The new year has started with a bang.
We are excited that so many of our dreams are realising in 2017!

Our application to become a professional body is in SAQA’s hands and the ball is rolling. The Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP) has been established and will function as our Professional Body.

SAAP is getting a new dress and will become the Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors (CPSC). I want to thank everyone who has worked so hard to get all the necessary documents ready to streamline our application. Because of this whole drive towards professionalisation, which has come a long way since 1991, we must reflect again on what and who we are as Pastoral Caregivers.

The word pastor literally means “shepherd.” It is used of Christ several times in the New Testament (Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25). In Eph 4:11 it is listed as a spiritual gift to be exercised by believers, not an office to be occupied. Actually, any Christian who guides, guards, and generally functions as a shepherd in relation to other believers is exercising the spiritual gift of pastor.

However, the word has come to stand for an office occupied by one who formally feeds the flock, administers the ordinances, leads the worship, and guards the truth (Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:2).

The Pastoral Epistles furnish guidelines for the duties of those who occupy officially designated places of leadership as pastors among God’s flock (2 Tim 4:1-5).

In addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17), Paul called them overseers or bishops (v.28) and enjoined them to feed (or pastor) the flock (v.28).

We are pastors
Pastor literally means shepherd. Paul’s pastoral epistles contain the sum and substance of New Testament teaching on this subject. He laid down three functions:

1. The ministration in divine service includes the ordering of worship, administering the sacraments, and preaching the Word. Here the pastor is appropriately termed minister.

2. The responsibility of pastoral care ensues from the first function. The feeding of the flock is the instruction of its members, but it is also the vigilant distributive attention to all its interests in the whole economy of life. The shepherds must imitate the chief shepherd, who “calls his own sheep by name.”

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(3) This pastoral relation passes naturally into what we have scriptural authority for calling the spiritual government of the church. Its ministers are called rulers (Gk. hēgoumenoi) or presidents (Gk. proestōtes), and all its members are hidden to obey them that have the rule. The design of the Lord’s gift of pastors and teachers, as supplementary to that of apostles and evangelists, is “the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12).

Pastors are to be watchful (Heb. 13:17; 2 Tim. 4:5), gentle and affectionate (1 Thess. 2:7-8), and should exhort, warn, and comfort (2:11; 1 Cor. 4:14-15).²

- Dr Tertius Erasmus

**What to Look for in a Shepherd**

Let us reflect on our roles as pastors and pastoral counsellors in this piece from Jeremiah Johnson’s blog.³

Do you remember what it was like as a child picking teams on the playground? The tallest and biggest kids always went first, based on the assumption of physical prowess. But they weren’t always the best choice—sometimes the game required the speed, flexibility, and coordination the bigger kids lacked. And sometimes they simply weren’t athletic.

Humans are prone to over-value externals. We’re too easily fooled by façades, eager to appraise every book by its cover. Rather than waiting to see the quality of a person’s character and integrity borne out over time, we make snap decisions based on the physical qualities we see—or don’t see.

God rebuked Samuel for making that very mistake: But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam 16:7).

Too many churches today put too much stock in externals when searching for a pastor. They give too much credibility to a man’s outward appearance, putting style far ahead of substance. They want someone young, attractive, polished, virile, exciting, funny, and cool. But those qualities have nothing to do with being a godly shepherd—in fact some of them might inhibit his ability to faithfully care for the flock.

Instead, the church needs to evaluate potential shepherds biblically - we need to see them as God sees them. We recently asked John MacArthur what a church ought to look for in a shepherd. Here’s what he said:

God’s Word is clear about the biblical qualifications for a shepherd. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul lays out the precise measure of the man fit to care for God’s flock.

An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (1 Tim 3:2-7).

A pastor is qualified, not by his impressive externals, but by established patterns of integrity, purity, and righteousness. Churches searching for a new shepherd need to be less enamoured by suave and sophisticated speakers, and more interested in a man’s spiritual maturity.

In addition to the qualifications Paul spells out above, it’s helpful to consider the actual work a pastor is called to, and how prospective shepherds might fit that role.

The pastor’s goal is not to please the sheep, but to feed them - not to tickle their ears, but to nourish their souls. He is not to offer merely light snacks of spiritual milk, but the substantial meat of biblical truth. Those who fail to feed the flock are unfit to be shepherds (cf. Jeremiah 23:1-4; Ezekiel 34:2-10).

When looking for a new pastor, churches need to consider more than just a candidate’s preaching style - they need to evaluate the substance he delivers. You wouldn’t hire a chef who couldn’t cook, or a pilot who couldn’t fly. If a man is unable or unwilling to feed his sheep the rich nour-

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³ March 2, 2016 https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B16030220

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ishment of God’s Word, he’s not fit to be their pastor.

Another vital element goes hand-in-hand with feeding—godly shepherds must also protect the sheep. Paul exhorted the leaders in the church at Ephesus to be on the alert and protect the church from spiritual threats.

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them (Acts 20:28-30).

Here’s how John MacArthur describes this vital function of God’s shepherds:

Sheep are almost entirely defenceless—they can’t kick, scratch, bite, jump, or run. When attacked by a predator, they huddle together rather than running away. That makes them easy prey. Sheep need a protective shepherd in order to survive.

Christians need similar protection from error and those who spread it. Pastors guard their spiritual sheep from going astray and defend them against the savage wolves that would ravage them.

The faithful pastor isn’t naïve or oblivious when it comes to his sheep. He’s keenly aware of the threats to their safety and health. He doesn’t venture as close as he can to the danger, or lead them into the unknown. He guards them carefully, and sacrifices himself for their protection. And when they do fall into danger, the godly shepherd must rescue the sheep. As John MacArthur explains, it’s in a sheep’s nature to wander and get into trouble.

A sheep can be totally lost within a few miles of its home. With no sense of direction and no instinct for finding the fold, a lost sheep usually will walk around in a state of confusion, unrest, and even panic. It needs a shepherd to bring it home.

Like lost sheep, lost people need a rescuer—a shepherd—to lead them to the safety of the fold. A pastor does that by pointing the lost toward Jesus, the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11).

A godly shepherd knows how precious the sheep are to the Good Shepherd, and the blessed joys of belonging to His heavenly flock. Churches looking for a pastor need to look for a man passionate about the transforming work of the gospel—not merely accumulating professed converts, but growing faithful disciples and equipping them for use in the work of God’s kingdom.

That means the faithful shepherd cannot bounce from flock to flock. He can’t have divided loyalties, or always be looking for a larger, more desirable flock. He’s got to be grounded and committed to effectively lead the sheep the Lord gives him. And as John MacArthur explains, leading God’s sheep involves more than just preaching.

Besides teaching, the pastor exercises oversight of the flock by the example of his life. Being a pastor requires getting in among the sheep. It is not leadership from above so much as leadership from within. An effective pastor does not herd his sheep from the rear but leads them from the front. They see him and imitate his actions.

The most important asset of spiritual leadership is the power of an exemplary life. First Timothy 4:16 instructs a church leader to, “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”

Churches searching for a new pastor need to ask two important questions about every potential candidate: Is this a man who will faithfully lead us? and Is this a man we should follow?

Finally, godly shepherds exhibit tender care for their flock as they gently comfort the sheep. Brash, heavy-handed leaders don’t make good pastors; pushovers are just as bad. Shepherds need to measure the needs of their individual sheep, and address them appropriately.

Sheep lack a self-preservation instinct. They are so humble and meek that if you mistreat them, they are easily crushed in spirit and can simply give up and die. The shepherd must know his sheep’s individual temperaments and take care not to inflict excessive stress. Accordingly, a faithful pastor adjusts his counsel to fit the need of the person to whom he ministers. He must “admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with all” (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Anyone can give advice, comfort, or rebuke—a godly shepherd gives it with authority, precision, wisdom, and gentleness out of genuine concern for the needs of his sheep.
Goodbye…

By Marieke Willers

After more than 10 years in the SAAP office, the time has come for me to say goodbye. I am retiring on 28 February 2017, which is going to be a new challenge indeed.

I am lucky in that much has been written and said about “active retirement” already and I know quite a number of “pensioner pastoral counsellors”. Someone might just receive an urgent call for “retirement counselling” from me in the very near future...

The SAAP season of my life has been an enriching journey and I have gained so many friends. It provided me with a precious support network when I had breast cancer in 2009 and when my dear brother, Callie Hugo (the then SAAP chairperson) passed away suddenly in October 2010. I was so privileged.

May you, the Executive and Anita, be blessed abundantly, while you “heal through caring”.

THANK YOU!

Please receive my sincerest appreciation for your kindness, patience, friendship and support throughout the past 10 years. These memories will guide me in the new and unknown phase of my life. I will miss you dearly.

Anita Snyders has been taking over from me slowly but surely during the past month. I already regard her as a special friend and colleague.

The two of us think and work in the same way, we are both task driven and we are both passionate about people – especially those in need. I have absolutely no doubt that I am leaving you in more than capable hands.

I am 58 years old and my husband Len and I have been married happily for 37 years. We met as children and went to school together in Pietermaritzburg where we matriculated in 1975.

We have two married children, a son Lourens, aged 28 (married to Retha) and a daughter Marileen, aged 26 (married to Eugene). We are a close-knit family and we love each other dearly.

A confrontation with breast cancer 10 years ago left us even closer and extremely thankful that we were granted the luxury of knowing the value of living a second chance. Our lives are centred in our faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour and Redeemer.

I am looking forward to get to know all of you and to work with you.

There will be no change in the contact information for the SAAP administrative officer.

A new face in the office!

By Anita Snyders

I am Anita Snyders, the brave person with the audacity to try and fill the shoes of Marieke Willers after so many years of serving SAAP.

I will give my all and try my level best to do her and you proud and to continue within her guidelines and high standards, which is truly a hard act to follow!

I have a BCur degree in nursing and have over the past 35 years, used my love for people, as well as my attention to detail and order, mainly in the private practices of 3 remarkable doctors in Pretoria. In these practices I handled office reception, the accounts, general administration and practice management. I am passionate in what I do and I always strive to execute every task to the best of my ability.

I am married to Retha and we have two married children, a son Lourens, aged 28 (married to Marileen) and a daughter Marileen, aged 26 (married to Eugene). We are a close-knit family and we love each other dearly.

A confrontation with breast cancer 10 years ago left us even closer and extremely thankful that we were granted the luxury of knowing the value of living a second chance. Our lives are centred in our faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour and Redeemer.

I am looking forward to get to know all of you and to work with you.

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Retire Smart

By dr Deon Bruwer, recently retired minister and hospital chaplain

“Those who do not plan, plan to fail.”

When the time comes for someone to retire, no one will be left untouched; there will be a reaction. Some might be excited and be looking forward to retirement; others might dread the inevitable changes that happen during retirement. You might even find those who are apathetic about retirement and deny the changes that they will need to face.

Whatever stance you take, retirement is as important as any other transitions in life. Preparations on an emotional and personal level for this transformation are often neglected and not given enough emphasis. Many people who have already gone through this process express the wish that they had prepared better for this life phase.

Quite often the only aspect of retirement that receives attention is financial planning. Financial planning is very important for maintaining the preferred lifestyle. If people do not have financial security, it provokes tremendous anxiety and this is extremely detrimental to general wellbeing and happiness. However, financial planning by itself is not sufficient for wellbeing after retirement.

What does responsible preparation for retirement entail? There are numerous aspects of life that need to be revisited. Following are some of the important aspects that need attention.

Identity: Who are you when you are not doing the work that you retire from? The identity of a person is constructed in many ways - also through your profession or the work that you do. Some reflection should be given to the ways that you are going to keep yourself busy after retirement, because this will contribute to your self-understanding and how others see you. In retirement no-one has the luxury to expect that your identity will be the same as during your professional or working life. You must take personal responsibility for your identity in retirement. For example, what will you call yourself in retirement?

Purpose: This relates to why you get up every morning. Finding a new purpose and meaning will help to direct you towards a meaningful life and future. A person without a purpose might struggle to find motivation to get up in the morning. A purpose is more than a goal. A question to consider is: How do you make this world a better place? No one can give a purpose to someone else; this is something to be found inside yourself and should be aligned with your values.

Values: Values determine behaviour and living according to your values will bring peace of mind. Although we all hold values, some people live unaware of their values. Upcoming retirement is a perfect time to revisit the values that drive your life and determine your behaviour. Listing your values and discussing it with someone you trust, might help you to identify important issues to attend to in retirement.

Self-knowledge: Knowing your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats will help you formulate how you need to plan for your retirement. Using a tool for self-understanding might help in managing your retirement more smartly. According to the Myers and Briggs Type Indicator, an extraverted person should keep in mind that he or she needs others to connect with more frequently, while an introverted person might need more privacy in retirement. Knowing your own personality traits might help in planning your retirement and bring more contentment.

Flexibility during transition: Looking back and reflecting on your life story will help in identifying your strengths and pitfalls during change. Reflecting on the various transitions that you had to face during your life and asking yourself what helped or handicapped you during those major transitions might be helpful. Even only reflecting on and naming the transitions in your life journey might remind you of certain aspects to attend to during planning for retirement.

Relationships and socialising: Spare a few thoughts for the important people in your life with whom you connect frequently. Are they relatives, friends, colleagues or from your faith community? Are they going to be around after retirement? Do you easily make new friends? What activities do you most enjoy with friends? The answers to these questions might have been unimportant during your working life, but after retirement need some consideration to avoid loneliness and for building meaningful relationships after retirement.

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Location: “Home is where you hang your heart”. Relocation is a very important and sometimes a complex issue in retirement. Therefore, unpack your thoughts and plan wisely. Some questions to consider is: Where do you want to live? Why do you want to live at that specific location? When will be the appropriate time to move? The question of needs and wants has to be measured against affordability and sustainability. Do I go where my children live? Do I live in a security village or a retirement village? Finding these answers is an important step in retiring smart.

Spouse: Retirement will influence the relationship with your life partner. It is a myth that partners can read minds after a lifetime together. Discussing thoughts, ideas and plans about retirement issues with your partner might not only clarify differences, but it might strengthen the bond and bring about new excitement in relationships where the stressors of life have taken its toll.

Health and fitness: Physical health is a pivotal determinant for happiness in retirement. Taking care of affordable medical care is an essential step towards peace of mind. Supplementary to medical care is physical health and fitness. It is a well-known fact that exercise enhances physical and mental health. If you are a person who has been physically active all your life, keep going! However, if you are not particularly fond of physical exercise, challenge yourself, and you will reap the benefits for years to come.

Another career: The so-called Baby Boomers are now at the age of retiring. We have built our estates for most of our working careers, but will it last for our entire lifetime? With the progression in medical care, longevity must be considered as part of retirement planning. If you are fortunate enough not to have to supplement your pension for survival, you need to find a space where you can make a contribution to make the world a better place and find meaning in doing so. If you do need to increase your retirement income for survival, finding a new job, might be part of retirement planning. In this planning, questions leading the way towards an alternative career are: What do I most like doing? What makes me tick? Now is the time to think outside of the box!

Time management, creativity and crafts: Sometimes there was just not enough time during working life to do the things that you always wanted to do. What about taking up the guitar, doing some woodwork or taking up the paint brush. There is more to life than just sitting on the porch and looking at the passers-by.

Mindfulness and spirituality: One of the privileges of being human is being aware of the gift of life and the ability to give meaning to life. Retirement might just be the phase of life where you can rejoice in the meaning of your life in the moment that you experience it. Mindfulness or even Soulfulness is the quintessence of being spiritual. Being spiritually intelligent in retirement can lead you to the most exciting and fulfilling time of your life.

These reflections on retirement are not comprehensive, but are meant to stimulate those who sometimes wonder about this phase of life and to open new windows of opportunity towards a new landscape with sparkling new horizons. The journey through the landscape of retirement may sometimes be difficult with both high and low roads, but the way you travel towards your destiny can be managed in a smart and fulfilling manner.

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I'm pretty certain that there is nothing more satisfying in life than sleeping while someone else gets ready for work.

Investments and Financial Planning

“One more time — explain to me why enjoying life after I retire is more important than enjoying life now.”
Character Strengths

The science of character is still a very young field. Character strengths are substantially stable, universal personality traits that manifest through thinking (cognition), feeling (affect), willing (conation or volition), and action (behaviour).

The great characters in the Bible are called just that because of their admirable traits. As a shepherd and leader, David was called a man after God’s own heart as he was brave, humble, trusting, devoted, faithful, etc. David’s faith pleased God and God rewarded David for his faithfulness. He was also repentant and obedient following his sin.

The VIA Institute on Character publishes a classification of character strengths and virtues. It comprises 24 character strengths that fall under six broad virtue categories. These character strengths are morally and universally valued, encompass our capacities for helping ourselves and others and produce positive effects when we express them. Knowing these strengths is the first step towards living a more authentic life. These virtues and character strengths are:

1. Wisdom and Knowledge The cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge:
   - Creativity (originality, ingenuity): Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualise and do things; includes artistic achievement.
   - Curiosity (interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience): Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering.
   - Judgment (critical thinking): Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one’s mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly.
   - Love of Learning: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one’s own or formally; goes beyond curiosity - add systematically to what one knows.
   - Perspective (wisdom): Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people.

2. Courage The emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal:
   - Bravery (valour): Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it.
   - Perseverance (persistence, industriousness): Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; “getting it out the door”; taking pleasure in completing tasks.
   - Honesty (authenticity, integrity): Speaking the truth and acting in a genuine and sincere way; being without pretence; taking responsibility for one’s feelings and actions.
   - Zest (vitality, enthusiasm, vigour, energy): Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated.

3. Humanity The interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others:
   - Love: Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people.
   - Kindness (generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, “niceness”): Doing favours and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them.
   - Social Intelligence (emotional intelligence, personal intelligence): Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick.

4. Justice The civic strengths that underlie healthy community life:
   - Teamwork (citizenship and loyalty): Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one’s share.
   - Fairness: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.
   - Leadership: Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done; maintaining good relations within the group; organising group activities and seeing that they happen.

5. Temperance The strengths that protect against excess:
   - Forgiveness: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not vengeful.
• **Humility**: Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is.

• **Prudence**: Being careful about one’s choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.

• **Self-Regulation** (self-control): Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one’s appetites and emotions.

6. **Transcendence** The strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning:

• **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence** (awe, wonder, elevation): Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.

• **Gratitude**: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.

• **Hope** (optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation): Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about.

• **Humour** (playfulness): Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes.

• **Spirituality** (faith, purpose): Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort.

Source: http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/VIA-Classification

**Applying character strengths**

An individual’s character is best understood as a profile of strengths. Signature strengths are character strengths that are displayed the majority of time in relevant settings and can be readily named and owned by the individual. These elements can combine to form complex character strengths that are interactive and interdependent. Being part of an individual’s personality, they are substantially stable, but may change in response to important life events or as a result of deliberate interventions or conscious lifestyle actions.

The five character strengths that show a consistent, robust relationship to life satisfaction are hope, zest, gratitude, curiosity, and love. Perseverance, love, gratitude and hope predicted academic achievement and ultimately life success. The character strength of hope is a key factor for better adjustment and less psychological distress, anxiety and depression.

The pursuit of meaning and engagement are more predictive of life satisfaction than the pursuit of pleasure.

There is a health benefit to the strength of gratitude. The practice of counting blessings results in higher levels of optimism and life satisfaction, with fewer physical symptoms, more time exercising and improved well-being and optimal functioning.

Grateful individuals report higher positive mood, optimism, life satisfaction, vitality, religiousness and spirituality, and less depression and envy than less grateful individuals. Grateful people also tend to be more helpful, supportive, forgiving, empathic, and agreeable.

**Uses in counselling**

The negative effects of stress and trauma is countered with hope, kindness, social intelligence, self-regulation, and perspective. Posttraumatic growth corresponds with improved relationships with others (kindness, love), openness to new possibilities (curiosity, creativity, love of learning), greater appreciation of life (appreciation of beauty, gratitude, zest), enhanced personal strength (bravery, honesty, perseverance), and spiritual development.

Viewing one’s work as a “calling,” results in your vocation being a source of fulfilment that is socially useful and personal meaningful. Deployment of character strengths in the work setting is linked with greater well-being, vocational satisfaction, and meaning.

The focus on cultivating love toward oneself and/or others increases feelings of social connection and positivity toward others, as well as positive emotions, sense of purpose, and mindfulness in general.

Many practitioners find that working with a client’s character strengths is one of the most exciting and fulfilling areas of their work. A three-step process of aware, explore, and apply can assist the practitioner to help the client become more aware of their existing character strengths.

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<td>- Loyalty</td>
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<td><strong>Temperance</strong></td>
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<td>Forgiveness</td>
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<td>- Mercy</td>
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<td>- Giving people a second chance</td>
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<td>- Accepting the shortcomings of others</td>
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<td>Humility</td>
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<td>- Modesty</td>
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<td>- Letting one's accomplish-ments speak for themselves</td>
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<td><strong>Fairness</strong></td>
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<td>- Just</td>
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<td>- Not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others</td>
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<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
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<td>- Organising group activities</td>
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<td>- Encouraging a group to get things done</td>
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<td><strong>Transcendence</strong></td>
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<td>Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence</td>
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<td>- Wonder</td>
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<td>Gratitude</td>
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<td>- Thankful for the good</td>
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<td>- Expressing thanks</td>
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<td>- Feeling blessed</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
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<td><strong>Humour</strong></td>
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<td>- Playfulness</td>
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<td>- Bringing smile to other people</td>
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<td>- Seeing the light side</td>
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<td><strong>Spirituality</strong></td>
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<td>- Faith</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Coherent beliefs about higher purpose and meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort</td>
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**Boundaries (Part 5)**

*Dr Hanlie Meyer is a Counselling Psychologist in private practice.*

Our previous discussion ended on a very high note: we do not need to be perfect. We are free from the slave driver of perfectionism. We were introduced to Jesus’ way of life on earth when the extremely cruel Roman Empire was running the show. We were encouraged by the knowledge that God knows that we cannot keep our side of the covenant and therefore made the covenant on our behalf empowering us through His Holy Spirit to not only imitate the life of Jesus through sheer willpower and natural strength, but to be transformed into the image of Christ by focussing on the glory of God.

This has far reaching implications for our lives: we are to expect a complete transformation in ourselves. We are also called to not only allow this but to also actively seek it in obedience to Christ and in response to His example. Christ had a single minded focus: to obey His Father and manifest the fullness of His character. To this we are called. Mica 4: 5 states that we will walk in the Name of our God forever and ever. This implies that we are to cultivate a God-awareness instead of self-awareness. The Name of Jesus is the complete and true reflection of the fullness of the character of God.

Like Jesus, we need to live with single minded loyalty to Him despite our circumstances. We cannot conform to expectations or demands that are contrary to what this Name entails. With the promise of freedom comes the responsibility to keep to this boundary. In our daily lives this could mean that we might not be selected for certain positions, we might be victimised, called all sorts of names - we might even be killed. Is this Name worth dying for? Count the cost! If we understood who God really is and what He really offers us in Jesus this price will not be too big to pay! Jesus paid it for us...

The sad thing is that because we do not appropriate our freedom from judgement and perfectionism the life in Christ seems like a burden and a whole lot of rules and prohibitions. This may dishearten many Christians and put off people who do not know the heart of God.

While Jesus walked the earth He practically lived the “better way” God introduced with the Ten Commandments. We are called and empowered to do the same so that others may be encouraged. What is the better way? Paul paints a very clear picture of this in all his letters but a very explicit picture is to be found in 1 Cor. 13: LOVE.

God is about a love relationship - a meaningful intimate relationship where we are safe enough to explore our blind-spots and share our hurts. This love is not only meant to enrich us and fill our inner void – it is meant to give us a new heart so that we will reach out to those who are physically or otherwise less privileged than us.

The message contained in the life of Jesus is one of service in love. We are God’s hands and feet. In the face of oppression and suffering the question to ask is not “Where is God”? The question to ask is “Where is the body of Christ who is supposed to bring heaven to every bit of hell on earth?” This we are supposed to do not merely by promising people prayer but by practical interventions and support.

Living with a God-awareness and single-minded focus on what He desires us to be, will not disappoint the hope that rests upon the Name of Jesus. When we realise that this is what God has called us to be and that He empowers us, we will not live in fear of failure or rejection. We will then be able to enter into the rest of God. From a position of rest in God we will be able to wait on Him but also be active – to take the next step in faith.

Boldness comes with the realisation that God’s desire is to transform us into the image of Christ and make us partners in His dream to transform all people. The boundary is that we cannot go beyond this. If we do not embrace this calling, we will experience a sense of emptiness, remain in fear and judge ourselves and others constantly. Whenever we live outside of what God desires, or do it our way instead of God’s way, the result is restlessness, judgment, fear, anxiety and ultimately a sense of failure.

The glory belongs to God – not to us. The gift of the Holy Spirit is free, although the highest price had to be paid to allow us to receive this Gift. We need to understand that we belong to God and that in as much this sets us free from our slave drivers, it also asks of us to surrender the right to our own lives to God. Jesus said that if we want to save our lives we need to die to ourselves. We cannot serve two gods – self and God. We cannot enjoy the freedom without accepting the responsibility to become what He has set us free to be: loving people!
I showered and shaved ...
I adjusted my tie.
I got there and sat...
In a pew just in time.
Bowing my head in prayer ...
As I closed my eyes...
I saw the shoe of the man
next to me ...
Touching my own. I
sighed.
With plenty of room on
either side ... I thought,

‘Why must our soles touch?’
It bothered me, his shoe touching mine ...
But it didn’t bother him much.
A prayer began : ‘Our Father’ ...
I thought, ‘This man with the shoes, has no pride.
They’re dusty, worn, and scratched.
Even worse, there are holes on the side!’
‘Thank You for blessings,’ the prayer went on.
The shoe man said ... A quiet ‘Amen.’
I tried to focus on the prayer ...
But my thoughts were on his shoes again.
Aren’t we supposed to look our best.
When walking through that door?
‘Well, this certainly isn’t it,’ I thought,
Glancing toward the floor ...
Then the prayer was ended ...
And the songs of praise began.
The shoe man was certainly loud ...
Sounding proud as he sang.
His voice lifted the rafters ...
His hands were raised high.
The Lord could surely hear.
The shoe man’s voice from the sky.
It was time for the offering ...
And what I threw in was steep.
I watched as the shoe man reached ...
Into his pockets so deep.
I saw what was pulled out ...
What the shoe man put in.
Then I heard a soft ‘clink’.
As when silver hits tin.
The sermon really bored me ...
To tears, and that’s no lie ...
It was the same for the shoe man ...
For tears fell from his eyes.
At the end of the service ...
As is the custom here.
We must greet new visitors,
And show them all good cheer.

But I felt moved somehow
And wanted to meet the shoe man.
So after the closing prayer ...
I reached over and shook his hand.
He was old and his skin
was dark ... And his hair
was truly a mess.
But I thanked him for coming ... For being our guest.
He said, ‘My names’ Charlie ...
I’m glad to meet you, my friend.’
There were tears in his eyes ...
But he had a large, wide grin.
‘Let me explain,’ he said ...
Wiping tears from his eyes.
‘I’ve been coming here for months ...
And you’re the first to say ‘Hi.”
‘I know that my appearance ...
It’s not like all the rest.
‘But I really do try ... ‘To always look my best.’
‘I always clean and polish my shoes ...
Before my very long walk.
‘But by the time I get here ...
‘They’re dirty and dusty, like chalk.’
My heart filled with pain ...
And I swallowed to hide my tears.
As he continued to apologize ...
For daring to sit so near
He said, ‘When I get here ... ‘
I know I must look a sight.
‘But I thought if I could touch you ...
Then maybe our souls might unite.
I was silent for a moment ...
Knowing whatever was said
Would pale in comparison ...
I spoke from my heart, not my head.
‘Oh, you’ve touched me,’ I said ...
‘And taught me, in part;
‘That the best of any man ...
‘Is what is found in his heart.’
The rest, I thought ...
This shoe man will never know.
Like just how thankful I really am ...
That his dirty old shoe touched my soul
You are special to me
and you have made a difference in my life.
I respect you, and truly cherish you.
Notes from the office

Professionalisation process

An application to be recognised as a professional body was submitted to SAQA on 21 October 2016 by the Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP), the non-profit company of which SAAP (to become the Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors, CPSC) will be a division. Other specialist Christian ministries, such as Ministry Training and General Ministry, were also identified to be represented on the professional body, as divisions of ACRP.

The SAQA process now entails assessment of the application, a SAQA site visit to the ACRP physical address (head office), submission to the SAQA Quality and Standards Committee, and finally submission to the SAQA Board.

The establishment of the CPSC was formalised at the ACRP Board meeting held on 23 February 2017. After all formalities such as the transfer of SAAP funds to a new CPSC bank account, SAAP will be deregistered with CIPC as a non-profit company.

The result of this process will be the former SAAP to start functioning as CPSC, with a new website, a new logo, amended documentation, new certificates, etc.

The CPSC will, however, continue to function exactly as SAAP used to. Existing members of SAAP will be transferred to the new structure and will be issued with new certificates reflecting the name of the new division, the name of ACRP as the umbrella organisation, and the designation awarded. The new registration structure will provide for CPSC associates (currently named SAAP members), as well as accreditation by awarding the following designations:

- Pastoral and Spiritual Caregiver
- Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellor (Basic Level)
- Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellor (Intermediate Level)

Subscription 2017

A very big thank you to all members that already submitted subscription payment for 2017. SAAP finances are “in the green” and the Executive is confident that we will be able to effectively maintain the administrative function throughout this year. However, almost half of our subscriptions are still due at this point.

Kindly keep in mind that members who resign, remain responsible for the payment of full subscription, unless notice of resignation was given before the end of the previous financial year. Payments without any reference (name and/or invoice number) can unfortunately not be allocated to the right person. We received quite a number of these payments, resulting in ongoing reminders and, eventually, cancellation of registration due to non-payment.

Update of personal details

It is the responsibility of every member to inform the Admin Officer of any changes in personal details. An up-to-date database means we can maintain contact with all members.

Events 2017

The first ACRP conference and Annual General Meeting is planned for August 2017. Topics for presentation will accommodate all divisions, i.e. Pastoral and Spiritual Counselling, General Ministry and Ministry Training.

Annual general meetings of the specialist ministry divisions will also be held during the conference. Exact dates and details will be communicated in due course. A SAAP/CPSC open day seminar is planned for June 2017.

SAAP CONTACT DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAAP Admin Officer</th>
<th>Banking details</th>
<th>Please note</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita Snyders</td>
<td>Nedbank</td>
<td>Cheques must be made payable to “The Southern African Association for Pastoral Work”. Fax or e-mail proof of payment to the SAAP Admin Officer. Please state your initials &amp; last name as reference for any deposit made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Branch code: 136-305</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cell phone: 082 600 6578</td>
<td>Fax: 0865105840</td>
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