

of course. So I always felt like I was the number two man, and I understood that and they understood that, and I was treated like that, and I was going to move on someday. That's not conflict exactly, but it tends to develop a more professional relationship rather than a personal relationship. I don't know if that's clear.

- JG: That's clear and very helpful. It's interesting that the average time that an assistant pastor stays in one place is usually three years, it is usually one to three years. I think the reason for this short period of time is that assistant pastors tend to view their position as a stepping-stone.
- P: Most definitely. I don't know of very many men who remain assistant pastors for very many years. I think that's why here we don't call anybody an assistant pastor. He has a major area of responsibility that he feels, at least in this point in his life, is his calling, and he has an equal vote and a full voice with all the rest of us.
- JG: Obviously, you see advantages in this as over against the other arrangement where you have a senior pastor and all the other staff members are really there to help extend his ministry. What advantages are there in this type of set-up?
- P: Well, I think there is an advantage to the team member first of all, in a man saying, "This is my area, I'm responsible for it, I don't pass the buck to somebody else, and the Lord and I, and of course, the people that work with us have a major thing to do here." An assistant pastor, I think generally has, and in fact, this is deliberately taught by some people, everything he does, is in a sense, an extension of the senior pastor's ministry. The youth director is carrying out what the senior pastor would do and his job is to continually make that man look good. Whereas, here, a guy could say, "Hey, my area is youth. I am the pastor to the youth. I'm responsible not only to those youth, but for their family relationships, to the extent that I can minister in their homes, or minister to their parents." He feels a great deal of freedom, latitude, and obligation. I think that's of value to him. It allows him to exercise his gifts more widely. I think that the church does not think of, at least most of the church members, don't think of the youth minister as some young kid who is going to be here for two or three years and then move on. They look at him as the man they go to if they have a problem with their teenage son. They feel like we have something that approaches experts in those various divisions. I think it gives the people a greater sense of security.
- JG: So there is not the problem that is so often feared of polarization where certain people from the congregation favor one man and they sort of revolve around him, and another group revolves around another man on the team.