowing this will help interpret certain the elements of this strategy.

A Strategy of Preaching, Teaching, Pastoral Ministry and Engagement in Mission

The key to successful preaching and pastoral ministry and to engagement in the redemptive mission of God is consistent involvement and effort. Therefore, any strategy for such ministry must include elements of routine both in development of knowledge and skills and in actual ministry. For this reason my strategy begins with a commitment to long-term, formal pastoral ministry in the same church, among the same people for as long as God allows, with the conviction that pastoral longevity increases the overall effectiveness of ministry and creates an environment for compounding the fruit of its labor (cf. John 15:4-8).

The goals

The goals I hope to achieve through preaching and pastoral ministry in the context of the church are based on the conviction that evangelism is not complete until converts are fully

discipled (cf. Matt. 28:19-20). The following is a list of what I aim to achieve through my preaching and pastoral ministry:

1. The regular salvation of people in the context of the church's ministry from week to week, and as a result of my own pastoral and personal efforts.
2. To see perceptible spiritual development in the tenor of church's spiritual life, measured against Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-37, so that the elements of New Testament church life are identifiably present in an increasing measure in the church I pastor.
3. To encourage a sense of faith and anticipation in the church that results in a spirit of expectation with respect to the outworking of God's power among his people, the evidence of which will be seen, among others things, in miracles, guidance, significant personal and corporate victories and in the sharing of testimonies about God's provision and grace.
4. Measurable, sustained and near universal personal spiritual growth among the people of the church so that there is noticeable individual spiritual development in the lives of the majority of the saints over a period of time.
5. For the church and for me to become more evangelistic in our outlook, philosophy of ministry and vision for the future. This means that there will be a significant increased desire and enthusiasm to engage in formal and personal evangelism, using skills taught and gained through the teaching arm of the church. Such a growing evangelistic consciousness should lead to a genuine commitment in the future to benevolent ministries beyond the constituency of the church as a platform for evangelism in the community, and to systematic, sustained and formal evangelism sponsored by the pastor and church as an integral part of the ministry (which is not occurring right now).
6. To maintain a sense of forward movement through careful

stewardship of our resources and time. Such forward movement should include management and improvement of our facilities, adding to them where necessary and appropriate according the vision God has given the church, and should include the addition of pastoral staff as the church grows and the Lord leads.

These goals include elements of the stated philosophy of ministry, the study and communication of the Bible and engagement in the mission of God.

The Plan

Knowing the goals, we now turn to the strategy for achieving them. My strategy is built upon a single inviolable principle, success in the work of God demands sustained routine and regular practice of the spiritual disciplines and ministry. Therefore, the first element of my strategy is my day to day office routine.

My week is broken down into four similar days, Monday through Thursday, which I spend in the office from 8:15 AM until about 2 PM. From 8:15 – 9:00 AM I am getting my day organized and lining things up, checking schedules and planning visitation or counseling if I am due to engage in any. The rest of my day breaks down so that 9:00 – 10:30 AM is spent in routine administration, something that I cannot avoid first thing in the morning, which is when my secretary arrives. This includes answering phone calls, reporting, letter writing, checking and answering e-mails, making purchases, and planning and evaluating ministries of the church.

From 10:30 – 11:30 AM I spend time in the study of Greek grammar, reading Greek and doing exercises in New Testament Greek. The purpose is to enhance and maintain my facility in New Testament Greek for the purpose of exegesis and teaching in my ministry. From 11:30 – 1:30 PM I the spend time in targeted study for the sake of specific ministry projects I have going on in the church. This includes sermon preparation, of course, but is not limited to this. This time forms the core of my preparation, and the foundation of my teaching ministry. It is where I thrash out spiritual issues from a Biblical perspective for ministry to the congregation, develop my preaching ministry to carry the vision of the church and leading of the Holy Spirit, and grow in my own appreciation and knowledge of God, his Word and spiritual truth.

From 1:30 – 2:00 PM I return phone calls and tie up loose ends which have arisen during the time I have been studying, and during which I have been unavailable for routine matters. The

only variations to the schedule, of course, are times of emergency, hospitalizations in the congregation, anytime my family requires me for whatever reason, and Tuesday mornings which are set aside for any pastoral counseling that needs to take place. On Fridays my routine varies slightly in that I spend my time at home studying for the greater portion of the day in a less formal environment, away from the office, the phone, and the accessibility that they afford. This is a key element in my week, in that it is possible for me to engage in 3-5 hours of intense, organized and sustained study without interruption.

After lunch between, 2:00 about 3:30 PM, I engage in formal and routine pastoral visitation. for about 2 – 3 hours. Other visitation is necessary when there are emergencies and hospitalizations, which cannot be taken account of in any routine schedule. On Sunday morning I arrive at church between 8:00 – 8:15 AM. After preparing my Sunday school classroom for the students, opening the doors and turning on the lights, I retire to my office for about an hour to prepare my sermon outline. I generally leave outline preparation until Sunday morning because that way the sermon is fresh in my mind when I preach. The outline is based upon my studies.

On Sunday night I follow a similar procedure arriving an hour or more before church to prepare the building and to get my mind and heart ready for service. On Wednesday, my formal study time in the office is spent in preparation for evening Bible Study. I again arrive early (1 – 1 ½ hours) to set up for service.

Saturday is my formal day off, and I spend time with my family. On Tuesday afternoons I do not visit, but instead I take personal time.

This rather detailed description is an important part of my strategy because it keeps me targeted in the execution of my duties as a pastor and ensures I incorporate all of the elements of balanced pastoral ministry. But it does not, of course, describe the strategy with respect to what I have received from Global University. It is merely a description of mechanics. It is to that we now turn.

The following is a strategic description of how I will use what I have received from Global University by engaging the process outlined above in the pursuit of my pastoral ministry:

1. Based upon my studies in exegesis and hermeneutics, and in order to achieve the above stated goals I have developed the following ministry strategy:

Sunday Morning: To consciously preach on three levels as

much as it is possible to do, designing each sermon and teaching session to encourage and challenge saints, clearly represent the truth of the gospel message and to give direction and vision to the church body as a congregation. To do this the pastor must preach the word of God clearly according to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, employing every skill he has gained, while not failing to remind the people regularly of the vision he has for the church and how the leaders intend to achieve the goals.

I have committed myself on Sundays mornings to blending evangelism with teaching by preaching blocks of messages on themes which address real-life and specific spiritual-life issues faced by people every day, and by taking a single specific issue to explore at each opportunity. My conviction is that, while a single sermon may not result in instant revival, sustained and consistent preaching, and pastoral ministry will bring spiritual change and growth.

Sunday School Class: The pastor teaches a Sunday school class for young to middle adults. This is a deliberate choice because the hardest and most entrenched issues which cause problems for Christians today are probably faced by adults with young families in our society, especially those with adolescents or teens. Using formal teaching materials provided by Christian publishers who tackles current issues, my approach is designed to encourage discussion and to create relationships in the group, with the conviction that these will help sustain spiritual growth and stability. This adds an element of spontaneity to the class and requires that the pastor remain actively engaged in study in order to be able to guide the lessons to the ‘correct’ destination in spite of unanticipated twists and turns in the

road.

Sunday Nights: The church's prayer emphasis meeting, in which we take serious time for prayer as a congregation, is Sunday night, and it is paramount. Therefore, music and preaching are not as prominent or as emphasized.

Preaching and worship is less formal and more devotional, designed to encourage the saints and sustain them spiritually, while stiffening their resolve in the face of day to day battles against the enemy.

Sustained prayer is offered with the conviction that God is involved in human affairs and that the redemptive mission of God includes not only salvation, but his providential care in real terms in the lives of the saints.

Wednesday Nights: The Wednesday night Bible study program is the work-horse teaching program of the church for adults, making use of the pastor's teaching ministry. The children have a graded program for their needs. It is here that we engage in concentrated and unashamedly in depth Bible study, including studies of doctrine, the full range of biblical truth, life issues, spiritual issues and our responsibilities toward God and to the lost.

The year is divided so that twice a year we take time out from a thorough biblical book study (chapter by chapter, often passage by passage), to engage in a consideration of other issues. In the spring we will spend 6-8 weeks studying some important and relevant doctrinal issue (i.e. holiness in today's society, baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts, etc.). In the fall we will take 4-6 weeks to study some practical issue (i.e. how to pray, Christian stewardship, disciplining children, evangelism in the work place, etc.).

Special Events: During the year he pastor leads the congregation in various special events. Most of these events are outreach events to which unbelievers are invited in order to create relationships which may lead to evangelism. These events include meals, fundraisers, children's programs, cantatas, Vacation Bible School, outdoor events, skate nights (all expense paid invitations to go skating), etc.

The pastor regularly engages in special activities designed to grow the church and to encourage the people of the church to invite neighbors and friends to church. These include children's sermons (usually object lessons) on a fifth Sunday morning, quarterly youth sermons on Sunday morning for teens incorporating audio and video presentations, an annual Easter event (either a catered meal and communion on Maundy Thursday or an unusual and out of the ordinary Easter Sunday morning sermon, this year for example a live butterfly release), and an annual Thanksgiving meal and communion (prepared and served entirely by the pastor for the entire church in order to demonstrate servanthood).

Every year the church sponsors Christmas programs as an opportunity for bringing people into the church. These include a children's program and/or a cantata. During the summer a Vacation Bible School is conducted as a formal outreach into the community. The church helps subsidize youth camp attendance for children who attended church regularly, and this provides incentive for families to stay in church under the sound of the gospel. The church under the leadership of the pastor, joins with other churches and pastor's each year to sponsor an Alternative to Abortion

Ministries banquet as a fundraiser to provide for a ministry to single women who choose to bring their children to term, but who have little or no support to help them.

2. Based upon my studies with Global University I have set personal goals for ministry to ensure that there is no stagnation on a spiritual or academic level while engaging in the work of the church. In this respect I have set out the following strategy.

Teaching Ministry: As the result of a deep conviction that the Lord has called me to teach and help train others for ministry, upon graduating from Global University, my first step will be to make myself available to my Conference leadership to be used to teach in *Falcon School of Ministries*, conducted monthly by the denomination's regional office for training ministers and pastors. I intend to engage in any teaching ministry or opportunity I can find outside of the routine of the church, in order to step up to formal teaching opportunities when they become available. These will surely increase teaching experience, provide an academic foundation for future use, enhance skills and prepare me for a place when God opens a door to a teaching position in the future. Since I currently serve on the regional Church Education Ministries Board such opportunities may increasingly be available. I intend to pastor while teaching, at least in the foreseeable future, in order to keep my teaching ministry relevant to contemporary ministry.

Doctoral Studies: Due to financial restraints (a daughter just graduating from college and planning to get married in 2007, a son entering college in the fall of 2006, my own graduate school expenses), I cannot immediately enter into formal doctoral studies. However, I have contacted Trinity

College in Bristol, UK about their program, underwritten by Bristol University (all UK universities and degrees are conferred by royal charter). I am eligible to engage in studies and complete a degree through dissertation, requiring annual or bi-annual visits to the school for progress evaluation. It is my goal to engage in such studies as soon as it is feasible.

Examining Committee, Church Education Board: I will continue to serve as long as I am required and allowed to do so, on important regional (Conference) committees whose focus is on teaching ministry in order to reach out beyond the local church and provide useful ministry to other leaders, aspiring ministers and beginning pastors. The Examining Committee interviews men and women for license or ordination, and occasionally provides me with mentoring opportunities. I am currently serving with the portfolio of Sunday school representative on the regional Church Education Ministries Board, charged with the responsibility of engaging in training leaders and teachers to teach effectively and to encouraging systematic Bible study in the local church. These extra-curricula ministries will ensure my engagement in teaching and maintain freshness of thinking. They will also serve to stimulate my ministry and commitment to communicating the Word of God effectively.

Accountability and Evaluation

In the discussion above I have tried to outline my philosophy and strategy in general terms by discussing the integral elements, concepts and practices of my ministry. The key to achieving these broad goals and exercising the strategy is accountability and evaluation. For any general strategy like that above to be effective it must at some level be reduced to concrete goals in terms

of a time frame for achieving success, and it must be subject to internal and external evaluation. The following statement is designed to reduce my philosophical and broad strategy to measurable terms for the next five years. I also intend to show how I will implement a system of external accountability by which I will allow other people to assess my level of engagement and success on each level.

In 2005, just before homecoming in October, I found myself challenged by the Lord to set concrete goals for the church and my ministry in terms of tangible and measurable results for the next 10 years. These goals were arranged into a sort of plan for the future, a road map for achieving the mission. Many of the elements of the vision are quite trivial and are contextually bound, so that they may seem to be of little consequence to those outside of the fellowship. However, they are in fact key and important elements of the church's ministry strategy and of fulfilling its mission. Because my own ministry is integrally bound to the mission and ministry of the church, and because my pastoral oversight of the church is intimately bound to my personal philosophy and strategy of ministry (since here is where I exercise them in the context of my work in the kingdom of God), the goals set for the church speak to my own ministry and mission.

The Mission: Our mission is to make disciples through winning the lost and by providing a spiritual environment for spiritual growth in the church. We are motivated by the conviction that Acts 2:42-47 is a good model for the church, in that where the life of the church is vital and Spirit filled and led, evangelism and discipleship will take place, the mission will be fulfilled (cf. Acts 2:47b).

Our church is housed in an older building having been built in 1958. One key element in our plan is to undertake key updates to the church and its facilities to make it attractive and appealing for ministry to this generation. This means making physical changes to the buildings and grounds in an effort to show to the community and city where we live and minister that someone is 'home.' For years the church has remain unchanged on the outside and in, and gives the impression that nothing much is happening. Therefore,

we have set our minds to making the following changes:

A. A complete renovation of the facilities, including providing adequate bathrooms, enlarging and modernizing the platform in the sanctuary, adding adequate stage lighting, new audio-visual equipment, redecorating and carpeting the building in order to make it more inviting. These changes were to be completed in 2005 (as of today they have been done).

B. Enlarge the parking facilities to accommodate the growth already occurring, new landscaping to impact the perception of the church in the community from the outside, including the installation of a new sign to replace the outdated sign, which indicates that the church is static. This project is to be complete between the winter of 2006 and 2007, in time for the spring.

C. Take the available land which the church owns (approximately 3 acres) and put it to ministry use by erecting a fence (for the purpose of security) and then adding a concrete pad for a basketball court. This will have a multi-purpose function. The pad will be used for skateboarding (a ministry we already have started among the children), and will include other games laid out on it for young people to use and play. This is aimed at children's ministry in particular. A volleyball court will be constructed near the basketball court, designed primarily for young adult recreation. Around the perimeter of the field a walking track will be installed for senior adults to use during the day for an exercise program. This project is to be complete by the late fall of 2006.

D. A *Family Life Building* is to be constructed on the same lot. This building will be designed to provide for ministry programs in the church, and as a facility to be used for outreach, including after school programs, athletic activities (clubs or sport leagues), for family fellowship activities, teaching Christian life-skills classes, and exercise and fitness programs. It will be a two story building

with classrooms, offices, nursery, bathrooms with showers, adequate storage and a commercial sized kitchen, all around the outer perimeter on the lower floor. The open area will be large enough for basketball, indoor volley ball, banquets and large gatherings, and could be used as a sanctuary should we outgrow the present facility. The upper floor will consist of classrooms, a large youth room for teen ministry, and a similar room for children's ministries. Every classroom will have a sink and running water for children's ministries to have the convenience of clean up after activities, and so that adult classes can prepare refreshments in the classrooms.

The building will be designed to provide adequate space for activities that can impact first of all the lives of people in the church, and then be used as an outreach facility for the city through invitations to involvement in non-traditional church programs and activities. This project will begin with the drawing up of plans in the summer of 2008, the laying of the foundation in the spring or summer of 2009, and the completion and dedication of the building in the fall of 2009 or early in 2010. We intend to build debt free, by paying for the work as we go, so the project may take a little longer than a conventional construction project. We are proceeding on the premise that debt will in all likelihood interfere with flow of resources to ministry, so we will attempt to avoid borrowing finances (all of our building and renovations so far, costing some nearly \$175,000 have been completed debt free).

E. In the next three years (by 2009) the church plans to find some way to "announce" its presence in the community/city with either radio or television advertising, or some sort of local radio program broadcast on a local Christian station.

F. At the same time we should develop an outreach program, not too ambitious at first, but something designed to aggressively

reach into the community. The approach will be designed to ultimately use the planned facilities to the fullest extent.

There will be two prongs to our evangelism approach. First, the pastor has affirmed in his own heart a *new* commitment to formerly teaching personal evangelism annually as part of the Bible study program, in order to encourage every saint to become a disciple-maker. The purpose of this is two-fold -- to encourage believers to become engaged in the *Great Commission* by developing a concept of how important evangelism is to God (because it is his mission), and by equipping them to effectively share the gospel with unbelievers in the course of ordinary life and their daily interaction with people. It is our conviction that the early church in Acts grew because of this type of approach to evangelism, more so than through formal evangelistic campaigns or programs. Second, the pastor in consultation with key church leaders will develop a formal evangelism program using some preexisting structure, such as *Evangelism Explosion*. Formal evangelism will be designed to supplement consistent church membership evangelism. These will be combined with an aggressive, targeted use of regular or special church events including meals, musical programs, award events, commemorative events, holiday programs, as a way to expose people to Christ, his church and the gospel in the context of real relationships and friendships with God's people. The ultimate goal is to see the average Sunday morning attendance triple in 10 years, to around 300-350, doubling in the next 5 years to around 210-220.

The Ministry: Evangelistic growth must be matched by ministry, or it will stagnate. The church cannot grow without a plan for ministry and discipleship. Therefore, we are planning the following:

A. Because teaching the Word of God in a relevant way to

meet the people's needs is integral to my personal philosophy and strategy, the church's first priority for ministry is to see to it that everyone has access to biblical teaching, not just in the regular church worship services on Sunday, but in an intimate small group where their questions can be answered and where they are held accountable for their spiritual growth and maturity. For this reason we will seek to revive and breathe new life into two areas of our teaching ministry, the Sunday school and the Wednesday night Bible study program.

The main changes that will occur at first in Sunday school will be aimed at the young to middle adult age group. We will seek to add an elective approach to teaching in order to provide a variety of spiritual, theological and practical topics for study. Targeting young to middle family adults is a deliberate strategy which will coordinate with engaging an associate pastor (see later). The idea is to provide an approach that this generation is familiar with in the college and school system, and which we hope will be attractive and interesting to them.

On Wednesday night, Bible study night, we are already restructuring to provide a better integrated program of teaching for the very youngest to oldest. Unlike Sunday school which tends to be more doctrinal, biblical and theoretical, the purpose of the Wednesday night program is to provide solid biblical teaching and training to address the practical implementation of biblical skills and truth to real life. To do this we will offer Royal Rangers (a scout-like program) for the boys, Missionettes for the girls, each graded for age, and a teen life-principles class. Soon we hope to have 'family adult' classes to deal with issues related to raising children and to marriage. This class will be offered along with a supper meal at a nominal cost for entire families as a way of encouraging busy, working adults to bring their children to the

programs we offer them. Since the adults will be in church we hope to offer them some valuable teaching and insights. Older adults, those who have retired, and those who have raised their families and who now have grandchildren will continue to meet with the pastor for Bible study and ministry. Twice each year, in the spring and the fall, the adult classes will be combined for the pastor to teach evangelism skills and to teach on some relevant spiritual or doctrinal issue (e.g. gifts and fruit of the Spirit, holiness in our generation, etc.). This will also help develop a sense of connectedness in the church among the adults.

This mid-week programs is unashamedly designed to develop personal spirituality, equip the saints for living the Christian life, and for enriching believers spiritually, doctrinally and practically. The overall goal of the teaching program is to mature the saints and to train, equip and raise-up leaders for ministry in the church. By the end of 2007 it is our goal to have a fully developed and integrated program with every class functioning as it should, including the provision of meals at least twice each month on a Wednesday nights.

B. In order to make all of these things happen and provide pastoral care to the key group that we hope to reach, young and middle adults, we plan to engage an associate pastor. The associate pastor will assist the senior pastor in ministry, but will have responsibility for family life ministry and the Church Education Ministries Department, with oversight of the teaching ministries and programs of the church on Sunday morning and Wednesday night. The associate pastor's main pastoral ministry will be directed toward those adults who are college age through those who have children in public school. He/she will be responsible for ministry, follow-up, crisis and regular visitation and counseling to the adults and their children (the senior pastor

will provide pastoral care for the senior and older adults).

Depending on the finances, we plan to engage an associate pastor around 2008-2009, at a time when the church should be growing to around 200 in regular Sunday morning worship attendance, and at a time that we should be finishing our building program, so that the finances will be available. By the year 2012 we fully expect to engage a second associate pastor over senior adult ministry, and either in conjunction with this ministry or separately, to engage a fully qualified and fulltime worship leader to oversee the music and worship program.

Personal Ministry: In order to increase and maintain vitality for my pastoral ministry, I plan to engage in a rigorous development of my own ministry growth through engagement and study. Engagement will consist of seeking and accepting teaching opportunities beyond the local where I will be involved in training and developing leaders. Study will consist in a targeted program designed toward obtaining a post-graduate degree.

A. After graduating from Global University, I will be eligible to become involved in teaching in the Falcon School of Ministries, a teaching arm of the North Carolina Conference of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, preparing men and women for license and ordination. In August of 2006 I will formally offer my services to the Conference Superintendent. I plan to become increasingly involved in Church Education Ministries in the theological and doctrinal training programs that are designed to encourage and develop the skills of lay people in our organization, as well as to train them for ministry and leadership.

B. As stated above finances will not allow me to enroll in a post-graduate program immediately. Therefore, I intend to begin a rigorous research project which (hopefully) I can use toward a

post-graduate degree offered by Trinity College in Bristol, UK. The project will involve research into holiness from a spiritual and experiential perspective. It will begin with a thorough investigation into the concept of holiness as it is laid out in the Old Testament, including a study of the significance of the rituals of the law associated with sanctification and holiness. The investigation will progress toward an in depth study of holiness in the New Testament as a personal experience provided for in salvation and connected to the cross, the operation of God's grace and as a result of the internal operation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. I hope to include a discussion of the practical implications of experiential holiness as part of this research. I plan to have a great deal of the work on this project fleshed out by the spring of 2008, with the hope that I might enroll in the doctoral program at Trinity College in the fall. Should my research topic be rejected, the study will be submitted to my denomination as a formal treatment of one of our key doctrinal distinctives, namely Wesleyan sanctification.

C. I plan to work on a post graduate degree between 2008-2012.

A system of accountability: I have already discussed personal accountability. The aspects of the vision and strategy which affect the church into the future have already been made known publicly in 2005. In that way I deliberately 'nailed my colors to the mast.' The church has enthusiastically embraced the vision without reserve, with a conviction that it is from God and that it is achievable with his help. In a primary sense, then, I am accountable to the church for progress toward our goals. The church members are not only committed to working toward the goals, but they are looking at the list of goals and the time frames and evaluating our effectiveness in reaching them on a week by week basis. They regularly ask me about the next step and how they can be involved. So to that end I promote and discuss our future plans and goals from the pulpit and in personal conversations with the members and leaders, both formally and informally.

In January of each year, along with budget discussions, and planning, the church board will be conducting an annual review of progress on the building projects and programs proposed and envisioned above. This evaluation, among other things will be tantamount to an evaluation of my pastoral ministry, the level of my engagement and of the effectiveness of my leadership. Failure to progress or meet the goals will almost certainly reflect on my ministry, so it provides a powerful incentive to stay fully engaged and targeted.

I will be inviting independent minister friends on a formal and informal level to take a regular look at the progress of my personal and church ministries. I will engage my brother-in-law, Rev. Dwight Dunning, who is a pastor and post-graduate degree candidate, in a covenant of periodic evaluation. In particular I will be asking him to take a semi-annual look with me at my progress toward the church and personal ministry goals, helping me to foresee problem areas, and to solve existing problems based on his similar experiences. I will ask him also engage in an informal discussion with me on the net results of my research, what I have discovered and how it has impacted my theological perspectives with respect to experiential holiness and the doctrinal distinctives of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church.

Additionally at some point soon, I would like to engage one of the denominational leaders in an agreement to take a look at my 10 year strategy and to agree to evaluate the progress each year on the aspects of it that directly impact the church and its ministry, in order to determine if I am on track, and to make suggestions and constructively criticize areas of failure or under achievement.

In addition to these things I would hope to engage what I call the ‘pastor’s prayer council’ in actively praying for the progress of the ministry. In this respect, we will discuss, evaluate and pray for the individual aspects of the plan which I have made known to the church and discussed above. The prayer council is designed to provide prayer support to the pastor, and a forum for regaining spiritual momentum when it is lost due to spiritual opposition, neglect or apathy. The council is a group of five people who can talk freely and openly to the pastor, and with whom he can share specific prayer requests for the purpose of intercession, things that he cannot share with the general membership of the church. This approach provides a deep level of personal accountability on the local church level.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to lay out the philosophy and strategy of my ministry in the context of my convictions and calling to ministry, and as a result of my studies at Global University. This philosophy and strategy of ministry include two main thrusts, biblical interpretation (for the purpose of teaching, effective pastoral ministry and preaching) and mission (for the purpose of evangelism and church growth). In the course of this paper I have attempted to develop my philosophy and strategy of ministry in the context of my current pastoral ministry and responsibilities, after which I further attempted to reduce these rather general aims to measurable goals on a church, ministry and personal level. Finally I have attempted to describe how I intend to remain accountable for my personal spiritual growth, the progress of my ministry, and toward the goals I have stated through developing a series of key personal and professional relationships.

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