

shame] right now.

"We want to keep the attitude of being a loving family. After all, who will we be working with for all eternity?" questioned Mr. Meredith. "And every human *is* lovable."

### Visiting and Counseling

Another of the major themes of this year's conference was a call to return to basic pastoral duties, especially visiting and counseling. Mr. Meredith recalled that in the 1950s and 1960s a great deal of a minister's time was spent making "general" or fellowship visits with the brethren to get personally acquainted.

"These visits should be a mixture of visiting and counseling—not an investigation to look for white sugar or white flour (for which Mr. Meredith kidded his wife Sheryl since they have both in their pantry at home)."

Stressing that the purpose of the visits was to become acquainted, Mr. Meredith changed his voice to say jokingly, "These are not visits by the gestapo—not 'the visitation' where the minister comes to bawl you out or spy on you."

Besides fellowship visits, Mr. Meredith instructed the elders to be much more diligent in proper pre-baptism, preengagement and marital counseling. "Marriage and baptism are two of the most important positive decisions a person can make."

He explained that an elder must avoid running the members' lives, yet he must help the brethren consider the crucial spiritual principles involved in baptism, engagement, marriage and other major happenings in life.

"In the past, it took years before we had one AC divorce [between people trained at Ambassador College]. That is because effective ministerial counseling helped young people to think through their situation.

"Were they really compatible? Were they willing to submit to each

## Preliminary Copy of Global's Ministerial Ethics Policy

During the conference, Mr. Larry Salyer presented a preliminary draft he developed for the proposed standards of conduct for all Global ministers, which will be considered for adoption by the Council of Elders. Mr. Salyer said that godly leadership always acts in the best interests of the brethren. He noted that most responsible people will try repeatedly to heal a family breach and what the Church should be—is—a family! "We are ministers as well as brethren," remarked Mr. Salyer. "We are, in Global, starting afresh. We have a chance to do it right." To really fulfill a ministerial profession requires humility and integrity. The following is the proposed draft of Global's Ministerial Ethics Policy:

**"Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD" (Is. 52:11).**

### Proposed Ministerial Ethics Policy

#### 1) Doctrinal Instruction

A minister must not knowingly teach doctrines or practices contrary to those officially held by the Church. While his first loyalty is to God and His Word, and he is not expected to teach what he does not believe, significant differences should be presented to the Church in writing for study.

#### 2) Responsible Administration

A minister must never use his office or rank to gain personal advantage over the brethren. This applies to both financial dealings with members and personal conflict with members. Ministerial office is held in high regard and deep respect by God's people. This relationship lends itself to abuse if a minister is careless.

#### 3) Counseling

A minister must limit his counsel to spiritual matters, including biblical and spiritual principles which apply to all areas of life. As an agent of the Global Church of God, he must not claim expertise in, or offer advice on, specific matters of health, diet, business, farming, investments, etc.

#### 4) Financial Responsibility

A minister must never appropriate money that does not belong to him for his personal use. He may frequently have funds entrusted to him belonging to the Church or its members. It is understood that it is sometimes necessary to process funds through personal bank accounts. Accounting should be timely and meticulous.

#### 5) Sexual Impropriety

A minister must absolutely avoid any kind of illicit sexual activity. Any infraction of this standard will result in suspension, which may include permanent dismissal. If such sin occurs between the minister and Church members or their families, the minister will be automatically terminated from the ministry. The presumption of trust and confidence to which members are entitled must not be violated.

#### 6) Counseling with Women

A minister must not visit or counsel with a woman alone behind

closed doors. If a meeting is urgent and a third party is not available, then a place in public view, such as a restaurant, should be used.

#### 7) Abusive Behavior

A minister found to be an abuser of persons under his charge, including his spouse or his children, will not be permitted to continue in the ministry.

#### 8) Substance Abuse

A minister who becomes an alcoholic or drug addict will not be permitted to serve in the ministry until the problem is completely overcome.

#### 9) Fraud

A minister found to be lying to a representative of Church headquarters who is investigating charges against him should expect dismissal when the truth is discovered.

### GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

When headquarters receives a complaint against a minister, the grievance procedure is as follows:

#### Step 1

If the charges are grave enough to call into immediate question the minister's fitness to serve, Church Administration will contact the minister directly.

#### Step 2

The plaintiff will be exhorted to approach the minister directly with the problem. He will be asked to report back to Church Administration on any resolution.

#### Step 3

If the complaint persists, or the member cannot bring himself to talk to the minister, Church Administration will ask the minister to attempt to resolve it.

#### Step 4

If the minister and member cannot agree on a resolution, then Church Administration will investigate the complaint by whatever means available, being as discreet as possible.

#### Step 5

If the minister is innocent of the charges, he will be exonerated among whatever group has knowledge of the complaint.

#### Step 6

If the minister was in error but is repentant, he will be expected to make appropriate amends to the offended parties.

#### Step 7

If the minister persists in a pattern of error, or is guilty of an infraction listed in the "Standards and Ethics," he will be subject to disciplinary action, which will generally follow this progression until the problem is corrected:

- Notification regarding the problem
- Warning that performance is not up to standard
- Suspension of duties accompanied by specific steps to improve performance
- Termination from the salaried ministry
- Termination from elder status
- Termination of membership in the Church

other? Were they really ready to make this commitment and to be loyal to each other? Were they financially prepared? How will they handle arguments and problems? Do they understand the various aspects and sensitivities in starting and growing in an intimate, sexual relationship? This type of information isn't something you force on people. But create a relationship of trust where they will feel comfortable in asking questions."

The Bible says, "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14; cf. 12:15; 15:22). The ministers were encouraged to draw out the real hurts, motives and attitudes of those they are trying to assist.

"Learn to listen, ask questions, get the facts—this is how you will come to really understand the deep hurts and grievances of those whom you are counseling."

Mr. Meredith concluded the session on counseling by quoting the Apostle Paul's counseling mission statement: "For the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13).

### Upgrading the Church's Understanding About Leadership

Dr. Doug Winnail, who was an Ambassador faculty member for 13 years and a field minister for 10 years, led the session on developing Global's new leadership-training approach.

In his opening comments Dr. Winnail noted, "God truly tries the hearts" (cf. Prov. 17:3). In the recent history of the Church this meant that it was, perhaps to the surprise of many, not the "neat" people who stood up for the Truth. Often it was