

A Senior Pastor in the Midst of a
Transition to a Team Ministry

JG: Pastor, could you tell us something about your experience in working with a multiple staff?

SP: I would say our first experience was several pastorates ago, and it involved a man whom we brought in to be our Christian Education Director, who was better educated theologically than I was as far as degrees are concerned. We brought him in because of his experience as a pastor and presumed maturity.

JG: Was he older than you?

SP: No, he was younger by...well, he wouldn't have been that much younger probably; I was in my early 40's and as I recall, he was in his late 30's. We soon found out that he lacked real initiative, and perhaps this was the reason that he left the pastorate in the first place. He didn't have initiative and ingenuity on his own. I think one area we failed in was not having the board involved sufficiently all the way through in laying down ground rules, a job description, etc. and so it did pose a problem. He wasn't one who would visit; he spent his hours in his office in the basement, either studying or rolling out reams of paper for suggestions to Sunday School teachers, and youth workers, but he never could get his feet dirty in the situation. Well, the conflict really came when he was teaching a young married couples class. As pastor, along with the board, I had to take a position against a man who was apparently a zealous missionary. I read him like a book, and some of the other men read him like a book. He was sort of a semi con-artist. His contact was with this young married couples class. Some of them in the class looked at him as being a real man of faith, how the Lord provided this, that, and the other thing. He had a way of getting his need across subtly so that they weren't even aware of it. The fellow ultimately went back to Alaska because his mission board wasn't sound according to him. He went back with an airplane, a bus, a truck, and a car, so you see how capable he was. We refused to take him on as a missionary, and we also refused to allow money to be channelled through the church to him. Well of course, this worked out in the young married couples gravitating toward this second man, our Christian Ed. man. So it posed a real problem. They ultimately, after we left the church, had to let him go because they found that he was carrying a full doctorate load at Michigan State University and had not informed them of that. That was where we perhaps were not thorough enough; we took him on the basis of his outward appearance instead of on his pastoral background, and his theological background, and all