

Pastoral Care Interview #2

**PM 514 Pastoral Care
Marvin A McMickle, Ph.D.**

Spring 2005

Christopher J. Kinner
May 23, 2005

The second pastoral interview I conducted to fulfill my course requirement was with a professional counselor who graduated from the ATS counseling program in 2001. My first interview was with a Pastor who had completed no college or seminary study but rather had more than twenty five years of experience and was the senior pastor of a congregation of over a thousand. Therefore in this second interview I was delighted to meet with a younger pastor whose title in this two hundred and fifty member congregation is that of Pastor of Family Life. My expectations for this second interview were to find what differences in church size may mean to the views and ability of the church to provide pastoral care for the congregation and community. Also I was anxious to investigate how the models that professors such as Dr. Wardle and Dr. Shultz are being utilized to facilitate pastoral care within his ministry setting.

I initially noticed a difference in the way I was greeted by Pastor Castle at the door of the church; he smiled widely and directed me to his office. Once there I noticed that his was not the standard pastor's office that would consist of a large desk with office chairs placed on either side for us to sit in. Rather Brett's office contained a small writing table that sat against one wall with a comfortable couch and cushy chair placed on either side of a homey area rug. I could tell immediately as I sat down that this interview was with a counselor and not a senior pastor.

Brett shared with me that he had been part of the church staff at the Maize Road Baptist Church for only three years and was the first Family Life Pastor to join the staff at Maize Road. His call to come to such a small church had been felt as the congregation of this church had wanted to reach out in new ways to new families and had shared with Brett that they were ready for change. The senior pastor of this church has been at Maize Road for over twenty years and the stability and maturity of the leadership also seemed to confirm Brett's call to this place. As we talked, I began to see many similarities with the dynamics of pastoral care at Maize Road to those that larger churches face.

Brett shared with me that generally the senior pastor was the front door from which many counseling and care issues were brought to Brett's attention. Generally this type of care is reactive; meaning there has been an issue raised in the preaching or teaching of the church that has exposed a need

in this person's life. Brett's position is one that assists the senior pastor by being equipped to provide initial care and referrals when necessary to keep the senior pastor from being forced to operate in dual roles in these situations. This prevents further preaching or teaching from the senior pastor as being a perceived care to these private issues. As a staff there was also a policy that Pastor Castle is to handle pre-marital counseling and weddings while the senior pastor handles funerals. This dynamic seemed to be partially from the longer tenure of the senior pastor and the title of family life pastor of Pastor Castle. This policy may be worked around due to scheduling and personal requests, but it certainly laid the groundwork for the senior staff to maintain order in the working relationships. Pastor Castle does have a background in counseling those with anger and grief therefore he would become directly involved with counseling those that continued to grieve after the funeral service.

Brett also shared that he and the senior pastor rotate hospital visits each week. Since he and the senior pastor communicate regularly and offer differing styles of care, they can usually assist congregants in differing ways and sometimes form attachments to differing church members or members of their family. This model of team care was of great interest to me. Pastor Castle expanded on this theme describing to me the role of the youth and music pastors in the team care model as well. The aspect of this model that I found to be the most interesting is that on Monday mornings this team meets to discuss the previous Sundays preaching and teaching and talks about how families in the church were impacted by the services, what dynamics each pastor noticed and how they can provide care for the week and improve the care of the church for the following week. I found this review process to be an encouragement as we seek to provide the highest quality care to God's people in His Church.

Brett also shared that the church needs to be proactive in providing care for people. He encourages the church staff to work in advance of issues to prevent them. One way this is done is by the church staff itself being unified in purpose before God. The Monday meeting more than being a review also provides an opportunity for the staff to be unified in the ministry of the church and watch for disunity in the body in general. Brett shared with me his conviction that a church staff must be the example of

unity to the church and that the church must have unity and truly care for each other. I know that the Apostle Paul would much enjoy attending this church!

I next asked about the ways that this church reaches out to its community. Brett shared with me that this is one area that the small church is at a disadvantage to that of the large church. They do encourage the use of their facilities by civic associations in the area and are glad that neighborhood development groups and community organizations regularly utilize their facilities to hold open forums that enable communication and awareness of community matters. However at this time there are no functioning AA groups or other recovery groups using their facilities. This church does open its facilities for use by the immigrant population to have late Sunday services in their language and Maize Road is also active in assisting a church plant nearby.

Brett shared with me that part of the limited nature of the outreach of Maize Road is due to his short time with this church. One of his initial goals has been to get to know the families of this church and form deep relationships of trust before expanding the mission and ministry of the church. Pastor Castle has a deep longing to promote a vision of "pushing down the ministry to others," but he wants to develop healthy leaders that will share this vision and take it on as their own. He has a vision for getting individuals and couples involved in mentoring ministries in the future such as prayer mentors who can teach and encourage others in prayer and marriage mentors who can assist in pre-marital and newly married couple counseling. His vision for ministry is one that takes a long view and one that I found to be reflected in my interview with Pastors with much more experience in ministry.

Pastor Brett Castle shared that he does not want to simply attempt to "spit in the ocean to change its color." He has a vision to provide care that begins within the family life of the church and moves outward to the community. In this way he feels that this growth will not be simply a "flash in the pan," but rather a long sustained form of outreach and discipleship. Throughout this interview I was encouraged by Pastor Castle's mature view of the importance of pastoral care as a ministry of the Church.