Thank you for last month's special issue on Pastoral Psychology and Church Administration. I am sure ministers will find it very useful. At the same time, I would very much like to share with your readers some of our own experience and thinking in this important field.

The minister of the church of today is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the people to the future of the church. It has been said that the future belongs to those who prepare for it, and the minister is cognizant of the fact that if the future church is to be at its best, then the people of that church must be prepared for their best. Thus, the minister, as an educator, endeavors to provide the means whereby people may attain to the best in matters of religion, and purposefully sets the stage for wholesome spiritual experiences among the people of his parish.

From the minister's actions and teachings the people learn something of a proper outlook upon life. Through him they acquire some concepts of faith in God and learn something of the purpose of life, as well as how they may fit into its fullest development. Much of this concept is acquired through sensory experiences. They hear, think, see, and feel those things which bring them into a knowledge of God and the universe. Consequently, the minister is confronted with a gigantic task. He not only has to find the proper persons who have the ability to be leaders in the total church program, and see in them the potential for the development of the ability possessed, but also provide them with an opportunity for the improvement desired.

I believe that every church endeavors to utilize lay people for the promotion of its program; and the laymen are to be commended for this major contribution which they are making for the success of the church program. Their task is quite difficult and requires clear vision of the needs with an opportunity to meet them.

Because the task of lay leadership is so exacting in its demands, great care should be given to the selection of leaders. How to go about this selection has been a question of primary importance.

With this bit of introduction, I shall proceed to point out how we went
about improving the leadership in our church.

The first step was to decide what work needed to be done. A general survey of the church situation revealed the need for leaders who could serve in an administrative capacity, such as counselors, sponsors, coordinators, educational supervisors, group leaders, visual aid director, publicity expert, social case worker, librarian, missionary educator, parish visitors, recreational director, musicians, along with an enlarged staff of teachers. Each church, depending on its local needs, should analyze its situation and set up a listing of the services to be rendered and the type of leadership that can best meet the needs.

In selecting the personnel of the church, due consideration should be given as to the qualifications of the persons who are to do the work. Primary among these qualifications, we felt, was one of faith; faith in God as a divine Heavenly Father, and in Christ as a personal Saviour. Without such a faith, the leader will not be deeply devoted to the church nor committed to the task set before him. Whatever else he might have will never compensate for his lack of personal Christian faith. The basic attitudes of life are produced from one’s faith. If the faith is small or inadequate, the attitudes will be inferior. The right religious atmosphere can be provided which will permit one to have truly Christian ideas about God. The teacher can be most effective if he has a good background of experience in the Christian faith. If the teacher is clear in his own faith he will give definiteness to his teaching. This personal Christian faith is a prerequisite for the increase of faith in the student and the enlargement of his knowledge of the will of God and the deepening of his own experiences which will strengthen his faith. It is much easier for a student to acquire a deep religious faith if he has a good example of it in the teacher. Make the teacher’s faith strong and you provide a good basis for a strong teaching program. Good leaders grow out of the life of the church, and this type background helps develop in the leaders a sense of responsibility to the church as well as to the people of its constituency.

We also felt that essential to success is the educational qualifications of the leaders. Increasingly, demands are being made upon the teachers of religion that educational qualifications be maintained. These qualifications should include a workable knowledge of the Bible, some background of Church History, its origin and development along with its present day ecumenical program, the techniques of the learning process, plus the methods used in character development.

A leader must have the ability to lead. The teacher must be able to teach. Both must possess the ability to work with other people, not from a professional standpoint only, but because of a genuine interest in people and a desire to understand and help them.

We found that it was so easy for people to appear reluctant in assuming a position of leadership. Most of the positions had been turned down because the persons had not been trained for them or had too little understanding of the task, or felt that it was not an important assignment.

To achieve the desired results in our situation we made sure that the task was really important. We then made certain that the prospective leader understood the requirements.

As a special inducement to his acceptance of the given assignment, we pointed to the fruits of his labors and helped him visualize the results along