

During the 2009-2010 academic year, writing instructors at Youngstown State University have been using a work-themed course reader and engaging students in writing about work. Dr. Lew Caccia asked his students to write profiles of area workers similar to the pieces in our Worker Portraits project. Here are three examples of the work that students produced:

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English 1550- 12:30
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Interview Essay- **Final Copy**

Police Officers are People

Lazy. Power hungry. Corrupt. Overweight. These are the words most people think of when asked to describe a police officer. But who really are these people behind the uniform? First of all, that is exactly what they are; people. **Police officers are people.** They have families, friends, and lives. They get up every morning, drink some coffee, read the newspaper, and go to work, just the same as any other person.

What I do not understand is why people attach a negative stereotype with police officers. People verbally attack these men and women on a daily basis, when all they are trying to do is their job. I, for one, know from personal experience what it is like to have a father as a law enforcement official. On a weekly basis, I would go to school to have my friends or acquaintances inform me that "Sadie, your dad is an asshole. He busted up our party last night." Eventually, I became tired of hearing people degrade my father and his job. I would ask them, "So you are saying my father is an asshole because he is doing his job?" Quickly the smart remarks ended.

The point I am trying to make is this, people do not understand that these men and women put their life on the line everyday for the good of humanity. Police officers stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. But who stands up for police officers? I will. I'm sure this paper will not stop anyone considering robbing a bank, nor make a wanted murderer hand himself in. However, I do hope to open reader's minds, and give them a change of heart.

To help counteract these common stereotypes I listed above. I interviewed two local police officers who have over fifteen years of experience in the field. The first officer I interviewed was William Barna. Officer Barna has a total of twenty five years of experience. He first served at Johnson Police department for a total of two years, and then he was at the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office for a year. The next thirteen years he served at Bazetta Police Department, and he now currently works at Howland Police Department. The second officer I interviewed was Michael Hovis. Sergeant Hovis has served almost sixteen years at our local Bazetta Police Department where he held the position of detective, and is now the Sergeant. Before serving at Bazetta, Sergeant Hovis worked one year at Cortland Police Department,

two years for the Trumbull County Drug Taskforce, and six years as a Military Police Officer. Officer Barna and Sergeant Hovis were both kind enough to spare their time to face those prevailing viewpoints and offer an alternate view on police officers.

When asked what kind of impact this prevailing viewpoint makes on society and individuals, both Officer Barna and Sergeant Hovis had similar perspectives. "People think that we are high on authority," explains Officer Barna, "the viewpoint of police officers being bullies often puts a wall between the police and citizens." He simply stated that "people already have an opinion of you before you even arrive at the situation. People think that just because you're wearing that same uniform as other police officers, that you are power hungry and abusive." People believe that police officers think they are above the law because of the title you hold. People see the uniform and badge and assume that the police officer is an alpha male or female that believes they better than everyone else. When in reality, police officers are forced to act that way. No one would listen to a police officer if they were a push-over or showed any sign of weakness. Just because police officers look that way, does not mean that is how they truly are outside of work. I mean has anyone heard the phrase, don't judge a book by its cover? Well, **don't judge a police officer by his uniform.** Every person is different, just as every police officer.

Officer Barna alleges that "people would rather see a society without rules." Truthfully, people hate being told what to do, and some take pride in defying the law. Some people believe rules are pointless, and made to be broken. However, if there were no laws, and no rules. What would stop someone from murder, or robbing a house? The answer is nothing. Laws are not made to be broken. Laws are made to keep stability and maintain as safe place for people to live. The same goes for the occupation of police officers. What would the point of having laws and rules, if there was no one to enforce them? That is the exact reason we have police officers, to prevent and stop crime, not to make a person's life more chaotic. **Police officers do not make the laws, they simply just enforce them. That is why they are called Law Enforcement Officials.** As Sergeant Hovis says, "If people just followed the law, then there would not be a problem. We are forced to take action when people break the law and don't follow our instructions. Somehow that is when we become the bad guys, not them."

Officer Barna describes his job as "keeping everything check and in balance." He believes that without police officers, the world would be filled with crime and danger. When in reality the world is already filled with danger as it is. I could not imagine what life would be like if there were no consequences for one's actions. Police officer's job not only entails stopping crime, but also preventing it. When people know there are consequences for their actions, they are less subject to acting upon them.

'Lazy' is the first word that comes to Sergeant Hovis' mind when asked what most people think of police officers. However, last winter Sergeant Hovis was involved in a foot chase with three men who were caught breaking into resident's homes and

stealing four-wheelers. Sergeant Hovis lead this six hour foot chase in the middle of the woods, in the dead winter, with snow on the ground up to his ankles, at one o'clock in the morning. He ended up catching one of men, and as it turned out he was part of a tri-county wide four wheel theft ring, in which they found hundreds of missing four wheelers. What most people do not understand is that **police officers have to be in great shape**. They go through physical training every year to be sure they are in a well enough physical shape, in case they become involved in a chase. Every year the state of Ohio holds what is called the Police and Fire Olympics. Here police officers and fire fighters from all over Ohio come together to compete in weightlifting, swimming, archery, wrestling, and shooting competitions. Sergeant Hovis has a box in his basement full of medals he has earned at the Police and Fire Olympics, while Officer Barna trains in M.M.A. (Mixed Martial Arts) and Jiu Jitsu. Overall, there are some police officers who are overweight, but most of them are in well enough shape to chase you for hours. So if you're a criminal on the run, I hope you can run fast.

Sergeant Hovis emphasizes that, "Communication is significant in police work. We want people to know we are here to help. **We are here to be problem solvers not problem starters.**" "People don't understand that we don't come to their house by choice," declares Officer Barna. "I tell them, **I'm not here to cause problems; I'm here to help, and find the root of the problem.**" Police officers do not want to cause a person more problems, that is just more work for them. They want to arrive at the scene of the crime, resolve the situation, fill out the paper work, then leave. What I believe most people do not understand is that, being a police officer is their job. It is the same as being a teacher, or a doctor. When you go to school you expect your teacher to teach. When you go to the doctors, you expect your doctor to determine your sickness, and prescribe your medicine. Just as if you call the police, you expect them to help you, and put an end to crime. Officer Barna explained to me, that it is very clear to him that people already preconceived judgments about officers. I asked Officer Barna, "Why you think people have such an extreme dislike for police officers?" Officer Barna explained to me that, "**People constantly see negative views in the press**, for example Pete Pizzullo"(Pete Pizzullo was a Trumbull County Sheriff Sergeant who was recently fired for embezzling money from the anti-drug charity he founded). "They read the newspaper and see the occasion corrupt police officers, and they think all police officers must be like that. **However, people never see the daily things police officers go through, and they take what we do for granted.**"

Another important subject Officer Barna discussed was "the extreme physical and emotion toll" his job takes on his life. "I have seen a lot of things that just won't leave my mind, for example kids that were beaten and abused. I don't talk about those things a lot." **One thing that I believe people often forget is that police officers are usually the first ones to arrive to the scene.** They are the ones who break into a home to find someone murdered. They are the ones who arrive to a crash to find someone is trapped in their car. They are the ones who arrive at someone's house to find a child abused by his mother's boyfriend. While the rest of us read about it in

the newspaper or watch it on the news, they experience it firsthand. I never use to understand why my father would come home from work in terrible mood. Then one day I heard my father telling my mother a story about a girl my own age, from our city, that was involve in a car crash. I heard him tell my mother the girl had died because the driver was speeding and the girl did not have her seatbelt on. Needless to say, for a whole week my father did not let me drive in a car with my friends. At that moment, I truly began to understand and realize how hard police work really is.

In the winter of 1996, Sergeant Hovis was involved in a high-speed chase when a car pulled out in front of him. The speed at which he was traveling was so fast that his car went soaring into the air. Next, the car landed in a ditch, then flipped several times until stopping upside down. Sergeant Hovis was rushed to the emergency room where he was diagnosed with having ruptured a disc in his back. Surgery was inevitable. Sergeant Hovis describes that day as "the most depressing day of my life." He used to be an avid weightlifter, receiving gold medals in the Police and Fire Olympics. Now, he could not lift his five-year-old daughter. Still to this day, Sergeant Hovis visits a chiropractor at least once a week. He still cannot lift anything remotely heavy, and he must ice his back almost every night. To his own dismay, he is reminded daily of the night that changed his life forever. Sure, the accident was a fluke, a one in a million chance, but that is the risk police officers take. I am absolutely positive that if he could go back to that day, and change everything he would. However, that is the chance someone takes when they become a police officer. Police officers put themselves in harm's way every day. They can never predict what is behind that door they have to bust in, or if the man that broke into a house has a gun. **The point I am trying to prove is that being a police officer is not just hard, but mentally and emotionally too.**

What I hope readers take away from this essay is that police officers are people too. They get up and go to work every day like any other person. The only difference is these men and women put their lives at risk every day, and receive very little credit. Therefore, next time someone picks up a paper and reads about a corrupt police officer, I hope they think about the millions of other police officers who are saving children from abusive parents, or the police officers who are the first ones to arrive to a crime in progress or an accident scene. I also hope they are able to understand the lives of those who have fathers, mother, children, and loved ones as police officers. They too are affected by people's opinions and their actions toward police officers. Most people judge police officers before they even get to know them. I hope readers take away not only facts but also that this essay touches their hearts. I hope next time they come across a police officer, they look them in the eye and say Thank you, because that is all they really want to hear.

Samantha Hamilton
Final Essay
11/16/09

Children Services: A Better Tomorrow

When people hear or talk about Children Services, it's usually not about anything good. However, what most people don't know is that the bad news floating from ear to ear and plastered all over the six o'clock news is usually very far from the truth. With the help of three women, I was able to conduct field research, which not only opened my eyes about the truth behind Children Services, but will hopefully change the views many people have toward the system. I first spoke with Diane Rossi who is a retired Case Manager from Children Services and is currently employed at Neil Kennedy Recovery Clinic in Youngstown. The second interview I conducted was with Gretchen Bowman, who for the past eighteen years has been employed with Children Services as an Intake Unit Supervisor. Finally, my last interview was with Denise Walters. Denise held a license to be a Foster Parent for 12 years and is now the mother of three adopted children the ages of 5, 6 and 14.

From talking with all three of these women, I learned many misguided assumptions people hold toward the system and its workers. But the number one misconception most everyone seems to have is that Children Services just takes children away. "People think we just go in and snatch kids," Diane explained to me. This couldn't be farther from the truth. Gretchen added that aside from the main assumption, people tend to believe that Children Services have more power than the police - another incredibly false remark. "There are so many distorted ideas in people's heads," Denise claims. "This person thinks Children Services does too much, and then you have people that think they don't do anything at all. People see or think kids are being abused and call the services and turn around to say that 'they didn't do anything.' Then there are those who are afraid to call because they're afraid kids might get removed from their home." None of these scenarios are what Children Services is truly all about.

So why does society have these assumptions and misconceptions? "Total ignorance," Diane stated. "If you have the right attitude, Children Services can be your best friend." Gretchen felt that it's just what people see.

I *hate* television shows that depict social workers. Every time 'Judging Amy' comes on, I just cringe. The only time it comes to people's attention is when we're being sued or something makes headlines. Everyone thinks we can just place a child wherever, stop visitations, all kinds of crazy things. I can't even put a child in my car without having custody of them.

She also explained to me that she believes that there is a lot of news that has been falsely reported. "I just wish people would report accurately," she implied. Gretchen

also mentioned that like anything else, most of the great things Children Services does never shows up in the paper.

The truth is that Children Services cannot takes kids away - only courts have the power to remove children. Even if a social worker suspects something, all they can do is turn to police who will then turn to the courts. That is when power can be granted to remove a child. Children Services is the caretaker for children - a system offering emotional support, and assistance. However, being a caretaker is far from babysitting. The system has many goals, and all three women had pretty similar ideas of what the main goal was. Diane revealed that the purpose was to keep families together and to make sure the basic needs of children are taken care of (and if possible, reunite children with birth parents). Basic needs can include food, shelter, safety and good hygiene. Gretchen believes Children Services is in order to strengthen families and empower them to parent better along with creating leaders in the community against child abuse and neglect. She hopes that by guiding parents to better themselves, they will in hindsight be role models for others. Denise touched on all these ideas and added creating a safe and secure place for children to live.

The main causes of problems that Children Services faces are drugs and alcohol. Diane confirmed that almost all of her cases were related to drug and alcohol abuse. "You have no idea how powerful your addiction is" she said. "I don't understand how you can choose your drug over your child." Denise's response ran parallel to Diane's, as she also stated that the most common problem was drugs.

A big frustration Children Services encounters is people using the system. "People will call and tell us that in order to stay in their house and provide for their child, they need their rent paid. They expect us to turn around and pay their bills," Gretchen explained. "We get a lot of people trying to have an open case around the holidays because they know Children Services will provide Christmas gifts to their kid." Denise also expressed her concerns of people using the system. "People will just do the minimum requirements to prove they're making progress" she explained. "Reaching minimum requirements doesn't make someone a parent. It's frustrating - children can't just be removed because their caretakers aren't meeting what ordinary people consider parental standards." She went on to explain that reaching minimum requirements, such as visiting one's child while they are in foster care once or twice a month, in her opinion doesn't make someone a parent.

Diane's frustrations centered on resources. "There's not enough money and resources out there to help parents get on their feet." Diane discussed that Children Services does so much, from providing beds, refrigerators, stoves, other appliances and a lot of food. "A lot of times it's straight out of pocket - even if it's just milk, bread, and some lunch meat, but you can only do so much. Sometimes parents just don't show *any* effort at all to help better themselves or the lives of their children." Gretchen mentioned how irritating it is when clients never use the word "I". "Everything is always someone else fault. I *hate* when kids are blamed. Parents have

the nerve to tell their own kids 'if you would have cleaned up, Children Services wouldn't have taken you'. Kids love their parents no matter where they come from." She also added parents giving up, "People literally just drop their kids off because **they don't want them anymore.**" This is the side of Children Services most people probably don't see.

Another topic discussed was on a group of individuals who are major impacts on society itself - foster parents. I discussed foster parents and what it takes to be one with all three women. Foster parents cannot have any criminal records. There's a whole list of things that they can't be accused of, and they even have to undergo an FBI check. Many hours of training are involved to reach licensure. Foster parents are given the choice to prefer ages and genders of children, but they are not allowed to discriminate against race. "Foster parents must be dedicated but realistic" Gretchen noted. "And they shouldn't do it for the money." Diane also suggested that they need to accept children for what they are. "You have to remember where they're coming from. Things are usually never perfect." Denise added that foster parents are licensed for a certain number of children. Sometimes it's not a good fit - the needs of the child might not be able to be met, and it's important to remember that your family comes first. She also talked about siblings. "The goal is to keep siblings together, but they might not start out that way. They could start out in different homes because of room in available homes." She also mentioned that foster parents aren't always permanent. "Illness may strike, the foster parent could pass away... they're normal people." The women want people to realize foster parents are special people - they just want to help in any way they can.

I asked Gretchen and Diane to take me through a typical neglect case. A referral comes in to the receptionist, and the receptionist then sends the referral to an Intake Screener who searches the family history to see if the family name is already on file or in the system. Everything is done on a computer, and every county can look at anything they want. The Screener takes the family's name and address, the child's name and address, and as many details about the event as they can. After this is all done, the referral goes to the Intake Unit Supervisor where the case is then assigned to a social worker. "Everything is timed. You have four hours to screen and twenty four hours to initiate" Gretchen described. "The social worker meets with the mother or caregiver about the allegations. They have a right to know what they are being accused of. Then the worker interviews the alleged child victims. You have thirty days to do this." After all of this is done, the social worker needs to decide if the child or children are safe where they are. "We have about 68 to 75 open cases of neglect per month, but we screen anywhere from 150 to 190 per month." She also added that most neglect cases she deals with seem to take place inner-city.

Diane told me that when a social worker meets with the caregiver, they have to speak to them about making improvements. "If it's a neglect case about the home being dirty, you have to give them a time frame to clean up the home. It might be a time frame of twenty-four hours, and then the worker has to come back in twenty-four hours to see if it's been done. You can even give them a task a day. It's all about

making progress." She also explained that workers have a case plan. If the tasks aren't being met, the worker can file with the courts to suggest getting custody of the children. There are also circumstances in neglect cases where emergency removal can take place. If dog feces are covering the floor, the child can be removed immediately for a period of time. Denise noted that the older a child becomes the more neglect there needs to be for any action to be taken. "Once a child reaches school age, more people are watching them. They spend more time away from home, so it's harder to have a neglect case." She also told me that there are people who are obligated by law to report any suspicious signs of abuse and neglect - teachers, lawyers, nurses and anyone in the medical field are some examples.

I then asked the women to take me through an abuse case. "If a child says they feel unsafe, you can't let them stay there until the situation has been investigated," Diane explained. "The child can be placed with a relative or within foster care in the mean time." She also informed me that when a child is removed from a home, they immediately are sent to a doctor to get a physical and to check for any signs of physical or sexual abuse. Gretchen noted that most abuse cases are 'outer-city'. "For some reason, they seem to happen most in places you wouldn't expect." She also noted that with abuse cases, there isn't always resolution. "It's so terrible because you can't always prove abuse. You have this child crying and telling you these things are happening, but if you can't prove it, it doesn't fly in court."

As I mentioned in the beginning, Diane is retired from Children Services. As I concluded her interview, I asked her what made her decide to retire. "A year before I retired, I was attacked," she explained to me. "I was going to a house to supervise a home visit in the middle of the afternoon. When I got there, the mother and her boyfriend were using cocaine." As her story went on, she explained that the boyfriend got upset and sent his pit-bull after her. When that didn't work, he got behind the wheel and attempted to run Diane over while she was holding his son. "That was the decline of my career," she added. "I realized I didn't have to deal with this. I had put in the years, and it was just my time. When things start to threaten yourself or your family, that's when you know it's time to let go." She does miss parts of it. "I don't miss going up to homes, or having guns pulled on me. But I do miss the kids and the co-workers. Nobody can understand unless you've worked in Children Services. They're the best people. Everyone pitches in to help each other. You don't see that at other places."

As a result of the above information, what should people think the next time "Children Services" comes to their attention? "In over twenty two years, I've only had one parent come to trial to fight for custody of their child" Diane admitted. "You do *everything* possible for parents to get custody back. I went out of my way, and parents still failed. You provide them every resource available. I want people to know that **parents gave up on their kids.**" Social workers go long hours with very little pay. Gretchen gave an average of about 50 hours a week for her, but she and Diane both agreed it's a twenty-four hour a day - seven days a week job. "It never

leaves you," Diane exposed. "The phone constantly rings, even in the middle of the night"

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Allison Sees
1550 - 2:00
Profession essay
December 3, 2009

Divine Relationships

I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I now pronounce you husband and wife. Lord, I pray that your holy servant may rest with you and rejoice in the eternal glory. Clergy are there for people in the some of the most powerful moments of their lives. Clergy get to witness birth, baptism, love, marriage, and death first hand. It goes beyond witnessing, however, as clergy lead and take part in such momentous points in life. It is truly both a humbling and powerful profession. Living out God's call in their lives as servant leaders, they build relationships with the church, community, and those around them. However, many in society have come to view clergy as abnormal, perfect, having all the answers, and "holier than thou." Through interviewing two clergy in The United Methodist Church, this essay hopes to dispel this misconception. It is offering an alternative view, asking society to look at those called to a life of ministry as faithful followers of Christ that truly care about building strong positive relationships with the community, church, and those around them.

A better understanding of clergy is important so that one's life may be enriched by the genuine connection made with members of the ministry. This understanding will lead to more openness between clergy, individuals, and the community, an openness that will be beneficial to all parties. Clergy will both be able to perform their jobs and have their lives, and the lives of others, enriched by building an honest human relationship.

Interview subject, the Rev. Tim Morrison, has been in the ministry for ten years and is currently serving at Spencer United Methodist Church (UMC) in Ohio. The child of a pastor, Morrison did not want to follow in his father's footsteps. He had seen the difficulty, obstacles, and hard times the job had presented his father with and knew it just was not for him. It seems like God had other plans for Morrison though as he always felt like there was something more that God wanted him to do. He followed this call all way the way into seminary. Clergy discern and listen for God's voice in their lives, even if the ministry was not their original plan. God, however, is calling them to serve, and Morrison considers himself truly blessed. Now, he is married with three children and is excited for the things God has in store for him, hoping to get involved in campus ministry.

The Rev. Don Christensen, another interviewee, is appointed to Canfield UMC, also in Ohio. He describes himself as a simple person who grew up the in country, but his knack at school opened up many opportunities for him. While in college he held a part-time job as a youth leader in a local church and fell in love with his job. Though terrified of public speaking, Christensen began to take the steps towards becoming

ordained and felt this was right for him. Christensen, in his youth, certainly could not have imagined himself where he is. Almost every Sunday he gets up in front of a congregation to preach. He may have not felt qualified to speak, or even to lead, but God called him. He gave his first sermon in 1976 and is now married with two children. Both of these men are, as the Rev. Christensen put it, just like everyone else, "just really trying to do our best to get through life."

The job of a clergy is, in general, to nurture, cultivate and maintain the church. This includes worship, pastoral care, and evangelism. Christensen informed the job of a pastor is "to try to connect with people on a personal level, heart to heart, to build trust with people, and to go forward in our lives together." However, there is a misconception that is interfering with ministers being able to relate to people on the level they need to. Due to this view, people may not be fully honest with or themselves around members of the clergy, or they might avoid contact with the church entirely. Morrison acknowledges that people seem to hold the prevailing view that clergy are always trying to judge or convert other people. "People think that we are some sort of perfect or that we are not normal like everyone else. Maybe you could even call us weird," he said. Christensen added that people have the sense that clergy seem to have all the answers. This view of clergy as not normal and perfect is simply a misconception that many people in society have adopted. There are many reasons why people could have adopted this outlook. Perhaps people think they have "checked out" the church through media and the news and have decided it holds nothing for them. The church is portrayed with problems of clergy abuse, infidelity, infighting, and completely shutting out contemporary culture. People look at these issues and wonder why they should have to go to church, especially if they have to deal with all that. Morrison acknowledges these issues but yet he still emphasizes, "The church is relevant! We just need to reveal it as such." This view of clergy can be very problematic as they attempt to build relationships with and serve those around them.

Why do people view those pursuing a life in ministry to be perfect or at some level beyond normal people? Morrison says although the majority probably wouldn't admit it, they "want to think that there can be a better way to live and, in a perfect world, clergy would exemplify this." Christensen would agree: "There is a part of us that would like to think that there are people who do have all the answers." People are searching for something and would like to think clergy could help point them in the right direction. Often this something is a deep thirst for hope, for the promise that there is more to life, for forgiveness, and for love. If this is the case, people should turn to clergy, not that clergy are the solution but that they will certainly try to guide them. People, deep down inside of them, need role models. Though clergy do not have all the answers and are not perfect, they truly do strive to do this: to live a life that people could look up to and offer direction to those who seek it. "Humbly on our knees we seek to do this," Christensen added.

The prevailing view that clergy are perfect has logical deficiencies that make it problematic. First of all, clergy are human and every person has faults. It is simply a

fact of life: Nobody is perfect. Morrison would like to remind people, "God has never once chosen anyone who was perfect." Biblical figures like Moses, Mary, Joseph, and Abraham, are often revered, but Morrison points out that by taking a look at their stories, one can tell they are "pretty messed up people." Moses had a speech impediment and was a murderer. Mary was but a young pregnant teenage girl, while Joseph was struggling with how God was acting in his life. Abraham, a father of nations, was old and sonless. Clergy, similar to biblical figures of old, are just trying to follow God's calling in their lives, in their case, to lead the church. Just because they are leaders and trying their best to do God's will does not make them beyond human. Ministers are normal, not perfect, people. Morrison emphasized, "God is still picking out pretty messed up people to choose." This "choosing" does not make clergy unnatural or not human. Truly, they do strive towards leading a better life, a more perfect life. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, believes that all Christians are on a journey towards perfection. However, as Christians live out their lives, despite their best efforts, no one can ever reach the destination of perfection, not even clergy.

Another falsity to the view that clergy are above normal people is they mess up just like anyone else would. When the Rev. Christensen was a teenager, he and his brother almost burnt the house down with fireworks, and in order to save his possessions, he threw his furniture and dog out the window. The Rev. Morrison at thirteen years old got busted for smoking outside a DQ at three AM and at fourteen he snuck out of his school trip's hotel to go to the hotel of an all girl school. These incidents do not stop with childhood either. On top of being a horrible procrastinator and having two left feet, Christensen often has slips of the tongue behind the pulpit. He once exclaimed, "We have the best breasts in bed!" He had meant to say, "We have the best bread in town." Morrison embarrassingly remembers giving his first sermon ever with his fly down. Christensen was once told by a member of his congregation that, "I am pretty confident you're going to make a mistake, and I never know what it is going to be." However these experiences and mistakes often draw people in. They are able to use the stories from their childhood in their sermons, and above all, they show others their moments of weakness and humanness. It is as a youth in Morrison's church once confessed to him, "I come to your church because you make Christianity seem normal. You don't have to be perfect to be here."

The false prevailing view that clergy are above normal people impacts society and individuals both positively and negatively. Christensen and Morrison said that others, upon finding out their profession, act in different ways. Christensen complains, "When people find out I am a minister, it is like the equivalent of them driving down the road at 70 mph and they learn that I am a patrolman." This stepping back, or "slowing down" as Christensen called it, is not helpful to pastors. It gets in the way of being able to connect with people on the personal level that clergy wish to. Many people tend to guard what they say and do in the presence of a pastor. They aren't, as Morrison put it, "being real with themselves or the church." The profession of the clergy is all about being real with people and building real, strong

relationships. When individuals are hesitant because they think that clergy are perfect, and therefore possibly condemning them, it is not helpful. How can two people get to know each other if one cannot be honest with the other?

However, just as many people are almost repelled upon discovering Christensen's and Morrison's profession, others are genuinely drawn in. This is perhaps because the position of clergy does hold respect and some weight in a community and society. Especially if clergy are revered or viewed as perfect, respect will generally accompany that. Morrison notices that when he is present at a community meeting, as a clergy representative, people tend to listen to him. Due to this respect, clergy are often able to steer a church or community in a direction that they wish to go. Their opinion and voice seems to hold more weight. Used responsibly, this can help a community greatly.

How should people view clergy? Both Christensen and Morrison wish people would approach them more honestly. Morrison said, "I wish people would feel comfortable enough around clergy to be themselves around us, that people would feel vulnerable enough to share their suffering so we can help." How will people be comfortable around clergy? To view them as good people who have faults and make mistakes but sincerely want to help them and build a Christ-focused relationship with them. Christensen added, "The people I am closest to are those who can look past what I do and see who I am."

Clergy build genuine, pure relationships with those they serve. Christensen observed that his job begins and ends with the people: "I have encountered thousands of people, such good people, and my life is enriched because of them." Ministers are normal people with a love and passion for Christ. They wish to enrich the lives of those around them by sharing this love with them. Those who approach clergy should view them this way and perhaps they will discover a relationship that has changed their life for the better.