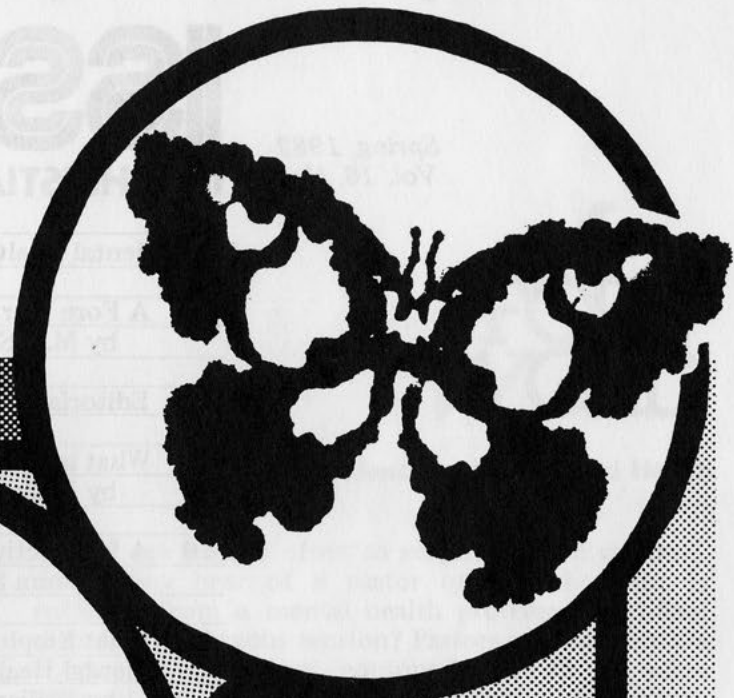


ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Spring, 1982

Vol. 16, No. 2



MENTAL HEALTH IN THE MINISTRY

Concordia College
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IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Too many church people place mental health problems into the category of unmentionable subjects. Some even prefer to pretend mental illness never happens among pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education or devout laypersons. What a tragic state of affairs. It is a Pharasaical stance which has no place among those who should be able to admit they are sinners, accept forgiveness for their sins and then proceed to be of good cheer with the resolve to refrain from repeating their sins, including those involving their mental health.

This number of *Issues* is devoted to providing information and viewpoints that can be used by readers who are concerned about the havoc that mental illness among professional church workers causes in congregations, in their families and elsewhere. The Editorial Committee hopes the materials on the following pages will contribute vital ideas on how to help those brothers and sisters who become subjects of mental health problems and their congregations to take the necessary steps to find the problems and remedy them.

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A FORE WORD

Mental and Emotional Health

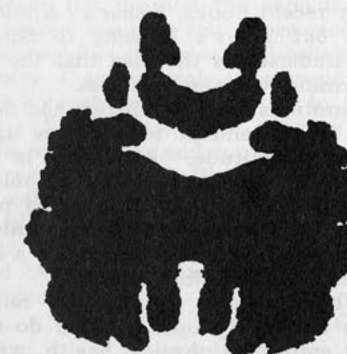
Why are people often so surprised, even shocked, when they hear of a pastor or a teacher who is suffering from a mental health problem, emotional disorder, or nervous tension? Pastors and teachers are normal human beings, equipped with all the same physical and psychological make-up as other persons. When their skin is cut, they bleed. When their bodies are injured, they feel pain. Likewise when they experience psychological stresses and/or emotional trauma, they tend to react in the same normal ways as other Christians. St. Paul put it very well when he reminded his hearers at Lystra who regarded Paul and Barnabas as some kind of gods, "We are men of like nature with you."

Happily our Creator has also built into the physical and psychological systems of people mechanisms which promote physical healing as well as psychological adjustment. When, however, some psychological or emotional maladjustment does occur, we should do more than pray about it, just as when physical illness or injury occurs we not only pray but also seek medical attention.

The best kind of health care, however, for both physical and mental health is preventative care. We need to prevent subjecting our pastors, teachers and other spiritual leaders to unnecessary and undue amounts of stress, just as we are concerned that they are not subjected to physical abuse. Pastors and teachers, however, also need to learn to cultivate and practice good mental health habits so that they can cope with stressful situations.

The articles, editorials and book reviews in this *ISSUES* contribute toward helping us develop insights into understanding and coping with situations, attitudes, and stresses which if ignored can sometimes lead individuals toward mental health problems. I believe laity, clergy and anyone who occupies positions of leadership which tend to increase feelings of stress will find these articles informative and useful.

M. J. Stelmachowicz



editorials

IF YOU DON'T CARE YOU WON'T WEAR OUT

All members of the helping professions, and this certainly includes professional church workers, are responsible for monitoring and caring for their own physical and mental health. This basic assumption applies to all people. We understand that God has created us to be responsible persons and that He has redeemed us and empowered us to live sanctified lives to His glory and for the benefit of society.

Hans Selye, a pioneer researcher on the effects of stress upon living organisms, emphasizes that individuals are responsible for coping with stress in their lives. Other contemporary literature on stress makes the following suggestions to people who are in the helping professions:

- 1) maintain an attitude of detached concern regarding clients,
- 2) separate your work from your personal lives (that's the old adage of don't take your problems home with you),
- 3) organize your professional day to deal with priorities only (this sounds like an attempt to operationalize the Scripture passage, "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof"),
- 4) form support groups with other professional church workers and people helpers.

The assumption that all individuals, and particularly professional church workers, are responsible for their own mental and physical health is well documented. This, however, does not make the responsibility any easier to fulfill.

It is very difficult to carry out all the good advice contained in the self-help literature because, to be effective in ministry to people, you *must* get involved with them. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. He was personally involved and therefore emotionally committed to His ministry. The pastor who does not take ownership for his congregation's problems but maintains the position that he cannot be bothered after 8 o'clock in the evening has carried the principle of departmentalization to absurdity. It is apparent that people who burn out or have other difficulties with their mental and physical health are those professionals who care very much for people and for their ministry. They are delighted with the opportunities which their ministry brings them. (If you don't care, you won't wear out or burn out).

Another difficulty in being efficient care-takers of our own mental health is that everyone is different. Everyone has different amounts of energy and differing needs for coping with stress in their lives. The challenge of high risk taking appeals to many church professionals. They need stress to keep their ministries intriguing and personally satisfying. Nancy Loving Tubesing of Whole Life Person Associates of Duluth, Minnesota, says that life would not be exciting without stress. Dr. Van Slyke of the University of Southern California commented in one of his recent interviews that one group of successful executives with whom he works believes that winners lose more often than losers. Successful people who are involved in the stimulating church professions are high risk takers. They deliberately seek stress and place themselves in situations where there are risks of making mistakes in attempting to help people. They don't let it all cave in on them when they are temporarily defeated.

Your mental health is your responsibility, but you are not alone. Your ministry is a joint ministry with other professionals with whom you work as well as with the people you serve. Most importantly, the Lord is with you. The solution to dealing with mental and physical health challenges is one of perspective. You must not over-identify with your ministry. You are a steward, just as all of God's children are stewards. At the same time you may not over-identify with your ministry. If you make this mistake you force someone else to be responsible for your mission. When you do not carry out your portion of the burden you begin to manipulate others. Ministers must understand that insitutions (congregations, schools, synods, and associations) are the settings or frameworks for carrying out ministry. These institutions are not identical to the Lord God. They are delivery systems for completing the Lord's ministry. We are not the Lord. The organizations are not the Lord. This seems self-evident, and yet it seems to me to be the root of many people's problems. They take themselves too seriously. It is important that we remember that God has chosen us and empowered us to be involved in a cooperative effort with our agencies and our clients. All professional church workers and all agencies and institutions are a means to an end. The Author and Finisher of all ministry is the Lord God.

Gene Oetting

WELLNESS AS COOPERATIVE MINISTRY

There is a growing concern among people of all ages over their physical and emotional health. The idea of holistic health and preventive medicine is becoming increasingly popular.

One of the reasons why wellness has become an international concern is that diseases and their related costs are escalating very rapidly. Furthermore, most common diseases are caused by a lifestyle, and health can be enhanced with a change in living habits. Thus, there is evidence that people do want a more fulfilling and healthier existence.

A recent book by Achterberg and Lawlis entitled *Bridges of the Bodymind* strongly suggests that the mind determines to a large extent a person's physical being. Attitudes which are formulated in the mind significantly determine a person's illness and wellness. Another of many recent books, Fisher's *I Know You Hurt but There's Nothing to Bandage*, also underscores the idea that the mind determines wellness or illness.

Emotions such as distress and depression are dependent to a degree upon a person's attitude. Attitudes in turn depend to a large extent upon relationships. When relationships among people are on a high positive level, attitudes are more positive. Relationships are a causal factor in attitude formation.

While positive and healthy relationships between people can and do determine emotional/physical health, we find

ourselves living in a society that repeatedly militates against positive relationships. Our society gives increasing emphasis to being Number One in sports and general living and in being independent. Competitiveness and independence are repeatedly fostered in schools and homes. Of course, striving to be Number One began in the Garden of Eden, but it is presently on a rampant brutal charge and seemingly is highly acceptable in a world that has fostered this philosophy by reinforcing it with high material rewards. Winning at any cost is an everyday, generally condoned occurrence. Independence or "doing it on your own" also is an ideal repeatedly fostered in our society.

Now here is the major conflict. We foster competition and independence while in our "shrinking" world there is a growing population which demands cooperation and interdependence for effective living. There is real stress and tension between what our world needs and what is being fostered. We desperately need to learn to practice cooperation because our real world can only continue to exist with effective harmonious living: interdependence.

The tension between what is and what needs to be is a definite cause of negative attitudes and poor relationships in home, school, church, community, state, nation, and world. Church workers should be aware that the same condition of independence and competitiveness (instead of cooperation and interdependence) will work to the demise of the church and will also foster poor physical/emotional health. Competition/independence causes poor attitudes which are part of the cause of illness.

The ideas behind the Moral Law, the Communion of Saints, the Office of the Keys, the Breaking of Bread and Prayers all strongly suggest cooperation and interdependence. This is a major thrust of Christianity. Our model is Jesus Christ who lived cooperatively and interdependently as He assumed the servant role. Pastors and teachers can experience successful and healthy cooperative living by assuming a servant role. A servant does not get caught up in activities to prove who is Number One. He is more concerned with serving and cooperating. Ministers who use their office to gain power over others may experience emotional and physical illness in self and their "slaves" to a greater degree than they would by living cooperatively and interdependently.

Herman L. Glaess

IDENTITY AND INTEGRITY

The last ten years has seen an explosion of concern over interpersonal relationships. In business, government, schools and churches, groups have formed to help people learn to know themselves and each other. People are becoming more aware of the emotional needs of those around them.

In the midst of awareness seminars, crisis training, enrichment courses, however, there often stands one man apart. He may even be "leading" the group. He is sought out by the desperate, the lonely, the misunderstood, the alcoholic, the hurting of society. He consoles, encourages, counsels, supports and loves. A sensitive, concerned and committed person, he is often alone, sometimes hurt and frightened, strangely ignored. He is the pastor.

The pastor walks through a myriad of experiences each day that demand of him his best. He responds to the inquisitive mind of the confirmand and to watching and praying with a beloved member at death's door. The world of the pastor is filled with conflict and crisis. His office possibly is more demanding than at any other time in the history of the church. In light of such pressures and demands the mental health of clergy has indeed been waning. Time and again we read of another pastor resigning from his pastorate due to pressures or to personal problems.

The identity and integrity of the pastor seldom goes unchallenged. He is constantly on stage to present himself as professional, as crisis counselor, as nourisher, as the one with the means of God's grace. A level of peace and tranquility is sought by the pastor who can sense some justice and find a way to be in good standing with such weekly performances as five evening meetings, eleven private communions plus Bible classes and sermon preparation. The conflict to remain in good standing and justified in his office and work may leave a pastor with a greater fear of the unrest felt within himself.

Too often the pastor may be tempted to respond, "What has God done to me?" rather than look at what he has done to himself. The pastor not only hears the calling of a pastorate as being from God; he somehow manages to shoulder the responsibility of saving the institution. Instead of investing himself in the hurts and pains of his members, the pastor spends endless hours in supporting the organization.

Time and time again Jesus had to

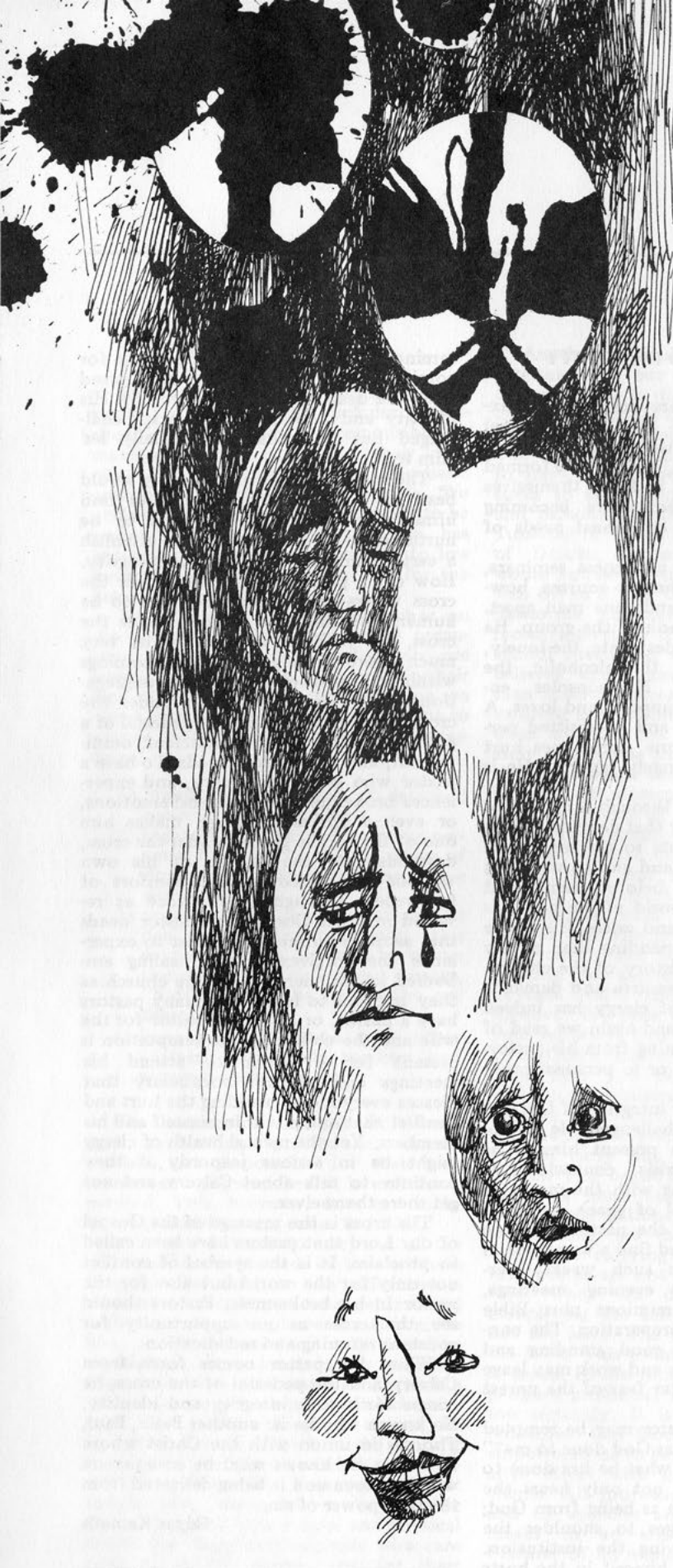
remind the disciples that His purpose for coming was to be crucified and raised from the dead (Matthew 16 and 26). His identity and integrity were always challenged but his ministry eventually led Him to the cross.

The mental health of the clergy would best be served if a pastor could find himself under that same cross to be nurtured, to be identified and to establish a certain amount of Christ-like integrity. How can a pastor find himself under the cross unless people allow for him to be human? No one enjoys being under the cross, for it hurts and makes us very much aware of the pain and shortcomings within us. I suspect members of congregations don't want the pastor under the cross. They need him on the pedestal of a god figure, one who is omniscient, omnipresent, and knows their needs. To have a pastor who gets tired, angry, and experiences brokenness of spirit and emotions, or even a broken marriage, makes him one of them. The pastor, under the cross, descends into the depths of his own wounds and discovers the comfort of forgiveness through God's grace as revealed in Jesus Christ. The pastor needs that same crucifixion of Christ to experience the forgiveness and healing embodied in the members of the church as they minister to him. How many pastors have a pastor, or at least a pastor for the wife and the children? The temptation is present for a pastor to attend his meetings and adopt a vocabulary that pleases everyone by avoiding the hurt and conflict that exists within himself and his members. Yet the mental health of clergy might be in serious jeopardy if they continue to talk about Calvary and not get there themselves.

The cross is the message of the Gospel of our Lord that pastors have been called to proclaim. It is the symbol of conflict not only for the world but also for the pastor in his brokenness. Pastors should see the cross as an opportunity for constant retuning and rededication.

When the pastor comes forth from Calvary and the pedestal of the cross, he comes forth with integrity and identity. He knows who he is: another Peter, Paul, Thomas in union with the Christ whom he serves. He knows what he is: a person who has been and is being delivered from the very power of sin.

Edgar Keinath



by Lorraine E. Demarest

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is an attitude which permeates our whole being and which integrates our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It can be positive or negative, but seldom neutral. It is the product of our genes, our upbringing, and our environment.

Although every part of our lives is influenced by our mental health, many people still attempt to separate it from their physical and spiritual counterparts. They have difficulty in seeing the inter-relatedness between the three and treat their emotional or mental health as though it were something of which to be ashamed, or at times denied. The more we try to deny what is inherent in our mental health, particularly our feelings and attitudes, the more they are apt to give us trouble. It is in not dealing with and/or directly facing our mental health problems that causes them to be compounded.

Who has mental health problems? Every one of us does at some time or other. If we have ever been unhappy, sad, irritable, or anxious and were immobilized in our coping for a few minutes, we have had a mental health problem. Most of the time we "shift gears" in our thinking and don't recognize that we have passed through a "problem" area. We utilize the resources that constitute our positive mental health to carry us through our dilemma.

What indicates positive mental health? According to the Nebraska Association of Mental Health Educators, some indications of positive mental health are to

- 1) express love openly,
- 2) deal constructively with reality,
- 3) work and be productive,
- 4) adapt to change,
- 5) feel and express emotions appropriately,
- 6) experience satisfaction from giving,
- 7) relate satisfactorily with others, and
- 8) redirect hostile impulses into creative and constructive outlets.

Although these seem to be rather simple and direct, people do not fully understand their import.

1. Express love openly

We need to understand what "love" and "openly" mean. First of all, we must love ourselves because, until we learn to love and accept ourselves, we cannot love and accept others. Some people will respond, "That's what's wrong with the mental health professionals. They teach everybody to think of themselves first. This is where we get the uncaring, 'me' generation."

Let's set some priorities straight. In my mind there is no doubt that God is first. The question of loving God is a "given" in my counseling situations. Our problem comes when we do not have the ability to understand human love.

I have been told by some ministers that at their seminary "J-O-Y," meaning Jesus, Others, Yourself, was taught to them as the way to view their ministry and their lives. We've changed this to O JOY, Only Jesus Over Yourself. As I said, God is first, and there is no hesitation on my part about that statement. But here on earth I think we have to look at love differently.

When God teaches us about love, He says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." If He had thought that it was appropriate to love our neighbors first, He could have put it the other way around and commanded us to love yourself as you love your neighbor. Evidently God thought we were going to love ourselves and was using this as an example of how to love others.

Some people see this as being selfish or self-centered, but they are only looking at a part of God's command and don't fully understand what it means. In our physical and spiritual lives everybody accepts the fact that we have to take care of ourselves first. In fact we're the only ones who can take care of ourselves. It's only in the emotional part that people have a problem.

Think in terms of the spiritual. We each have to believe in God for ourselves. We cannot believe in God for another person. We're saved through *our* faith, not somebody else's faith.

This is true of our physical well-being too. Who do we expect to take care of us physically? Who do we expect to see for us? Who do we expect to breathe for us? Eat for us? You'd say, "That's foolish. I have to do that for myself." We have no hesitation about doing for ourselves physically or spiritually, but when it comes to the emotional, suddenly we're being selfish if we take care of ourselves first.

This emotional paradox has caused certain patterns to emerge in how people care about each other. Because we feel we're being selfish if we love ourselves (yet we need to feel that we are loved), we seek to get other people to do for us what we will not do for ourselves; therefore we reach out to people and do things for them. But often there are strings attached because we want something in return. When we do not get anything in return, we feel rejected, unloved, and insecure.

When we follow the pattern as God wants it, where we love ourselves first, then because our needs have been taken care of we can give freely to others, with

no strings attached, because we already feel loved and fulfilled. I recognize that this is an ideal and we'll never get there 100%, but this is more of what we should be striving for than to be self-effacing, unfulfilled persons.

Asking for something that we're not willing to do for ourselves (no matter what reason we give for not doing it) puts a terrific burden of responsibility upon other persons. It not only is asking a great deal of them, but also is dooming the effort to failure because no one knows our needs as well as we do.

The second part is to express love openly. Being open is being honest *most* of the time. I have often told people that some of the goals of treatment are to get them back to where they were when they were about four years of age, a time when they were honest with the world in general. Think of a four-year-old's honesty. That directness is embarrassing to adults, but we need this kind of honesty, tempered with adult tact, so that we are not purposely hurting people's feelings.

2. Deal constructively with reality

A very basic question is, "What is the reality of the situation?" This means we have to strip away our fears and imaginings and deal with plain facts. Too often we worry about what might be or what could happen, and we build it so much in our minds that the reality of the situation is hidden.

Although it may sound like Pollyanna, we need to decide that something constructive can be done about every reality. Two things have often helped me in looking at things constructively. One is the firm conviction that whether I see it or not, God will make all things work for good to them that love Him. The other is a motto that I have long used in dealing with problems, namely, "the difficult we do today; the impossible takes a little longer."

3. Work and be productive

Work is often thought to be a panacea for many ills, and certainly productivity causes us to feel satisfied. It is documented that, in a mild to moderate depression, physical activity of some kind is helpful in warding off the depression and/or alleviating it. In severe depression professional help is needed for awhile.

4. Adapt to change

Change will always be with us and if we are not adaptive to change, we regress. It is impossible to stand still. One of my favorite prayers is the Serenity Prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." While this seems like a simple prayer, I've often told people that if they live by it they will never need to seek help from anybody. It recognizes that change will always be with us, but that at the same time we personally cannot always change things. Of the three points of that prayer, the hardest is the last, the wisdom to know the difference between what one can and cannot change. Too often when I've asked people what they would like to change in their lives, the answer usually involves how they want to change somebody else. This never works because the only person that we can change is ourselves.

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5. Feel and express emotions appropriately

Many people want help to enable them to feel more even emotionally, and not to have so many ups and downs. We need the ups and downs! If you've ever seen a medical TV show, you've seen a monitor which indicates a heart pulsating by moving up and down. What does it mean when this line straightens and moves horizontally across the screen? It indicates death. If our emotions flatten out in the same fashion, we are emotionally dead. It is our "lows" that enable us to appreciate our "highs." Only when these are extreme, as in the manic-depressive, are they cause for concern.

To demonstrate how to *express* emotions appropriately I make an analogy between a person and a pressure cooker. People are like pressure cookers in that they have things that annoy them all during the day which cause little fires of irritation to start. Like the cooker with the fires beneath, the fires of annoyance tend to build up on the inside. What happens when the control on top of the pressure cooker is working properly and giving off steam at regular intervals? Nothing much, outside of a little noise. But if that same top is clamped down tight and not allowed to make the noise to indicate that it is letting off steam, what will happen? There'll be a big noise. The pot may rupture. Certainly the safety valve will blow. Something will explode. People are the same way. They have to let off the steam that they accumulate in some way. Persons who can say how they're feeling when they feel it (in other words, blow off steam appropriately) never have too much of a problem. People who hold their emotions in often have somatic complaints such as headaches, high blood pressure, and ulcers. It's surprising how easily these can be controlled or reduced when the emotions begin reacting appropriately.

Christians often have trouble expressing their feelings, particularly what they term "negative" feelings, such as anger. Feelings are. They're not good; they're not bad; they just exist and we have to deal with them. It has always interested me that sinning is talked about in specific ways — "thought, word, and deed." There's no mention of "feelings." The feeling of anger seems to be the emotion that is troublesome for church people. I remember one minister who had great difficulty in expressing or admitting his own hostile and angry feelings. I had been seeing him only a short time when an article came out in *The Lutheran Witness* entitled, "Anger Can Be Useful" (March, 1970). Since I knew he was an avid reader of *The Lutheran Witness* I asked him what he thought about the article. He claimed that he had not seen such an article, although he had read the magazine from cover to cover. We were both amazed at how completely he had blocked out seeing the article because it went against his beliefs.

God never tells us not to be angry. He displayed anger Himself. He does tell us we should never let the sun go down on our anger. As human beings we will get angry, but we have to deal with it immediately and appropriately and get rid of it before the day is done. We need to "go to our brother" before the sun goes down and straighten it out between us.

Labeling our feelings can cause problems also.

Spouses request divorce counseling because they "hate" their spouses. If I ask what is the opposite of "love," I'm told "hate." Nothing can be further from the truth. "Love" and "hate" mean the same — intense personal involvement with someone. "Apathy" is the opposite of both "love" and "hate."

6. Experience satisfaction from giving

This may sound incompatible with taking care of yourself, but becoming independent by taking care of yourself is only a first step and not an end in itself. Many mental health people talk in terms of doing "our own thing" and a "me" generation is created. The goal of the mental health profession is not to lead a person to the end of independence, but to have him or her go on to interdependence. Our task in life is to go from dependence to independence to interdependence, and this interdependence is a complete one with our fellow human beings and with God. In our interdependence we have tolerance for others and are able to accept ourselves and them as they are without making demands, while still encouraging everyone to utilize their potentials.

7. Relate satisfactorily with others

We are social beings, and even though we must stand on our own two feet, our ultimate goal is interdependence with others. When we cannot function comfortably in a group, or when we are so inhibited as to cut ourselves off from other people, we need to seek help. Sometimes it is as basic as taking a public speaking course or a course at a community college that will help us to overcome initial shyness and insecurity. However, prolonged feelings of this sort indicate the need of professional help.

8. Redirect hostile impulses into creative and constructive outlets

When we say others make us angry, we are *allowing* them to make us angry. They cannot make us angry unless we give them the power to do so. Many people balk at this thought until they recognize that, as long as they give this power to others, they have less control over their own lives. Because we do control whether we become angry or not, we can choose to elect to make our intense emotions work for our own positive mental health.

What can we do to promote ourselves to positive mental health? First of all, we need to understand our feelings, moods, and ways of coping. This may not be how other people cope, but there is no one right way to solve problems. We need to understand ourselves and recognize what will work for us.

Secondly, we need to set goals and realistic limits for our activities. Too often we have not learned how to say "no," and we get ourselves pushed into predicaments where we find ourselves with backs to the wall. We need to be realistic about our time and our talent and, while we will want to use them to the optimum, we do not want to overuse them to the point where they become inoperational and neglected.

Third, in planning time, don't forget to relax. Transactional analysis describes three ego states: the

parent, the adult, and the child. Many people see the parent and the adult as useful ego states, but completely cut off their child. They're workaholics and don't know how to have fun. They can get by with this for a very long time, and some get by with it forever; however, they're not living up to their optimum, because there's a part of them that has not developed.

Fourth, work on one problem at a time. When people come for help, it's usually because they're overwhelmed by so many problems crashing in on them at one time that they're not able to sort out problems individually and look at them. When they are helped with sorting out the problems and look at them one at a time, they usually find them manageable.

The fifth requirement is to smile and/or cry. Sometimes people are afraid to show their emotions. We hear such admonitions as "Don't wear your heart on your sleeve" or "Don't let the world know what's going on with you." Showing our feelings openly and honestly can open up new worlds for us.

Our sixth need is to finish something we've started. When something is completed there is a sense of satisfaction over a job well done that is hard to beat. It does not matter how small it is, as long as it gets done. It also does not matter if it is done perfectly or imperfectly.

Not making a decision or commitment can be debilitating. Straddling the fence is a very uncomfortable position. Once we made a commitment, one way or the other, we can either live with it or change it. No commitment at all can drag on and on and really wear us down.

The seventh need is to trust ourselves, our abilities and our goals. In trusting ourselves we run risks. They are not to be avoided but to be met and overcome. When people are afraid to trust themselves and risk experiencing life, I give them a copy of the following poem:

The Name of Faith is Risk

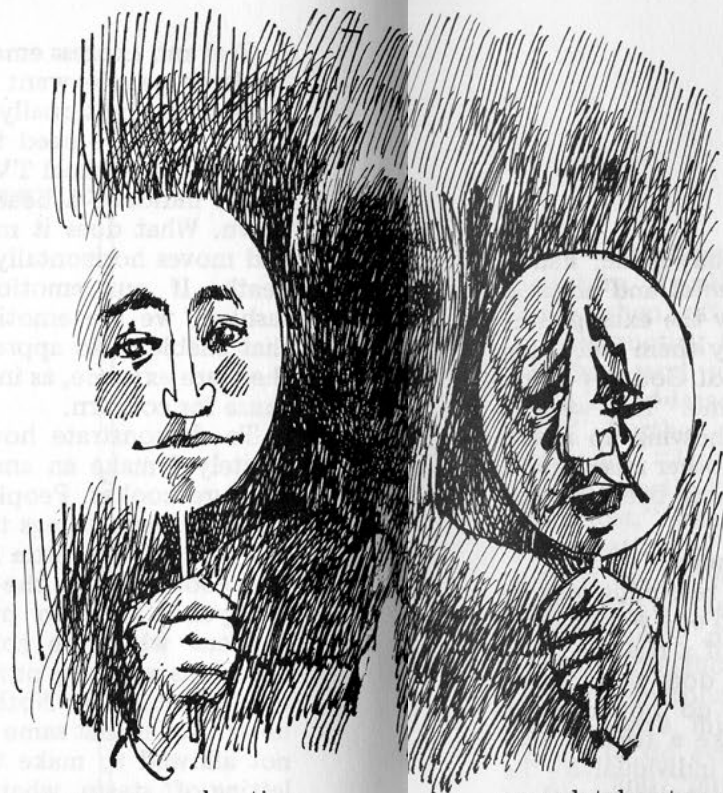
To laugh is to risk appearing the fool;
 To weep is to risk appearing sentimental;
 To reach out for another is to risk exposing your true self;
 To place your idea, your dream before the crowd is to risk your loss;
 To love is to risk not being loved in return;
 To live is to risk dying;
 To hope is to risk despair
 To try at all is to risk failure;
 And only the person who risks can be called a free man;
 And only a free man can be called a child of God.

From the book *When Love Prevails*

The eighth goal should be to give and receive help. Some people find it easier to give help than to receive it. As Christians we often give help more easily than we accept it. Many of us, when we are paid a compliment, find it very difficult just to say "Thank you." We either have to explain it away or defend it.

In summary, all of us have mental health problems at times, but we are able to cope with them. Inability to solve our problems means only that we need help in marshalling the positive mental health resources that God has given all of us. ■

by John S. Angle



A Perspective on Some Elements of Mental Health

In any given magazine or newspaper, advertisements touting the easy accessibility of mental health for a given price continually assault readers. Purchase our book, attend our sessions, put yourself in our hands, and you will assuredly be provided with inner calm, peace of mind, and tranquility of spirit. If that isn't to your liking, attend many private parties or hit the streets to obtain the use of tranquilizers, drugs, and alcohol in sufficient quantities to dull the mind and numb the senses and conscience to the realities of life. The search for mental health has, even among the servants of the Word, become one of the great concerns of this century.

Mental Health is something larger and deeper than a transient state. It is a condition of body, mind and spirit which enables a person to live through pain and anxiety as a steward of God's blessings, to "fight the good fight" of faith and to be "more than a conqueror" in the experiences that try a person's soul. It is a creative growth through all the relationships of life, be they healthy or unhealthy. Such mental health is not the goal, but rather a road to follow on as long as a person lives. It is not a hundred-yard dash where the runner falls at the finish line at the short end of a given course, but rather a steady pace for a longer distance of many years duration. It is the constant renewing of strength and purpose to keep going on over many odds so "they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

The Role of Sin and Grace

To aspire to such a rugged, dynamic state of mind and spirit, it is essential that we seek it within the framework of the divine justice and the redeeming love of God in Jesus. We live, as Luther says, in "daily contrition and repentance" finding a catharsis in "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son" which "cleanses us from all sin." As we penitently and believably look up to the Christ who through His suffering and death

completely atoned for our sins, we receive from Him the comforting assurance: "Be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives, give I to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

We are redeemed! We are freed from the shackles of sin by God Himself! Yet we find ourselves trapped within the shackles of a human structure that constantly seeks to weaken and destroy the very work of God within us. If we can continue to grow in understanding our structure and how it functions within us, it leads toward a freeing of self from its bondage and enslavement.

The Heredity-Environment Fallacy

Those accepting the human evolution from more primitive forms of life see the human evolving gradually toward some future state of animal perfectionism. This leaves people, at the present, living enslaved and conditioned to a theory of hereditary crippling and, more devastatingly, environmental shackling. We are at our best curtailed by the mysterious past emergent genetic powers operative in our life and fenced in by the overwhelming influences of the past and present environment. Such conceptual thinking leads to a futility and a debasement of the human who was made "in the image of God," made "a little lower than angels" to be "the image and glory of God."

We should anticipate from such a creation made and redeemed by God Himself a kind of mental health and behavior different from the world. God provides us with the expected model which is to honor Him with lives that fulfill His command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In a sense this may be regarded as an equation wherein we are able to show and provide love to other people in the same degree that we are able to show and provide love to ourselves. This equation challenges us to get beyond

mere verbalizing love into the arena of actually loving ourselves and subsequently other people.

This immediately poses not only a challenge, but also the critical question of how one goes about loving oneself when we are well aware that we are contained within a human system that opposes such a concept of love and mental health. Scripture is replete with examples of our ancestral heritage in conflict over this issue — even to the extent of creating situations wherein a love for self is actually weakened.

Our first ancestors, the original creation by God, upon breaking God's request that they not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, compounded the action by denying personal responsibility for their actions by projecting the blame upon someone else. Adam states, "The woman whom You gave me, *she* gave me the tree," while Eve states, "The serpent beguiled me."

When Moses confronted Aaron about his building the golden calf, Aaron projects the blame upon the people as he defends himself saying, "You know the people, that *they* are set on mischief. For *they* said to me. Make us gods . . ."

Saul in defense of his usurping the function of a priest over Samuel projected the blame upon the people and upon Samuel himself saying, "Because I saw the people were scattered from me (loss of control over them) and that *you* didn't come when you were supposed to, and the Philistines were gathering . . ." Samuel used the same excuse for himself a little later when he states, "I have obeyed the voice of the Lord . . . but the people took of the spoil, etc."

The difficulty of achieving or creating a favorable climate for loving oneself is further revealed at the time when God requested Moses to represent Him before Pharaoh. Moses replied, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" and followed this excuse by

his further rationalization, "I am not eloquent . . . I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue."

A different yet familiar excuse was utilized by Gideon when approached by the Lord's angel to go forth on God's designated ministry saying, "My family is poor . . . and I am the least in my father's house." Gideon projected the blame for his lack of love for himself upon his family background, in essence stating that if it weren't for that hindrance, he would have had a different concept of himself.

So we are confronted by the ghosts of the weaknesses, the chinks in the armor of loving oneself from our religious past and our own excuse-laden human system. This is our challenge, to learn by and profit from the examples of our ancestors and to forge in ourselves the love relations, the mental health which our Creator and Redeemer intends for us to possess as His servants.

A major stumbling block to even seriously considering this challenge in our lives lies in the direct and indirect educational process we have absorbed throughout our lives which reinforces our helplessness to control and direct our lives *even under* the great freedom from sin and guilt provided us. We have bought into what we might refer to as the "medical model" of illness, namely, that viruses and other evil things invade our bodies and minds over which we have little or no say as to their effect upon us.

We think that one of the primary limitations which causes us to fail is our hereditary influences. While it is true they do influence to a degree our stature, certain disease influences, hair, eye color, etc., we have viewed them as being able to even determine our behavior. In short, we have succumbed to a way of thinking which encourages an attitude of helplessness in the face of genetic influences. For example, when a problem arises with a child's behavior it is not uncommon, whether in jest or not, for parents to point the finger of responsibility and guilt to some past ancestor on either the maternal or paternal side of the family — "He's just like so and so in *your* family."

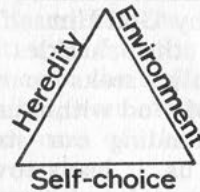
Coupled with the genetic theory to explain away human attitudes and behavior is a more tangible and hence, in some ways, a more convincingly held concept that the past and present environment within which we have grown up has so molded and formed us that we view ourselves as victims caught within its sticky web, a web that has hemmed us in on all sides and that is refusing to free us.

If one combines these two controlling, manipulating, forming forces of hereditary and environment, we are, without thinking, capitulating our mental and physical health in a major degree to forces and powers beyond ourselves. The best we allow ourselves within this conceptual framework is minor adjustments related to nutritional and exercise contrivances. We are prone, even as followers of the Creator

and Redeemer, to utilize these ready-made, handy rationalizations for our lack of mental and physical health. We are too willing to follow the examples of our ancestors instead of learning by them and being the reflections of God, the image of God. We think and verbalize a "poor me" syndrome. "If it weren't for my great grandfather's genes showing up in me and if it weren't for the way my mother raised me — think what a great person I could have been! Excuse me, God, it's not my fault."

The Element of Self-Choice

Perhaps the fallacy of this line of reasoning may be illustrated by the simple triangle. No one would think of describing the total properties of a triangle using only one line. One line (/) simply does not make a triangle. Similarly two lines (Λ) do not make a triangle; it takes three lines to make a triangle (Δ). Similarly, if we may compare an individual to the triangle, one aspect (heredity and environment) of the person does not reveal the person nor do two aspects (heredity and environment) important as each may be to the understanding of the individual. A third aspect is needed, even as the third line on the triangle, to complete a real view of personhood, namely, the self-choice system of the individual.



This self-choice is diagrammable, predictable, and participates in all events that occur within a person's lifetime. Generally speaking, the choice system consists of the intellectual functions and the emotional functions of the person. As such, it is present in a completed, operative form as the human being is being formed prior to the actual birth process itself. Evidence is reported to this point when John the Baptist, being in his mother's womb, "leaped in her womb" when Elizabeth was visited by Mary. Elizabeth reported "the babe leaped in my womb for joy." John fully knew the coming Messiah being carried by Mary. Thus, the actual being, the total structure, the foundation of the human is already in a completed form — intellectually and emotionally — prior to birth, unaffected in such structure by post-birth environmental forces.

The person then is not a product of some always evolving, incomplete, evolutionary process who is continually hindered by conditioning imposed upon his state of non-perfection by external forces in his environment. The person is totally capable of choice-making and decision-making from birth. This is built upon and enhanced by the experiential learning process.

The fact that we are active participants in all of our

life events rather than passive subjects is indicated in Scripture. Recall the account of Jacob's total death scene when, after having called his sons about him and instructing them, "he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost." The same is recorded of Isaac, "And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died." Further, the four gospel accounts of Jesus' death are: "Jesus yielded up the ghost"; "Jesus gave up the ghost"; "He gave up the ghost"; and "gave up the ghost." Each account is reflective of an active participation in the death process. Nowhere does it suggest the above were passive recipients upon whom death simply has been inflicted from external forces.

The theme of the capability of choice is continuous throughout Scripture, irrespective of hereditary or environmental influences from, on the one hand, God's injunction that we are to reject sin: "cease to do evil"; "let not sin reign in your mortal body"; and "put off the former conversation of the old man" to, on the other hand, God's injunction that we are to do well: "Those things which you have both learned and received and heard and seen in Me, do"; "Whatever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Scripture assumes that the human being, made in the image of God, has choice responsibilities and capabilities which make possible greater degrees of physical and mental health than what we have allowed ourselves to be conditioned to think.

Examples of the Self-Choice System

Let me illustrate this two-edged choice system (for illness and for health) in spite of hereditary and environmental factors. A young man, experiencing a steady progression of debilitating illnesses which caused him to miss most of two years in school although maintaining an 4.0 grade average, was referred for a psychological consultation by his physicians. In short, it was determined that his intellectual-emotional choice system in effect created a barrier around the virus which prevented medications from accomplishing their purposes. He was making a choice (unaware to himself) to be and remain ill for selective periods of time. As this choice system was diagrammed and understood, short-term therapy was instituted to "teach" him how it operated and to explore alternative available choice selections. This was accomplished and it enabled him to alter his choice selection from illness to health, both physical and mental. He has remained relatively free of symptoms for the past fifteen years without additional therapy.

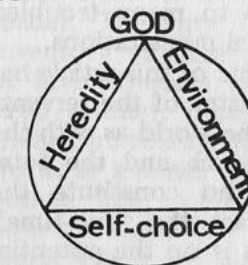
Another individual having heard lectures on the concept of "triangular physical and mental health," privately decided to test such choice-making in the

face of her own known disease entity. She found and then reported within a semester that, by simply paying attention to this concept, she did have a choice in participating in "health-unhealth" processes. She could and did alter her physical and mental health by "freeing-up" her choice system from its former captive state to hereditary and environmental forces.

There is ample evidence that the human being is far more than a captive to hereditary and/or environmental forces. We are indeed quite capable of participating in all life's events — dating and marriage selection, vocational selection, illness selection, and death selection — through our deliberate, responsible choice participation. We have a decision-making voice in our physical and mental health situations.

A comparison of this principle in operation would be a home which has a certain predetermined foundation which dictates the basic structure that can be built. The individual living within the home has the choice to determine appointments for the home. As such, it may be appointed with rugs, drapes, over-stuffed furniture, pictures, etc. to reveal a warm, welcome kind of home; or it may lack such appointments and reveal a stark, cold unwelcome feeling.

In a similar fashion, our foundation (hereditary-environment) has been already structured by birth. The freedom experienced by servants of the Word lies in our capability, being freed from sin, to make choices as to how we "appoint" this house we live within. We can choose jealousy, envy, gossip, anger, etc., and appoint an unwelcome home to live in; or we can choose kindness, love concern, etc., and appoint our house a welcome kind of home.



Finally, it would be well to complete our human. He is at all times and in all places surrounded by his Creator-Redeemer, even as Elisha's servant was privileged to see when he feared for their lives. He saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha." Our great God was and is able to intervene into human history, events, and structure as only He in His infinite wisdom sees fit. Our God has created and made us to have the courage to choose, to risk, to explore without having to fear any mistakes we may make or failures we may encounter. He promises in this great venture of choice-making, of loving oneself, of loving others that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to *His purpose*." ■

What employers can do to promote the mental health

by William Billow

Introduction

"I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b, RSV). Our Lord described Himself as our Shepherd and described His shepherding task in the words quoted above. That abundant life begins with His gift of forgiveness of sins which makes believers of us and also gives us the promise of everlasting life. Believers are those people who have been made new by this gift; and there is no distinction among them in God's sight, no matter who they are.

In order to perpetuate His Gospel, Jesus Christ established the Church, where those who have been saved may come together to praise and worship Him and sustain one another. While all who are baptized have the same gift of life eternal, it has been part of God's plan, as we have interpreted it, that from among the whole membership some are set apart for a "fulltime" ministry in His church. Those designated for a "fulltime" ministry become servants to all God's servants, and thus the Church has come to be an organization with worldly trappings and worldly obligations. This organization remains under the grace of God. Some critics have observed that if the Church were not under God's grace, it surely would have destroyed itself long ago through many poor management practices. That observation of the Church as an organization is probably truer than servants of the Word would like to admit; and yet it has been the servants of the Word, throughout the history of the Church, who have given solace to many troubled souls by their spiritual and material ministrations.

The question raised by the topic of this article has not so much to do with the ministry of the servants of the Word to each other and the world as with the ministry of officials of the Church and the total membership of the Church, who constitute the employers who call and contract the "full-time" servants of the Word. The focus is on the potential and reality of problems in the mental health of those who deliver the Gospel to both the congregations assembled and the world which is being called by that Gospel.

Novelists from Sinclair Lewis in *Babbitt* to Evelyn Waugh in *The Loved One* have been quick to point out the sick religion of some of the servants of the Word. While we may recoil at their observations and disclaim the men depicted by the novelists, we know that someone along the way did, in fact, provide the model for the stories. We also may say that the models for the novelists were not and are not true servants or they would not have come to such a sorry end. Yet some of our backroom conversations about our fellow servants hint that there is enough of



an element of truth in the stories to make the need for better care and keeping of all servants of the Word a matter of concern.

"Full-time" servants of the Word, like other Christians, are but saved sinners. The heavenly garment of God's grace covers the sin which still clings and causes us to do things we don't want to do, think things we don't want to think and say things we wish we hadn't said. There is enough volatility in this mix to cause a lot of things to happen that we wish would not. At the human level, even within the Church, this is enough to cause many a servant of the Word more than a little disturbance; and such disturbances bring on what we now call problems of mental health. Ultimately, such problems may not stand in the way of the salvation of believers in Jesus Christ, but these problems do wrack the Church and often stand in the way of effective ministry.

Now that we can talk about such problems among ourselves with some degree of objectivity we have taken a long stride towards the solution of the problems. *Permitting ourselves to talk about our potential for problems is one of the first things we can do to promote mental health among ourselves.*

I. Identifiable Problem Areas

Working conditions, including salaries, become a source of stress for many servants of the Word. Job descriptions which do not spell out the responsibility of the servant is another. Undue demands upon the time of the servant show lack of consideration for the servant's personal needs. Rumors start which are often believed without investigation. This may destroy working relationships and the potential for a continuing ministry in a given area. Other specifics which may become problem areas include private time allowed, vacations, house, etc.

Singly, these areas of concern may not be problems for the servant. A combination of them may not be troublesome if they do not continue for a long period of time; but any one or several of these concerns over a long period of time can reduce the most idealistic servant to muttering, hurting, and complaining that all is not well. The servant who is freed up enough to speak out loud about the concern which is bothering may escape it and maintain mental health. It is the servant who suffers alone, and possibly in silence, who puts himself on the road away from mental health.

II. What Is Mental Health?

Ecclesiastes, the Preacher, has described it thus: I have seen the business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; also that it is God's gift to man that every one should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil. (Ecclesiastes 3:10-13, RSV)

Mental health is that happy state of mind which induces smooth functioning of all our systems and gives us pleasure in our toil. It is a state of emotional equilibrium which frees a person to be open to others. It is a state of spiritual confidence which knows that God's strength is made perfect in human weakness.

Described in an excellent brochure by the Nebraska Association of Mental Health Educators, mental health is: "to be able to express love openly, to deal constructively with reality, to work and be productive, to adapt to change, to feel and express emotions appropriately, to experience satisfaction from giving, to relate satisfactorily with others, and to redirect hostile impulses into creative and constructive outlets" (page 2). When one can do and be these things he knows that things are running right,

and that is mental health.

This same brochure, written in the terms of an owner's manual, describes the accessories we have which aid the smooth functioning of our mental health. The accessories are: "understand your feelings, needs and ways of coping; set goals and realistic limits for your activities; plan your time (don't forget time to relax); work on one problem at a time; smile; cry; try something new; stand up for yourself; speak out; finish something you started; trust yourself, your abilities and your goals; and give and receive help" (page 3).

Mental health, so described, is the primary responsibility of each individual and there is no argument with that. But if mental health is like an automobile, the owner who is employed by someone has leased the vehicle to another for specific tasks for a specific period of time. The lessor then, also has some responsibility for the smooth running of the vehicle, so that both owner and lessor will be satisfied with its performance.

In fairness to both the servant of the Word and the employer, let us look at some of the factors which enter into the contract or call and that may effect the disposition and mitigate against solutions in problem areas. Factors most influential are what we term *stress*.

III. Experiences That May Stand in the Way of Good Mental Health

Daniel Girdano and George Everly recently published a book entitled *Controlling Stress and Tension* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1979). Their book is a self-examination exercise for the reader. The very first exercise in the book is an inventory of stress-producing events in the past year of life. Stressors range from the death of a spouse (100 points), death of another family member or friend, borrowing money, trouble at work, changing work, to a minor violation of law which is rated at 11 points. The inventory will net the examiner 150 points or less, 150 to 300 points, or 300 points or more. The lower range is where most of us are most of the time. The moderate range indicates caution in further changes at the time. Over 300 points means that one should not only avoid further change, but also should engage in activities to alleviate the stress factors that are indicated. Any of the 43 stress situations may strike anyone at any time. Effects of the stress may be felt in attitudes and actions.

The authors say, "There are four psychosocial processes that appear to be more connected to stress: (1) adaptation; (2) frustration; (3) overload; and (4) deprivation" (page 54). Adaptation is the body's fight to keep balance. Frustration is any blocking or inhibition of behaviors or goals. Overcrowding, discrimination, socioeconomic factors, and bureaucracies are the main sources of frustration. Overload

is overstimulation which may be the result of urban living, occupation, academic or domestic situations. Deprivation is stress due to boredom and/or loneliness.

A holistic solution to stress and tension is offered by the authors which "logically offers more chances of ultimate success because it promotes a little change in many aspects of your life without causing a major upheaval in any one area" (page 233). *Remember that change is a constant source of stress.* The concluding appraisal of the holistic approach is, "Finally you can begin to slow down and hurry less, for your destination is within you and in constant easy reach" (page 234). For the servant of the Word that "destination" is the implanted, living Word of Christ. The point made by Girdano and Everly is still valid.

Insofar as every person is subject to the stresses inherent in a given society it can be said that the people who comprise the Church as an employer also suffer stress. For that reason a degree of empathy for the servant of the Word might be expected, since both employers and employees are under stress. This is not necessarily the case, due to the differing areas of responsibility. The need for each to do his respective job may indeed create a gulf between employer and servant which even suffering from the same stresses does not budge. It follows that both employer and servant of the Word alike will need to measure the stresses present and conscientiously work at eliminating the negative and potentially debilitating effects of stress and tension both on and off the job.

Another current book which must be brought into this discussion is *Burn-Out* by Jerry Edewich with Archie Brodsky (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980). The subtitle of the book describes its content, *Stages of Disillusionment in the Helping Professions*. Edewich is a social worker and the population, which is the subject of his book, is in the helping professions at all levels. While the majority of servants of the Word will not claim to be social workers, all are, in a very real way, members of a helping profession. How well does this description fit us?

"We can use the term 'Burn-out' to refer to a progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose experienced by people in the helping professions as a result of the conditions of their work. Those conditions range from insufficient training to client overload, from too many hours to too little pay, from inadequate funding to ungrateful clients, from bureaucratic or political constraints to the inherent gap between aspiration and accomplishment." (page 14)

The goal of the authors is this:

To the extent that individuals and institutions can recognize — better yet, anticipate — what Burn-out is and how, when, and where it occurs, they will be better prepared to resist the ineffectual, wishful remedies that are often practiced today and to seek more realistic antidotes. A positive approach to Burn-out will be based not on the hope of preventing it (which is virtually

impossible), but on the realization that it will happen — perhaps repeatedly — in a person's career and must be dealt with on an ongoing basis. Burn-out can even be turned to advantage in that it can energize a person to break out of a rut. When frustration is used creatively, it becomes a stimulus to the kind of enthusiasm that it normally erodes. (pages 14, 15)

Below is a list of frustrations which come to those in the helping professions. Similarity to the frustrations which are met by servants of the Word is more than coincidental. The list:

1. Noble aspirations and high initial enthusiasm.
2. Lack of criteria for measuring accomplishments.
3. Low pay at levels of education, skill and responsibility.
4. Upward mobility through the administrative channel.
5. Sexism.
6. Inadequate funding and institutional support.
7. Inefficient use of resources — the dilemma of case management.
8. High public visibility coupled with popular misunderstanding and suspicion. (pages 16-20)

Edewich has an exercise which could be used in workshops or just about anywhere two or more people are gathered together and start complaining about various work conditions.

There is a 12 point planning board exercise that has proved very useful in identifying issues of concern to people. A person is given a blank piece of 8½ x 11 in. paper and asked to tear it into 12 parts. On each of the first 11 sheets the person writes one of the common frustrations in the help-giving fields, as dictated by the person administering the exercise. The 12th sheet is left blank as a "Wild Card." Here the person can call attention to any issue not covered in the standard list. After rearranging the slips of paper so as to rank the 12 items in order of importance, the person describes how he or she is experiencing each of the 12 frustrations. (page 111)

The standard items used by the author are: (1) not enough money; (2) too long hours; (3) career dead-end; (4) too much paper work; (5) not sufficiently trained; (6) not appreciated by clients, (7) not appreciated by supervisor, (8) no support on important decisions, (9) powerlessness, (10) system not responsive to client needs, and (11) bad office politics. For us in the church some revision of the list is proper. Rather than client we'd say parishioner, student or committee member. Rather than supervisor we will have a chief pastor, principal, dean or president. At least within our circles the lack of training is not an apparent issue with most servants of the Word in "full-time" work. For the "Wild Card" what might we have? For women in full-time positions as servants of the Word it may be some aspect of sexism. For anyone it might be some aspect of the fellowship question. For all, this is a personal choice and should be exercised honestly.

One more important point from this book before we make suggestions about the ways employers can

promote the mental health of servants of the Word. Concerning these frustrations the author says:

There are two that stand out as, in a sense, encompassing all the rest. Much of the frustration that people run up against in the helping professions is summed up in the phrases "powerlessness" and "system not responsive to clients' needs." The second refers to the expectations people have for their clients; the first refers to the expectations they have for themselves. What, after all, are the unrealistic hopes which characterize the stages of enthusiasm? Essentially, they boil down to two (1) "Clients' lives will be changed," and (2) "I will be the one who will make the difference for them." But if the system is not responsive to clients' needs, how can clients benefit? If one feels powerless, how can one be of service? (page 112)

Within church circles, as in society at large, it is not the front-line servant of the Word alone who is buffeted by stress and tension or alone is subject to Burn-out. Employer and servant alike are subject to these potentially destructive forces. It follows that what will help the servant will also help the employer and the whole organization in all its parts to function more smoothly.

IV. What Can Employers Do?

Possibilities range from doing nothing at all to conscious application of proved techniques in effective personnel management.

A. Employers can do nothing.

Servants of the Word, after all, have given themselves to service in God's church and among His people. All have access to the forgiveness of God and His power in their lives. It is administratively unnecessary to intervene with problems which occur because everyone has the grace to live above troublesome worldly situations. Successful servants of the Word are those who overcome the world as it threatens to overcome them. For men to interfere with this process is an abridgment of the power of faith in Jesus Christ.

Overstated? Perhaps. But this is one of the dynamics at work among us. For some servants and employers this works, depending upon the nature of the persons and to a large extent upon the nature and duration of the problem. The efficacy of direct divine intervention is in no way denied, but God also uses men in His interventions for the benefit of other men. Our Lord has directed that we should bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of God.

B. Employers can pray for servants of the Word.

Certainly, and servants of the Word can pray for their employers as well. There is no denying the power and efficacy of prayer as an invitation for God's direct intervention in whatever situation is causing friction, reducing effectiveness and building walls of separation between servants of the Word and their employers. It is a most effective tool but one that is more properly used together as in "praying with one another," not just "praying for one another." Praying "for" is no problem, but its

effectiveness in dealing with mutual concerns comes from participating in the activity together. Here is a word from James on this subject:

Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. (James 5:13-16, RSV)

C. Employers can seek and use preventive measures before the fact.

Those who are being trained as servants of the Word in our colleges and seminaries may become versed in the skills of assertiveness, time-management, and mental health exercises and be guided in bolstering what we call "self-image." They can be informed about available professional help in the communities where they will eventually serve, such as Lutheran Family and Social Service Agencies which employ staff trained in problem-solving. They can learn about the function of community-based mental health agencies which provide the same services for the broader community. By field experience and training our servants can at least be exposed to the stresses and tensions that exist in the church and world where they will one day work.

At the student level there is no way that the idealism and enthusiasm of youth can or even should be totally dissuaded. For an instructor to paint only a picture of problems would be a disservice; however, insofar as these idealists meet difficulties among themselves, with faculties and administrations of the schools, the reality of life as it is experienced in the here and now of academe can be a laboratory of learning to better cope with the problems that beset us all.

D. Employers can use services already at hand.

(1) The Nebraska Association of Mental Health Educators brochure which was quoted above gives the addresses of many community health center satellite offices. Any number of these offices are located in churches, and quite a few of them are Lutheran churches. At the preventive level, if workers and members of the congregations are not already availing themselves of the services offered by the workers in these offices, using them could be a good basic step in learning ways to stay mentally healthy.

(2) Lutheran Family and Social Services also have satellite offices throughout the nation, and the workers in these offices are surely available for training sessions and educational programs. To use these facilities and workers only for treatment purposes is to use them only half-way.

(3) The Nebraska District Committee on Family Services has available and is prepared to conduct

workshops on Burn-out, its prevention, and creative use. A call to the Nebraska District Office can bring this service to any institution, agency, school, or congregation in the District. Many of the districts of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod can provide similar services.

(4) Effectiveness Training program leaders are near at hand and ready to give training to parents and teachers who want to avail themselves of their service. A list of all persons in your area capable of this leadership is not included here but their availability for help can be learned through circuit counselors, the district offices of your church, or Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska.

(5) The congregation as employer may seek out and appoint someone to serve both congregation and the "full-time" servants of the Word in the role of ombudsman. Such a person would be someone sensitive to human needs who has the respect of everyone concerned. The individual so appointed would hear grievances from employees, report them, seek solutions, and be a resource for seeking the help needed to solve problems. To whom would this person be responsible? To the entire congregation as the Body of Christ whose spiritual responsibility it is to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ. The more informed every member is of all that is going on, the healthier the entire body. The healthier the entire body, the better the health of each member and the better all work towards the promotion of mental health in all servants of the Word will be.

The suggestions above are not exhaustive. There may be members of the congregation who can bring

particular expertise or experience to the relationship with servants of the Word and the promotion of mental health. The wise administrator brings such expertise and experience to bear upon the whole body and in particular with the members or committees who deal with personnel matters.

Conclusion

Promoting the mental health of servants of the Word is a positive action by their employers. God's gift of Jesus Christ is the power of grace and forgiveness working in us and among us. Promoting the mental health of servants of the Word begins with obedience to God. Problems do come and must be met here and now in the arena of human interaction. God has provided us with minds and creativity which make the study of our situation and development of skills and techniques for problem-solving available. We can be positive about our possibilities in promoting the mental health of servants of the Word because of the foundation God has provided.

Employers and servants of the Word together may find the invitation and motivation for this worthy task in St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 4:8-9, RSV:

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard in me, do; and the peace of God will be with you.

Anyone so motivated will indeed be promoting the mental health of servants of the Word. ||

book reviews

CAN I MAKE IT ONE MORE YEAR?: OVERCOMING THE HAZARDS OF MINISTRY by Edgar M. Grider. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980.

The subtitle, "Overcoming The Hazards of Ministry," speaks more directly to the content of the book. Addressing primarily the parish pastor, Edgar Grider draws from his own experience both as a pastor and as a counselor of pastors. He wants to assist the pastor to face one of his greatest challenges: himself. In analyzing the multitude of problems faced by pastors today, Grider attempts to demonstrate how the pastor may utilize his capacity to use his anxiety creatively. In order to analyze problems and present constructive and creative solutions, Grider draws heavily from the studies of

Rollo May on anxiety and from the developmental insights of Eric Erickson and Abraham Maslow.

Most pastors will find themselves discussed somewhere in this book. As for so many in other professions today as well as an increasing number of parish pastors, there is a crescendo of expressed feelings of uncertainty, helplessness, powerlessness, a sense of being overwhelmed and paralyzed. The book offers an excellent analysis of many problems, pressures and feelings pastors are experiencing and also some very good insights into the etiology of the problems.

The greatest weakness of the book is its theological content. In this reviewer's judgment it is but bland abstraction, and it represents a good example of the failure to integrate solid Biblical theology with the insights of humanistic psycholo-

gy in addressing our psycho-spiritual problems. Unless one finds some meaning in a Tillichian theological framework, one will probably find the scattered theological mutterings of little help or relevance toward healing anxiety or depression. The theology, in fact, is the depressing part of the book. Grider suggests turning anxiety (abstract) to fear (specific) so it can be dealt with objectively. He should have used the same principle in weaving Christian theology into the discussion. We can deal with anxiety, depression and fear with the specific images and story of the Gospel. This may well have been part of the "how to" section of the book.

The book can yet be recommended on the basis of its strong points and the contribution it does make. There is throughout the text a pizzicato of wise sayings for pastors and other parish workers. Grider's urgent call to pastors to join the human race and to come out of lonely, self-imposed isolation is absolutely poignant. There are excellent discussions on the difference between faith and religion; a much needed and good discussion on learning to live with leadership and power; and specific suggestions on how to use anxiety creatively. The book is task-oriented. The author is to be thanked for this orientation and for his contributions.

A. Paul Vasconcellos

COPING WITH STRESS IN THE MINISTER'S HOME by Robert W. and Mary Francis Bailey. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979.

Lots of people seem to be exercised about stress these days. Robert and Mary Francis Bailey are a part of the crowd. Their special concern is the pastor's family.

The principle thesis of their slender volume is simply "Enjoy being a family and enjoy being the minister's family." Laudible goal! But how? The Baileys suggest ten guidelines, the two mainstays being: "Remember who you are and whose you are" and "Keep on trusting in the power and goodness of God." Who could argue with such encouragements? Let me try, but only within the context of the Bailey book.

Church workers who seek respite from debilitating, profession-related stress, both individually and with their families, are frequently engulfed by anxiety, feelings of helplessness, and even terror. Whether it be their inability to say "no," a haunting sense of incompetence, or reoccurring fatigue, they know something is wrong. In theological terms the law has them on the run and they are keenly aware of how lacking their efforts are. To such a state of desperation the Baileys

come with piles of pious language and a wheel-barrow full of "shoulds," "musts," "remembers," and "keep ons." In essence, their well-meant book confronts the entangled, burdened reader with a theological pep talk that places one more demand on the pastor and his family, namely, he and his clan are to live up to their responsibility to be "a unique family" who are to "be a bridge over the troubled waters of society's misuse of the family into the green pastures of God's intention for the family." In other words, the pastor and his family are to be models of how congregational families are to live. This may engender a stress that is even more difficult to combat.

Does the above sound harsh or perhaps even dis-stressed? Actually the reviewer's feelings are disappointment and alarm. The disappointment came because the three part outline of the Bailey book initially held a lot of promise. Their first section was to lay the foundation for understanding stress via chapters on God's intention for the family, society's misuse of that same family, and then a look at the potential of a pastor's family.

The second section dealt with eight common stressors: the pastor's need for education (or continuing education), the dilemma of whether to relocate, relating to parishioners, economics, time demands, physical and psychological fatigue, parsonage isolation, and family relationships within "the glass house." The final and briefest section capped off the book with ten general guidelines for coping with stress.

This reviewer's alarm centered upon six areas. One was the book's reoccurring tendency to describe potential stressors without a balanced list of suggestions for the dilemmas facing the pastor and his family. Secondly, there was an inadequate definition of stress and a superficial treatment of its origins and varying manifestations. (A book needs to move beyond Webster's definition and a followup sentence!) Thirdly, the Baileys lashed out at "society's misuse of the family," without ever defining society, and then rather glibly identified the main enemy of the family to be communism. Fourthly, in describing God's design for the family, the authors tended to suggest a Biblical theme (e.g. "God intended the family to provide a secure place to learn and develop one's self-worth") and then went on to buttress the idea with non-Christian writings (e.g. Virginia Satir's *People-making*). Fifthly, in presenting sources of stress for the pastor and his family the focus was upon external forces with little attention paid to internal dynamics such as fear of failure, need to be number one, and the inability to let people get close. Finally, although co-authored, the book had an overly heavy focus upon the pastor. Potential spouse-related stressors, such as the wife working outside the

home and parish expectations of her, were given little emphasis.

There were several helpful chapters in the Baileys' book. Their descriptions of stressors and concomitant remedies were concrete when they spoke of coping with emotional and physical fatigue. The ten general guidelines, understood as encouragements in the Gospel and not as demands, also offered a useful starting point.

At one point the Baileys suggested that the real question concerning stress is "How can we, in the name of Christ, cope with stress in a redemptive and creative way?" For an answer to that vital question I'd recommend a more substantive, balanced, equally theological treatment of the subject such as is found in Gary Collin's book *You Can Profit From Stress*.

William Karpenko

BURN-OUT: STAGES OF DISILLUSIONMENT IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS by Jerry A. Edelsich and Archie Brodsky. New York: Human Science Press, 1980.

"Burn-out is a hot topic today; however, this reviewer is convinced that many of us in the helping professions of the church went through it a long time ago and didn't even know what was happening. Edelsich and Brodsky state that "We can use the term 'burn-out' to refer to a progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose experienced by people in the helping professions as a result of the conditions of their work" (page 14).

Though this book is not written for Lutheran "professionals," the progressive stages of debilitation from enthusiasm through stagnation and frustration into the slough of apathy, have been the experience of too many church workers. We have not done well in the preparation and integration of "neophytes" and, therefore, have lost untold numbers of dedicated people.

How to deal with powerlessness, the *status quo*, and unrealistic expectations of one's self and others are discussed in this excellent professional paperback. If you enjoy your stagnation, frustration and apathy, please don't read this book, for it will challenge you to change and take personal responsibility for realistic expectations while confronting the "givens" in life's situations.

Some of the causes of "burn-out" given in the book are: unrealistic noble aspirations, low pay, lack of personal recognition, moving up and doing what one didn't want to do or was good at, sexism, inefficiency, powerlessness, politics, givens of the system, and other worker's lack of support or enthusiasm. Through case studies and personal ac-

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counts the authors attempt to describe what "burn-out" feels like. The actual causes are broken down into stages of disillusionment. The destructive effects of "burn-out" on people are presented through interviews with social workers, psychologists, counselors, teachers and others in the helping professions.

The authors maintain that the best time to intervene is at the beginning, during the enthusiasm stage. A realistic perception at that time can do much to prevent much long term damage. We need to do a better job with pre-service and first year teachers. By the time a worker is truly stagnated it is difficult to break it through further education or movement to a new position, but it can be done. District executives need to be attuned to this need for change and restimulation when a worker grows flat. Sometimes frustration can motivate significant change, but it also can stimulate retreat, retaliation or escape into another field of endeavor. Even in the apathy stage one can still be renewed through a new experience. "Effective interventions are those that remind the burned helper of the ideals and emotions evoked by the idea of working with people" (page 246).

This is a challenging book and should be read by all church workers who are serious about the full utilization of talents of God's gifts to the church — the

people, the staff, and the leadership. "The inevitable experience of burn-out can be, professionally speaking, a terminal experience, or a growth experience." The skills of realistic problem solving presented in this book could make a significant difference — but, then, WHO CARES?

Glenn O. Kraft

KICKING YOUR STRESS HABITS by Donald A. Tubesing. Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates, Inc., 1981.

Stress management is a pervasive and necessary human activity which requires continuing attention through a lifetime. We cannot get rid of all stress habits, but we can learn to make efforts to avoid burnout, copout, or dropout. This volume offers a range of strategies for the "Do It Yourselfer" to help in managing stress more successfully.

The origins of stress are many. Much stress is caused by the minor irritations of life which accumulate and grind us down. Our frames of reference and our beliefs sometimes cause stress. Then there are the many stressors associated with economic and social change, personal gain and/or loss, changing life status, and so on. The heaviest stresses tend to be associated with changes that threaten

what is most important to us personally.

A suggested sequence for stress management runs as follows: 1. Make a choice among alternatives; 2. Outline a plan of action; 3. Practice the plan; 4. Evaluate the results. The author develops and applies that paradigm to areas like organizing ourselves, improving our relationship skills, changing our outlook skills, and building up our physical stamina skills.

The *Inventory for Assessing Personal Coping Behaviors* promises to be helpful. It is designed to help summarize our management skills and then to formulate a custom-designed plan for coping with our stressors. The central components of this plan require summarizing our stress symptoms, defining the problem, listing our resources, reviewing what we have tried, checking our attitudes, clarifying our goals, formulating a plan of action, finding ways to make it enjoyable, moving into action now, and then reviewing and revising the plan as needed.

This reviewer has tried out several components outlined in the book and they have proven helpful. Additional resources are available. These include seminars, empathy training workshop cassette tapes, leader manuals and participant workbooks, all of which can be purchased from the publisher.

Gilbert Blomenberg