THE ART OF BELONGING:
CLERGY FORMATION & WELLNESS

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Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
The degree of Doctor of Ministry

Acadia Divinity College,
Acadia University
Spring Convocation 2016

This thesis by Cheryl Ann Rebecca Beals was defended successfully in an oral examination on 29 March 2016.

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This thesis is accepted in its present form by Acadia Divinity College, the Faculty of Theology of Acadia University, as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry.

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ABSTRACT

There is a health and wellness crisis among clergy. The major symptoms include burnout, stress related illness, pastoral misconduct, poor health and a lack of wellbeing. Research studies on burnout and spirituality have found that relationship with God is a crucial factor in their health and wellbeing. Soul neglect, the inattention to relationship with God and relationship with self, is explored as a major factor in clergy distress. This thesis briefly explores the theology, anthropology and Christology of belonging. God is relational and exists in a Trinitarian community of three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Humanity bears God's relational image with the ability to relate to God, self, others and creation. Sin is the destroyer of relationship, particularly between God and his creation.

As recorded in John 13-16, Jesus intentionally led his disciples through a time of formation and preparation as a precaution against stumbling. Jesus challenged the disciples to choose between belonging to the world and belonging to him. The flow of divine resources is from God to Jesus through Holy Spirit to the disciples' souls and through the disciples to the world. This is the flow of belonging.

In addition to the above discussion, this study measured the current health status of one hundred-fifty-six leaders from the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches (CABC). The study found that relationship with self and relationship with God are key factors in pastors' health outcomes. The analysis of variance found that younger clergy had the lowest health outcomes in some areas. Those who left pastorates because of difficult circumstances had lower health outcomes than those who had not left a pastorate because of difficulty. Those who felt seminary did not prepare them for the stressors of ministry had lower health outcomes than those who felt they were prepared by seminary. Using multiple regression, relationship with self was found to be the most robust predictor of health outcomes. Overall results suggest that health outcomes for clergy are affected by their relationships to God, self and others.

This study examines the clergy's need for a spiritual theology and concludes with a proposal for a process of soul formation.

ABBREVIATIONS

CABC	Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches (CABC)
BO	Ministry Burnout Inventory (BO)
GWB	Psychological General Well-Being Schedule (GWB)
Res	Resiliency Scale (Res)
RG	Relationship to God (RG)
RS	Relationship to Self (RS)
SE	Self Esteem (SE)
SSM / SSM18	Social Support Ministry Questionnaire (SSM / SSM18)
SSMb / SSMb18	Social Support Ministry Satisfaction (SSMb / SSMb18)
TH	Total Health Scale (TH)
THS	Total Health Satisfaction Scale (THS)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Mrs. Sheila Beals, Mother (1939-1990)

Mrs. Kathleen Beals, Grandmother (-1995)

Mrs. Grace Suttle, Grandmother (1913-1998)

Mrs. Kelley Johnson, Friend (-2007)

Rev. Dr. Willard Clayton, Mentor (-2007)

Reverend Audrey Conard, Spiritual Director (1943-2015)

PREFACE

I have had a long-standing interest and concern for the well being of Christian leaders. Since 1987, I have been involved in some form of ministry. I have had opportunity to work with and observe Christian leaders, mostly pastors, in a variety of contexts. During this time, I have observed varying degrees of healthy and unhealthy leadership practices in myself as well as in others. I have witnessed the negative consequences for pastors' lives, families and congregations when the leaders have not been healthy. Unfortunately, I have watched leaders fall from grace due to professional misconduct.

My observations and conversations with leaders have convinced me that many pastors are struggling. They have a growing recognition of their need for personal change, but they lack an awareness of how to bring it about or where to seek help.

Because of my own sense of vulnerability, I have intentionally tried to nurture my own health and wellness—and have encouraged others to do the same. My experience, prayer, and reading have led to the creation of this thesis. I offer it out of a loving concern and a deep respect for our spiritual leaders. It is not a condemnation or a judgement of our leaders, but an attempt to describe a reality. Being a leader is difficult, especially today when pastors are not always appreciated or valued. Being a spiritual leader is impossible without divine help. The challenges are many and come from both the spiritual and the physical worlds. Nonetheless, the world needs spiritual leaders, and God has chosen to call such people to guide his church and impact the world.

This thesis will not be meaningful for all pastors, but I hope it will bless those who are struggling and or searching for a pathway through the wilderness. As you read about leaders seeking relationship, please know that I am also on this journey. I welcome your comments and your critiques.

Thank you to the brave pastor who provided journal excerpts. I have included them as a way of making the topic more personal.

May all of us find our way Home.

Cheryl Ann

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?
I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.
Isaiah 43:19 NLT

Introduction

The North American church has prioritized congregational health and leadership effectiveness as its focus. This has also been true for the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches (CABC). Its twin priorities were creating healthy churches and fostering effective pastors. Despite this, there were still too many congregations that remained unhealthy. Harmful characteristics included deep-rooted conflicts, financial issues, declining attendance, reduced membership, decreasing sense of mission, short pastoral stays and waning effectiveness in ministry. Denominational leaders once believed that this crisis had a direct correspondence to congregational health, when in fact there was another urgent situation festering beneath the surface for years. It was a crisis among pastoral leaders. This was not simply an issue of leadership effectiveness, but a crisis of the health and well-being of pastors. In the midst of the practice of ministry, spiritual leaders were losing their health and wellness.

This leadership crisis remains ignored and untreated. Clergy are allowing ministry to rob them of life and erode their internal resources. Burnout is all too common. *Activism*, hyper activity and busyness have become a way of life for pastors, more important than relationship, balance and soul care for too many. Christian leaders are becoming alienated from God, themselves and others. Genuine rest is rare – as is time for experiencing God or reflecting on life in God. All of this negatively impacts upon the pastors' ability to intimately connect to God, themselves and even others. It creates a *crisis of belonging*, where pastors increasingly adhere to the world of *activism* more than they do to the communion of God's love.

The present crisis among clergy is an issue that is both trans-denominational and global. Some consequences of this crisis include burnout, stress related illness, clergy misconduct, and premature departure from ministry as well as poor health and well-being among clergy. Although many pastors appear fine externally, research supports the reality that internally they are in crisis. Leaders are impacted by both the internal factors of who they are and the external factors related to the ministry environment. Research studies on burnout and spirituality have found that the relationship with God is a crucial factor in the health and well-being of clergy. Many clergy are neglecting their own souls. Soul neglect, the inattention to relationship with God, is a major factor in pastors' distress. Soul neglect is a *crisis of belonging*.

God is relational and exists in a Trinitarian community of three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—who are a diverse and loving union of one essence. Humanity bears God's relational image, having the ability to relate to God, self, others and creation. Sin is the destroyer of relationships on all levels, the beginning of alienation and shame. It destroyed the connection between God and his creation. This is where the crisis of belonging began. Desiring to be reconciled with his people, God sent Jesus to restore connection and belonging. The words of Jesus in John's Gospel provide the most detailed presentation of the Son in relationship to the Father, the Holy Spirit and humanity. These are of the *roots of belonging*.

Jesus intentionally led his disciples through a time of formation and preparation as a precaution against stumbling. Jesus challenged the disciples to choose between belonging to the world and belonging to him. They discovered divine hospitality, their need for cleansing, and how to love one another by keeping one another clean in Jesus. *Choosing*

intimate connection with God is belonging's greatest challenge. Jesus invited the disciples to enter into a new spiritual reality of belonging in the Trinity. Jesus declared that through relationship in him, the disciples would live at home in the Father's presence, connecting and belonging for eternity. The *model* for his followers' relationship with Jesus was the model of Jesus' relationship with the Father. It was the Holy Spirit who would enable the disciples in their belonging. The flow of divine resources is from God to Jesus through Holy Spirit to the disciple's soul—and from the disciple to the world. This is the *flow of belonging*.

In addition to addressing the above issues this study also examined the status of the health of a group of 156 CABC pastors. The research focused on the impact of relationship to God, to self and to others on specific health outcomes. Several demographics were also explored. The need for a *spiritual theology* is discussed and a process of soul formation is proposed.

Chapter 1

Soul Neglect: A Crisis of Belonging

In Cairo, Egypt, across the street from the incredible Egyptian Museum filled with many grand treasures and artifacts of this ancient land, there is what appears to be a beautiful, ornate, white stone building. As one draws closer, one realizes that all the windows are broken, and that there are burn marks. Apparently, the building had been destroyed by fire internally when the government workers fled during the 2011 uprising. It is a sad sight: burned-out ruins of what was once a stronghold of leadership, vitality and power. Now, it is a symbol of chaos, internal devastation, and decay. All that is left is a burned-out, empty shell. All life and power is gone. Across the street still stands the spectacular Egyptian Museum, a tribute to the history of civilization. What a contrast. What desolation!

What Went Wrong?

Clergy begin ministry with great expectations and hopes that they will be able to minister effectively to others and affect positive change in and through the church. They desire to be helpful. They are committed, optimistic, and idealistic. Their motto is "All things are possible with God". They believe that they have been called by God to touch lives and lead others into his kingdom. They desire to be a loving, healing presence. They want to encourage, equip and mobilize the saints for action. They work hard to make their vision a reality. Then one day, reality begins to hit them. The adversity of ministry becomes clearer. Their efforts are not having the impact they had hoped for. Everyone is not as receptive as they had anticipated; some are actually resistant. There are more issues and problems than they know how to address. Life is continually getting busier. Enthusiasm and energy starts to decline. Feelings of inadequacy and being overwhelmed begin to invade. All the to-do lists, meetings, expectations, conflicts, apathy, and

demands begin to add up. Even the successes in ministry come at a high price. **God seems distant**. This is not the ministry that they had envisioned.

Grosch and Olsen appropriately describe the sad reality of many pastors,

> The sad reality is that for many, idealism, commitment, and compassion gave way to disillusionment and despair.… They continue to go through the motions, but the joy is gone. Many report feeling that their spiritual well is completely dry. Others reach the extreme of total burnout and breakdown; some even resort to sexual misconduct, leading to ruined careers.
>
> Most clergy have heard the standard advice—take time off, build a balanced life, get regular exercise, develop friendships, etc.—to prevent burnout. … Yet, despite knowing this, most busy clergy cannot take the advice they freely give to others. The standard advice about preventing burnout generally leaves people feeling guilty. The advice to build a balanced life is one more thing they do not have time for.
> The standard advice rarely works, how do we understand how [faithful, committed], well educated, idealistic, compassionate …[clergy] burn out?" (Grosch and Olsen 2000, 619-620)

This is the question that many pastors are asking themselves internally, "What is happening? Why is this happening? How did this happen? How did I get here?" No one warned them or if they did, they never thought that it could happen to them. Isn't this only supposed to happen to less committed pastors? These struggling pastors are convinced that they are more committed, work harder, and care more. That is *supposed* to make the difference. It does! It leads them into burnout *faster*. Faithful servants are becoming stumbling servants. This is a *clergy crisis*!

What is happening?

Stumbling servants are often very faithful spiritual leaders who have, over time, neglected their own souls and their relationship with God. It is often a slow, steady progression from some degree of relationship to less and less relationship and—for some—to no relationship with God. They are sacrificing their own spiritual well-being in

the name of ministry and the tyranny of busyness. God is no longer the centre; church, ministry, people, projects, expectations, etc. have displaced him. The leaders' souls have become buried under lost identity and lack of self-awareness.

Research supports the reality of the stumbling servant's existence. It reveals that there are many symptoms of clergy losing their way in ministry. This stumbling is evident in the high levels of burnout, stress related illnesses, premature departures, professional misconduct, etc. Pastors are struggling with their own spiritual lives, relationships, physical bodies, emotional and psychological health, and leadership demands. It is not because they are lazy or even poor leaders. It is the stress of change. Our world is in constant flux, and it is accelerating with each passing year. Life has become more complex in all aspects. Pastors are feeling overwhelmed by the adversity of the external pressures of ministry and its internal personal pressures. They are stumbling and faltering under the weight of a heavy yoke—the burden of the expectations and demands of the church and of themselves. Pastors are surviving, some barely, but many at a high cost. Many are not thriving and are not resilient.

Review of Research

The following overview will give a summary of the research on stress and its impact on the health and wellness of pastoral leaders in the areas of psychological and emotional, social, physical, spiritual and vocational wellness. Burnout will be defined as both a result of internal, external and spiritual factors. Spirituality will be considered as a unique category of factors that are crucial in the wellness of pastors. This section will conclude with an introduction of *soul neglect* as the disregard of relationship to God and *soul erosion* that is the result.

In order to understand and confront the issues of clergy health and wellness, it is important to have a sense of the breadth of the issues. These are not only issues in Canada or the United States; they are prevalent around the world. Lewis et al. (2007) report that the poor health of Clergy is a serious problem that has a "special and unique dynamic" related to peculiarities of spiritual leadership. This includes poor psychological health, stress and burnout. The Church "… has the unenviable task of looking back to its roots, living in the present with the constant changes associated with a modern community, and looking forward with eschatological confidence and hope, all at the same time. Combined with the sense of urgency attached to the church's mission, clergy and church leaders frequently become the victim of their own humanity and frailty" (Lewis et al. 2007, 2). The church and especially spiritual leaders, find themselves at a crossroads of great stress and tension between their hopes for ministry and the reality of ministry. Churches and pastors can only address the issues they are aware of and take seriously. It is important to raise awareness of the critical issues that are impacting clergy health and wellness. Following is a brief literature review of the research on clergy health.

Psychological and Emotional Wellness

There are very few studies that explore the anxiety and depression experienced by clergy.

> Self-report data from a large sample of male parochial clergy in the Church of England indicated that 30% of pastors had experienced depression, and 21% acute anxiety, since ordination (Turton, 2003, as reported in Turton & Francis, 2007). In another study, senior pastors with no staff who read Leadership magazine were asked how much "depression" or "anxiety" they experienced on a five-point scale (Ellison & Mattila, 1983). The mean for depression was toward the high end at 3.35, and anxiety was 3.90. Another study found that ministers had significantly higher scores on the depression scale of the MMPI if they had low congruence with ministry (based on the career-fit measure, the Strong Interest Inventory Minister Scale) (Celeste, Walsh, & Raote, 1995). (Proeschold-Bell et al 2011, 701)

Doolittle (2010, 88) in research among 358 parish-based clergy identified the prevalence

of burnout and found that "clergy who met criteria for burnout were younger, identified

themselves as being depressed and unsatisfied with their spiritual life, and have endured a

traumatic church placement."

Examining the relationship between burnout and age among Anglican clergy, Randall

(2007, 39) found that chronological age (rather than years in ministry) was "negatively

correlated with the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales of burnout." He

found that younger clergy are more prone to burnout than older clergy. "… [T]he finding

that ministers experience moderate, but not high levels of burnout after twelve months is

consistent with the findings of Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001) that clergy are more likely to

experience burnout in the period from 6–20 years after ordination than in earlier or later

ministry careers" (Miner 2007, 25). The psychological and emotional health of clergy is

being negatively impacted.

Social wellness

Relationships are a significant part of life, and pastoral ministry is all about

relationships. However, the accomplishment of tasks and projects is becoming more

important than the cultivation of healthy, loving relationships in the church. "Pastors

work within a complex web of relationships–peer, family, congregation, and

denomination among them–with sometimes conflicting demands that have repercussions

on pastors' vocation and health" (Duke University Clergy Health Initiative 2014).

An unpublished Canadian study by The Centre for Clergy Care & Congregational

Health, Knox College (part of the University of Toronto), entitled *Clergy Well-Being:*

Seeking Wholeness with Integrity (Irvine 2003), used a sample of 338 clergy from

Ontario. The six denominations that participated were: The United Church of Canada, The Anglican Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec[1].

In the area of emotional health, the study reports that 62-80% of clergy in the study responded, saying that they were unfulfilled in ministry, incongruent in who they were and how they presented themselves to others, fearful of showing how they really felt, experienced guilt about taking time off, and were projecting ministry frustrations onto their families. This is not a picture of health or well-being. The researchers also found that clergy had few personal relationships. The ones that they did have were most often weak and inadequate to respond to the inner needs of clergy, especially in times of stress and crisis. This study concluded that the lack of clergy health is rooted in a distorted personal identity that is formed in an unhealthy or often nonexistent relational milieu (Irvine 2003).

Relationships within churches are becoming increasingly difficult and conflicted. There is growing tension, alienation, and relationship breakdown between pastors and congregations as well as within congregations. Clergy are seeing increased marriage breakdown and family problems, including divorce, within their ranks. Weaver et al (2002) found that Protestant clergy reported higher levels of occupational stress than Catholic priests and that this had a negative impact on family (395). Hill et al. (2003) found that their results "revealed a number of boundary-related stressors affecting the quality of life for clergy and their families. Boundary-related stressors were found to

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[1] A sister convention to the CABC

include issues surrounding time, mobility, congregational fit, space, isolation, and intrusions" (150). Relational health is declining for clergy and congregations.

Clergy burnout is also connected to the high expectations of congregations and of clergy themselves. Pastors often feel they have little control over the things that determine success in ministry (Jackson-Jordan 2013, 2). The phrase "vision conflict" coined by Wickman describes the sense of failure clergy experience when their expectations when first entering ministry are not met in the reality of ministry (Spencer et al. 2009, 1). The pressure to measure up from both internal and external expectations can cause great stress.

Garner (2013) studied the adverse effects of interpersonal criticism for clergy and found that it can have harmful vocational, psychological and health consequences. Criticism from congregants, the larger denomination, and others was harmful for interpersonal relations and could lead to stress, burnout and premature departure from ministry. Beebe (2007, 257) found that the quality of clergy interpersonal relationships, their style of conflict management, and the degree of self differentiation from the role of pastor are all factors in burnout. Those who used an accommodating style when dealing with conflict had higher burnout than those using a collaborating style. How a pastor copes in relationships affects health and wellness.

Physical Wellness

Physical health is also an issue for clergy. Pastors are experiencing more stress-related physical illnesses, such as high blood pressure, heart issues, migraines, obesity, diabetes, chronic pain, and reduced immune system function. More and more medications for stress-related ailments are being prescribed. Increasing numbers of pastors are taking

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stress leave and medical leave. In a survey of 1,726 actively serving United Methodist clergy in North Carolina, Proeschold-Bell and LeGrand (2010, 1868) found that the obesity rate among clergy aged 35–64 years was 39.7%, 10.3% higher than the general population of North Carolina. Clergy had significantly higher rates of diagnoses of diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, angina, and asthma compared to their North Carolina peers. They concluded that, the other-orientation of clergy and lower mortality rates have deflected concern away from clergy health. The health of clergy has been neglected and there is a need for interventions that take into consideration the uniqueness of the pressures clergy face (Proeschold-Bell and LeGrand 2010,1868).

Physically many clergy are in a health crisis that is having devastating effects on their lives and families. "The relentless nature of ministry means that fatigue is a constant companion of leaders in the church. … A pastor's work is overwhelming because it wears upon the body and soul" (Burns, Chapman and Guthrie 2013, 137-138).

Spiritual Wellness

Pastors are feeling increasingly alienated from God and their own souls. They are missing their deep connectedness with God and their own beings. When spiritual leaders experience spiritual decline, their churches suffer. Pastors are called by God to be models of what it means to live in his presence. If this is not happening, their ability to lead with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is greatly diminished. Miner in her study of" burnout in the first year of ministry", found that "some degree of self-integration is necessary to avoid burnout" (2007, 17). For new clergy whose beliefs were not firmly rooted and were open to changing their beliefs, they were found to have greater exhaustion after a year in

ministry. Also openness to changing beliefs was found to be correlated with depersonalization.

> Ministers who are very open to change in their worldview lack a firm set of reasonably well-integrated beliefs, according to predictions from privatization theory (Luckmann, 1967; Miner, 1996). As a result, they would struggle to find an inner basis for their ministry in word and action. These ministers may then find it difficult to develop long-term plans and to maintain and inspire confidence that goals can be achieved, both strong correlates of clergy burnout according to Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001). The increased effort they would have to make could result in heightened emotional exhaustion. (Miner 2007, 26)

The degree to which clergy have integrated their faith and beliefs into their lives also has an impact on stress and burnout. If beliefs are not integrated, then the potential for burnout is greater. Having an internal foundation for ministry is important for maintaining health in ministry. This suggests that relationship with God and relationship with self need to be integrated for health and well-being.

Vocational Wellness

Vocational wellness is defined, in this study, as the health of the pastors' call, pastoral ethics, competency to carry out pastoral duties, and the character of how they carry out their pastoral duties. Ministry has changed and continues to change. "Coate (1989) states that constant changes within ministry roles, coupled with changing vocational tasks, increase risk for burnout among clergy. Additionally, clergy often feel overwhelmed by their pastoral responsibilities, which has also been associated with burnout (Rees & Francis, 1991; Roberts et al., 2003)" (Jacobson et al. 2013, 457).

The incidence of pastoral misconduct in the form of sexual abuse, affairs, and unprofessional behaviour is increasing. Many high profile pastors in recent years have been caught up in sexual scandals and unethical behavior. A survey administered through the Fuller Institute of Church Growth,

reported striking statistics among pastor respondents: 80% indicated that ministry had affected their families negatively, 50% dropped out of full time ministry within five years, 70% reported not having a close friend, 37% acknowledged having been involved in inappropriate sexual behavior with someone in the church, and 12% confessed to having engaged in sexual intercourse with a church member (as cited in Headington, 1997). (Meek et al. 2003, 339)

Seat et al. (1993, 368) found in their study of Southern Baptist pastors that stress and sexual misconduct are significantly correlated. They also found that pastors who were not confident in their training or trained in dealing with transference and countertransference were more likely to engage in sexual misconduct. When unhealthy pastors compromise pastoral ethics, people who are both inside and outside of the church can be abused and victimized. The effects of this clergy crisis are all encompassing, affecting every area of the pastor's life. The negative impact of this is not just felt by the clergy, but also by their families, the church, and others. The resulting consequences of clergy misconduct spill over into the life of the church and damages the lives of others. This is a high cost.

Research Summary

Spencer et al. (2009, 1) summarized the reality of some of the ministry liabilities that are affecting clergy,

Clergy are leaving the ministry in greater numbers than ever before (Beebe, 2007; Hoge & Wenger, 2005; Lehr, 2006; Palser, 2005) as a significant and increasing cross-section of evangelical clergy express a growing sense of spiritual, physical, emotional, and social bombardment (London & Wiseman, 2003; Wells, 2002). Collateral contributors to clergy fall-out include such issues as interpersonal disagreements with parishioners, role overload, lack of personal and professional boundaries, loss of hope for positive change, and financial pressure (Beebe, 2007; Wickman, 2004). Unfortunately, these conditions present themselves as typical liabilities within pastoral ministry (Kisslinger, 2007; London & Wiseman, 2003).

Lewis et al (2007, 5) presented six studies in a special issue of "Mental Health, Religion and Culture: Exploring clergy work-related psychological health, stress and burnout". Consistent across all the studies, they found that levels of work-related burnout were

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high. The results did not differ across denomination or country. They concluded that the research

> does demonstrate the salience of the problem and possible consequences upon the clergy, their families, congregations, and possibly the community. It is of concern that the popular image of the clergy is that they are one of the last professionals in the community to suffer from work-related poor psychological health, stress, and burnout. It is hoped that by focusing on work-related psychological health, stress, and burnout among this dedicated and committed group of professionals, greater awareness and resources can be channeled into supporting them and understanding the expectations of congregations and church leaders, both of whom hold, in the final analysis, some responsibility for their welfare. (Lewis et al 2007, 5)

Research on clergy supports the claim that clergy health is being impacted negatively by ministry related stressors. It is an all-encompassing negative effect that is affecting the psychological and emotional, social, physical, spiritual, and vocational wellness of clergy. The stressors can be internal to the leader such as degree of self-integration and conflict management style, and stressors can be external to the leader, such as ministry environment and congregation expectations. Stressors can lead to a lack of wellness and to the experience of burnout.

Burnout: Things are not what they seem

Dr. Herbert J. Freudenberger, a psychologist and researcher, coined the term "burnout" in the 1970s. In the beginning of his book, *Burn-Out: The High Cost of Achievement*, he paints a picture of the devastation of burnout. Freudenberger (1980) explains that people who burn out under the stress of living in a difficult demanding environment are very much like burned out buildings. On the outside, they may look the same, but "Under the strain of living in our complex world, their inner resources are consumed as if by fire, leaving a great emptiness inside, although their outer shells may be more or less unchanged" (xv). The damage moves from the inside out, beginning as a

consuming force that eats away at the internal resources and structures, gradually destroying energy and life.

From the outside, life appears to be intact. It is only a closer internal look that reveals the true desolation. Freudenberger vividly describes how burnout robs people of their inner resources. It is an internal robbery from a silent thief who steals right out from under them when they are not looking. Pastors are currently experiencing this kind of devastation. They are being robbed and consumed by the stressors of ministry. At a distance, they appear perfectly fine on the outside, but it is only obvious when one gets closer that there is a crisis brewing.

Freudenberger (1980, 62-68) describes the devastation of burnout as having eleven intrapersonal symptoms. These are the effects of burnout in a person's life:

1. **Exhaustion:** usually the first sign of difficulty
2. **Detachment:** withdrawal from both people and situations
3. **Boredom and cynicism**: questioning the value of what was once important and become cynical
4. **Impatience and heightened irritability**: the ability to be productive decreases and greater effort is required. Impatience and irritability grows.
5. **A sense of omnipotence**: unhealthy beliefs grow. (Example: "No one else can do it. Only I can.") Freudenberger says, "Be assured—somebody else *can* do it. Maybe not the same way you'd have done it or with the same degree of excellence, but it may be a situation that doesn't require excellence."
6. **A suspicion of being unappreciated**: suspicion, anger and bitterness increase
7. **Paranoia:** suspicion of others and the environment
8. **Disorientation**: feeling separate and not part of the environment
9. **Psychosomatic complaints**: "Headaches, colds that linger, backaches --all these are signs that something is wrong, and it's usually something the person doesn't want to look at."
10. **Depression**: that is caused by burnout develops. It is "usually temporary, specific, and localized, pertaining more or less to one area of life."
11. **Denial of feelings**: "Since we know that people who are subject to Burn-Out are the carers among us, it doesn't make sense to assume that one day, for no particular reason, the caring simply stopped.... Far more logical is the assumption that the caring has been shut off for a very good reason—and shut off by the person himself."
(1980, 62-68)

These are psychological, emotional, physical, and social symptoms of inner deterioration and erosion. These symptoms are all quite common among Christian leaders. Pastors are using all of their resources to try to meet the growing demands and to remain faithful to their calling. The stress and strain of ministry in a changing world is taking its toll. Pastors are depleting their internal resources and the resulting consequences are devastating.

Understanding Burnout

There are two categories of factors that are active in burnout: 1) external or interpersonal factors that relate to the clergy's system and environment, and 2) the internal or intrapersonal factors that relates to the leaders and who they are. Both influence the leaders' ability to function within their ministry role. Freudenberger recognizes both the external and internal factors, but focuses mostly on the external causes and effects of burnout. He describes, "A Burn-Out is 'someone in a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward'" (1980, 13). When expectation and reality are not in harmony and the person persists to make the expectation reality, this causes a depletion of inner resources (1980, 13). According to Freudenberger, unrealistic expectations of self, over-commitment, over-dedication, and a need to achieve an unrealistically high standard not in line with the person's real needs create the internal forces that make burnout possible (1980, 17-23). He points to a profile of someone who is dynamic, capable, lacking self-awareness, and has an unhealthy drive for achievement as factors that set up that individual for burnout.

Internal Factors

Burnout is a liability of the helping professions and is a major cause of professionals leaving their positions. It is dominant in work that requires a high emotional investment and is "other focused"—caring for others, meeting the needs of others. The major difficulty is in the imbalance of meeting the needs of others and the professional's own self-care needs. These professionals often have unrealistic expectations of themselves and feel inadequate for their task. This describes pastors' growing lack of health and wellness.

People who burnout are not lazy, incompetent or bad people. "The people who fall prey to [burnout] are, for the most part, decent individuals who have striven hard to reach a goal. Their schedules are busy, and whatever the project or job, they can be counted on to do more than their share. They're usually the leaders among us who have never been able to admit limitations. They're burning out because they've pushed themselves too hard for too long" (Freudenberger 1980, 11-12). Burnout attacks those who are competent, hard workers with high ideals and who care about others. Our best leaders are among the devastated victims of burnout. Freudenberger writes, "As we pile layer on layer, the weight bows us under. We begin to make excessive demands on ourselves, all the time draining ourselves of energy. To compensate for the weakness, the burning out we feel, we develop a rigidity. … Unfortunately, the harder we try, the more we impair our efficiency. About the only thing we succeed in doing is burning ourselves out more" (Freudenberger 1980, 5-6).

In conclusion, the interior landscape of too many pastors' lives is becoming one of deterioration in every component of life: spiritual, emotional, psychological, relational, physical, and vocational. The health and well-being of pastors active in ministry is

declining. The incidence of serious, stress-related illness has greatly increased among pastors. Our approach to ministry is having a negative impact on clergy health and wellness.

Dr. Freudenberger focused on the internal factors of the individual that helped to fan the flames of burnout, such as over-achievement and busyness, pushing too hard for too long, over responsibility, not knowing limitations, unbalanced life, etc. He pointed to individual self-stewardship as problematic for those who burnout. He also presented the effects of burnout on the professional's life. What was true thirty-five plus years ago when Dr. Freudenberger first described burnout is still true today in the lives of many leaders including pastors. Freudenberger focused on the internal characteristics of the leader. We will now look at the external factors.

External Factors

Seventeen years after Freudenberger's initial work on burnout, Maslach and Leiter (1997) wrote a book called "*The Truth About Burnout: How organizations cause personal stress and what to do about it*". Maslach and Leiter focus on the work environment and how it creates the atmosphere where burnout can develop. Maslach and Leiter argue that burnout is not a problem of the individual, but of the social environment in which people find themselves working. "The structure and functioning of the workplace shape how people interact with one another and how they carry out their jobs. When the workplace does not recognize the human side of work, then the risk of burnout grows, carrying a high price with it" (1980, 18). Churches often focus on the tasks and not the "people processes" that are needed to accomplish goals. This leads to goals being attempted or achieved without sufficient thought to their impact on people. Church

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boards are known for making decisions without considering how it will impact the pastor or even themselves.

Burnout develops when "working in a situation of chronic imbalance in which the job demands more than you can give and provides less than you need. … you feel overworked, undervalued, and no longer in control of the job you do." When you begin to burn out three things happen "you become chronically exhausted; you become cynical and detached from your work; and you feel increasingly ineffective on the job" (Maslach and Leiter, 1997, 17).

Maslach defines burnout as a complex with the following ingredients: emotional exhaustion, high depersonalization characterized by negative and detached reaction, and a low sense of personal accomplishment. Exhaustion is the feeling of being over-extended emotionally and physically. Cynicism is to have a cold, distant attitude towards others and work. Ineffectiveness is a growing feeling of inadequacy where things feel overwhelming (Maslach and Leiter 1997).

Burnout is far more than feeling blue or having bad day. It is a chronic state of being out of synch with your job, and that can be a significant crisis in your life (Leiter and Maslach 2005, 172). Burnout depletes energy and overwhelms, erodes enthusiasm and passion, and kills confidence and a sense of self-worth. According to Leiter and Maslach burnout is the result of the professional's relationship to work. It involves six factors in the work environment, namely

1. **Workload** - usually too large a workload;
2. **Control** - usually a sense of loss of control;
3. **Reward** - feeling one is not being rewarded enough;
4. **Relationship to work community** - usually a difficult, tension filled, uncomfortable environment;
5. **Fairness** - feeling one is not being treated fairly; and

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6. **Values** - feeling one's values are not compatible with the work environment. (Leiter and Maslach 2005)

The environment of Christian ministry, both the physical and social, is a major factor in pastor health. Its workload is overwhelming and never finished. The leader can feel he or she has little control or power to lead, especially when it is a very controlling congregation. Often churches do not pay pastors adequately to provide for themselves and their families. It seems that some churches are becoming more tension-filled and relationships are more difficult. Many congregations do not seem to understand the pressures pastors are under and therefore are not fair in their expectations or treatment of the pastors. There is a growing "values disconnect" between pastors and congregations. Pastors want to bring change and growth, and congregations are fearful and protective. They resist change while at the same time saying they want change. It is easy to see how pastoral leaders can be out of sync with their ministry environment.

Pastors are becoming increasingly aware that ministry is hurting them. It is not an isolated effect, but an all-encompassing one. In the midst of faithfully doing ministry, the wellness of pastors is being impacted negatively. Pastors are losing their emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual, relational, and vocational wellness. Ministry is not improving the health and wellness of leaders; it is destroying it. Clergy research is showing this sad reality. Proeschold-Bell et al. (2011) have been very involved in clergy health research with the United Methodist in the United States. They have concluded that clergy health is in a state of crisis that can only be addressed by understanding the unique conditions of clergy vocation. "While some clergy persons are able to manage the symptoms of burnout and can continue working in ministry, increasing numbers leave

ministry completely due to burnout (Spencer, Winston, Bocarnea, & Wickman, 2009)"
(Jackson-Jordan 2013, 1).

Recent studies have shown that clergy deterioration is a growing crisis worldwide and
across denominations. The efforts to curtail it are not very effective. Pastors are leaving
ministry prematurely to protect themselves from the stressors of ministry. Fewer people
are entering the ministry.

There are identifiable stressors and factors that are affecting the health and wellness
of clergy. They are both factors that are inherent to the leader and to those who are part of
the ministry environment. Proeschold et al. in their article, A *Theoretical Model of the
Holistic Health of United Methodist Clergy"* found that early research focused on the
sources of clergy stress. They summarized the research: Rowatt (2001) found four classes
of stressors: "vocational stressors (inadequate pay, low work satisfaction, unrealistic time
demands, relocation); intrapersonal stressors (emotional exhaustion, burnout, low
personal satisfaction, sense of personal failure); family stressors (low family satisfaction,
lack of family time, lack of privacy); and social stressors (high expectations regarding
behavior, criticism, intrusiveness, lack of social support)." Lee and Iverson-Gilbert
(2003) described four major categories as causes of lower well-being and increased
burnout in pastors: "personal criticism, boundary ambiguity, presumptive expectations,
and family criticism." Morris and Blanton (1994) cited "five stressors for clergy:
mobility, financial compensation, social support, time demands, and intrusions on family
boundaries" (Proeschold-Bell et al. 2011, 3).

This summary of stressors on pastors' health shows the diversity of factors that are
affecting the well-being of clergy. Most of these sources of stress are external or

interpersonal. They support Maslach and Leiter's claim that burnout is caused by stressors in the work environment. However, personal and internal factors like Freudenberger's internal factors are also present. There is also a unique category of spiritual factors that also need to be considered.

Spirituality and Burnout

One Pastor's Story

I never thought I'd be the victim of burnout. I managed my life well, worked hard, and enjoyed my congregation. I took care of myself physically, had a happy marriage, and continued to learn better ways to lead the church. Yet here I was in midlife with nothing left to give.

Gradually I came to realize that for me the core issues were spiritual. Seminary taught me how to think but not how to pray. While I had tried on my own to practice the spiritual disciplines, I had never been very successful. My relationship to God was much like Nicodemus in John 3. He was a Pharisee, well-educated, and probably overworked. Most of that sounded like me. Nicodemus sneaked away to visit Jesus at night. Like him, I also had a hard time owning up to my spiritual poverty. (Haas and Hudson 2012, 47-48)

For Christian pastors, ministry is not just a job; it is a calling and vocation that integrates the leaders' spirituality—their connection with God, their relationship with their own souls, their relationship to self, and their relationship to others. The quality of the relationship to God and the relationship to self both have an impact on leadership and relationships with others—and thus have an impact on the leader's distress and wellness. "Research has shown that the average pastor works between fifty and sixty hours per week, spends limited time in personal spiritual formation activity, and lacks a close personal friend or support-accountability network (Jinkins, 2002; Jinkins & Wulff, 2002). While nurturing others spiritually, pastors often tend to neglect their own personal spiritual growth (Hall, 1997)" (Chandler 2010,1).

Golden et al., in a 2004 study entitled "Spirituality and Burnout", studied 321 ordained United Methodist clergy, 81% male and 19% female, with 89% married. The median age was 51 years, with an average of 21 years in the parish and working an average of 54 hours per week. They found,

> The significant component of spirituality involved the individual's perceived relationship with God (Prayer Fulfillment); …. It would seem that spirituality, and especially that quality which connects one with the Transcendent, does indeed tell us something about burnout among clergy that personality and work environment do not tell us. The less one feels oneself in intimate relationship with the Divine, the greater the likelihood of burnout. The implication of this is that when it comes to dealing with the work-related distress of burnout, the ability to lose oneself in prayer or meditation is different than the ability to lose oneself in other areas of life such as in a hobby or in service. (Golden et al 2004, 123)

They concluded that spirituality is a factor in clergy distress. Personality and environmental factors play a significant part; however spirituality, particularly "that quality of spirituality which relates the individual to God through prayer or meditation, was also shown to be an important additional component in burnout. All three components make unique and important contributions to understanding burnout among clergy" (Golden et al 2004,123). Spirituality, defined as relationship with God, has an impact on clergy well-being. When clergy are disconnected and have less of a sense of intimacy with God, they are more likely to experience distress and burnout. When pastors are experiencing a deeper sense of connection and belonging to God, they are less likely to experience burnout and more likely to experience well-being.

In a small, but in-depth study of the impact of pastors' spiritual practices on burnout, spiritual practices were found to have a direct impact on pastors' ability to avoid burnout and maintain overall well-being. This study involved 8 full time pastoral leaders: three women and five men, ages range from 41 to 61, years in fulltime church leadership

ranging from 4 to 22 years. Chandler (2010, 7) reported, "Spiritual leaders "linked strong spiritual practices to their personal engagement, health, and well-being, serving as a deterrent to burnout. … [T]hese practices formed the foundation of their relationships with others including their families and church members. Consistent with the literature, the pastoral leader's spiritual life affects leadership behavior (Hall, 1997)." Pastors' spiritual lives are significant to their well-being and health as leaders.

Meeks et al (2003) in a survey of 398 Protestant senior pastors and 26 personal interviews found that pastors who functioned well had a healthy spiritual life based on regular spiritual practices, satisfying relationships, and a balance between work and home life. Chandler concluded, pastors are likely to overwork, and even abandon their spiritual practices and nurture in order to meet the demands of ministry. Regular overwork can cause pastors to become susceptible to burnout (Chandler 2010, 7). This is detrimental in two ways: lack of spiritual practices deprives the pastor of resources for maintaining well-being and resilience and overwork destroys the resources that are available.

In a study of the relationship between attitude toward prayer and professional burnout among 1,278 male Church of England pastors, Turton and Francis (2007, 5) found that "a positive attitude toward prayer was associated with lower levels of emotional exhaustion, lower levels of depersonalization, and higher levels of personal accomplishment." They concluded that for clergy "a positive attitude toward prayer and good work-related psychological health go hand in hand."

The Danger of Soul Erosion

Burnout is not just a work issue; it is a soul issue. Maslach and Leiter (1997) wrote, "Burnout is the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit, and will, an erosion of the human soul. It is a malady that spreads gradually and continuously over time, putting people into a downward spiral from which it's hard to recover" (Maslach and Leiter, 1997, 17). Too many pastors find themselves in this slow downward spiral. For spiritual leaders, there should be a harmony between who they are and what they do. *Doing* is an expression of their *being* in Christ. It is therefore crucial that their being and doing be in harmony and not dissonance. Burnout is the result of dissonance.

For the spiritual leader, the disconnect represented by burnout is even greater and more alarming. When there is conflict between who the pastor is and his/her ministry witness, there is a disconnect between the leader and God, between being and doing, and the leader and his/her own soul. This is a soul crisis. Maslach and Leiter call it an "erosion of the human soul". This soul erosion is what is happening to our pastoral leaders. For the Christian leader, the roots of this crisis are in a deteriorating relationship with God, self, and others. The internal resources that flow from relationship with God are eroded. Values, dignity, spirit and will are issues of the mind and heart, which are parts of the soul. The heart in biblical psychology is the core and centre of the soul. The soul is where the erosion in our leaders is occurring.

Dallas Willard defines the biblical meaning of soul as the dimension of the person that interrelates all of the other dimensions of heart (will and spirit), mind (thought and feeling), body and social context (relationships) into one life. "*The soul encompasses and*

'organizes' the whole person, ..." It is the *deepest part of the self* (Willard 2002, 37 italics mine). In actuality, burnout is corrosive to the whole soul. Burnout is a symptom of a hidden, insidiously slow process of soul erosion that dis-integrates the soul. It is bringing our pastors down and causing them to stumble in ministry. Many are struggling to recover. Others are not sure what has hit them. Some have left for self-protection, and some have already fallen and been defeated.

The soul, the very thing that the church seeks to nurture in others, is the treasure that is being destroyed in its leaders. The symptoms of burnout and declining well-being are the telltale signs of "soul erosion." These are not isolated, unimportant factors, but significant signs of soul erosion. Burnout has been the most pervasive sign of this crisis. This is not a false alarm, but a serious emergency that deserves the attention of both leaders and their churches. What affects the heart and soul of the leader also affects the heart and soul of the church body.

Erosion of Resources

Wellness is the integration of physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being representing body, mind, and spirit. These three areas are further divided into seven components. The basic wellness model is usually made of seven components: psychological, emotional, spiritual, social, physical, vocational and environmental. Wellness is the integration of internal components: our emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical natures; and external components: social, vocational, and environmental factors. Each component provides resources for living. Internal and external resources help us to be resilient when encountering adversity. The internal and external resources of clergy health and wellness are being eroded. There is something

about ministry and about pastors that is damaging the individual souls of the leaders and the collective soul of the church. What we are experiencing is soul erosion.

Internal resources are the resources that are within a person. "Internal resources refer to qualities and attributes that the individual possesses and can utilize in response to the stressor. They include the person's cognitive and behavioural responses to stress, personality attributes and disposition" (Barkway 2013, 240). Examples of internal resources include: health status, spirituality, personality (optimistic outlook, self-efficacy, resilience), communication skills, and problem solving skills.

External resources are those found within the environment. "External coping resources are factors external to the person such as, other people and tangible resources they can access that enable them to deal with the stressor." They include supportive relationships such as family, social network, workplace and other resources such as time and financial (Barkway 2013, 240).

Burnout destroys our internal resources, cuts us off from our external resources, and prevents us from being resilient. Resilience is having the internal and external resources needed to cope effectively and to grow from adverse circumstances.

The quality of pastors' ability to minister and witness is dependent on maintaining a high level of wellness. Their wellness affects every aspect of life. Their actions, emotions, and thoughts affect their well-being and are affected by their well-being.

Wellness provides the resources to cope with stress, reduces our risk of illness, and impacts the health of their relationships. When clergy research is taken into consideration, it becomes obvious how the internal and external resources of clergy are being eroded and resilience lost.

Soul Neglect

Spiritual leaders are neglecting the nurture of their own souls and well-being for the sake of "ministry". They have focused on ministering to the needs and wants of others to the neglect of their own—and often their family's—needs. They have silenced the voices of their own souls to listen to the voices of others. They have valued pleasing the church over pleasing God.

Some pastors are no longer standing on—or leading from—the solid ground of a deep-rooted relationship with God and a healthy integrated soul. Their roots are shallow and weakening; the ground is unstable. The erosion is happening from the inside out. The sinkholes are showing. The space in leaders' lives that was once filled with a vibrant relationship with God, a healthy strong sense of identity, call, purpose and an integrated, healthy soul is now collapsing under the unbearable burdens of ministry expectations, tasks, and conflicts. The springs of living water are vanishing and only a cavernous vacuum remains that nothing else can fill. One pastor described his experience of ministry this way:

> What happens when I skirt my spiritual growth? I replace it with the 'spiritual' tasks of pastoral life. So, for example, it is not unusual to find me substituting sermon preparation for personal worship and Bible study. 'After all,' I rationalize, 'I will be meditating on the Bible.' However, the sustained exchange of ministry duties for spiritual growth results in my becoming an 'inch deep.' The outcome is a spiritually dry, worn-out pastor with very little 'left in the tank, for others. The 'spring of water welling up to eternal life' has slowed to a trickle. (John 4:14). (Burns, Chapman and Guthrie 2013, 339-343)

At the roots of spiritual growth is the leader's relationship to God, self, and others. Spiritual tasks are significant in spiritual growth to the degree they aid the development of deepening relationship with God, self, and others.

Rutherford in his book, *Soul Shaping*, describes soul neglect by listing ten indicators. This list is not exhaustive, but gives clues to what to look for. What are the ten signs of soul neglect?

1. Low-grade depression
2. Busy but bored
3. Loss of control over life's routine (overwhelmed by life)
4. Loss of spiritual connection and responsiveness to others
5. Withdrawal from responsibility and leadership
6. Preoccupation with projects of lesser importance
7. Restlessness and dissatisfaction
8. Resurgence of unhealthy habits, diminished impulse control and diminished resistance to temptation
9. Guilt and shame
10. A hard heart (loss of spiritual sensitivity)

These are symptoms of soul neglect that indicate that pastors are being negligent with their own souls. These factors are symptoms that relate to poor quality relationships.

Many of the indicators Rutherford lists are also signs of burnout and other forms of distress that pastors are experiencing. What is clear is that the distress pastors are experiencing is not just physical, emotional, and psychological, but is also foundationally spiritual and soul eroding.

Herrington et al confirm,

> What Rutherford calls 'soul neglect' is a way of life for many in ministry. We grow busier and busier to please more and more people. We spend more time in meetings than we do in prayer. We scarcely have time to read the newspaper, much less spiritual classics or devotional readings. We study Scripture, but we do it for other people to convey God's Word to them. Our own hearts are often thirsty for a word from God, but who has time? We faithfully minister to the spiritual needs of others and teach ourselves to be content with the leftovers.
> Our inattention to spiritual transformation first produces the fatigue, restlessness, and irritability that accompany burnout. Dissatisfied with our lives and ministry, we may feel melancholy or even hopeless. Some of us withdraw from responsibility and leadership, while others try to grasp the reins of the church more tightly. We may begin to hide from our dissatisfaction by immersing ourselves in mundane tasks and avoiding people, a strategy that drains the meaning from our ministry. Eventually, the

spiritual malaise we experience creeps into the deepest part of our lives. (Herrington et al. 131, 2003)

Researchers Burns et al in their study of resilient ministry agree, "Ministry leaders collapse under the overwhelming pressures to ignore their own needs motivated by busyness, people-pleasing, the tyranny of the urgent and their own lack of priority on personal growth" (Burns, Chapman and Guthrie 2013, 34).

The sinkhole that leaders are concealing is the emptiness that was once filled with the abiding presence of God. Pastors are losing their "centeredness" in God, their sense of wholeness of being and their ability to connect deeply with others. This is evidence of an internal shift away from soul well-being and integration to soul fragmentation and dis-integration. This is a soul emergency.

Soul neglect is not just a failure to do certain spiritual practices that are important; it is a neglect of relationship with God, with one's own soul, and the souls of others. It reduces ministry to a human enterprise of completing tasks. Ministry is no longer God's action through his chosen instrument, but it is human activity in human strength for human need. Soul neglect is fundamentally about the lack of connecting and belonging to God, self, and others.

Summary

Clergy are in crisis. The most prevalent symptoms are burnout, stress related illnesses, clergy misconduct and premature departure from ministry. All aspects of wellness are impacted including psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, physical and vocational dimensions. This Clergy crisis is the result of *soul erosion.* It is a dis-integration of the soul and the deterioration of relationship with God as both internal and external resources are eroded.

Soul erosion is caused by *soul neglect*—the neglect of relationship to God and the importance of spiritual factors, such as spiritual formation and transformation, spiritual disciplines, and soul wellness. Spiritual practices are ignored. For example, practicing the presence of God, and "the spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship, Scripture reading, journaling, intentional rest taking, renewing fellowship with others, and coaching and/or accountability relationships." (Chandler 2010, 7). *Soul neglect* causes the leader to become cut off from the divine resources of God.

Burnout, the dissonance between being and doing, is the consequence of *soul neglect*—the *doing of ministry* for God to the detriment of *being in relationship* with God. The soul is no longer rooted or centred in God or nurtured by God. The leader becomes burned out from the inside out. The soul is disconnected from God and internal resources are eroded. This is soul erosion—our clergy crisis.

When a pastor stumbles or falls in ministry—burning out, leaving ministry because of its demands, suffering from extreme stress, or falling from grace—it raises questions. Questions about the particular leader or church: What types of spiritual leaders

experience such things? What personal characteristics lead to burnout? What kinds of

church environments perpetuate it?

It also raises questions about the kind of God we serve. What kind of God would

allow this to happen to his faithful servants? Why did God not protect them or care for

them? Where is God in the midst of the tragedy? At face value, it could appear that God

is a distant taskmaster with impossible demands and extreme expectations. Is he a God

who is not concerned for the well-being of his servants? A God who is a slave driver,

concerned about only what his servants can produce for him? Is this the kind of God we

serve?

Chapter 2

Roots of Belonging

Belonging: A Biblical Overview

Who is this God?

Who is this God whom clergy are serving to the detriment of their own well-being? Does God care? Are relationships important to God?

I would suggest that ministers' unconscious views of God—as well as of themselves and others—are driving this unhealthy behavior. Some clergy hold the view of a taskmaster God who is always busy doing and never stops; one who has high standards and is indifferent to human frailties and limitations. This God is not really interested in a deeper relationship. This is not the image of God that is preached from pulpits or taught in Bible studies, but it is the image of God that is being lived out in the lives of some pastors. The witness that clergy leaders are giving in plain view for all to see is the witness of a slave-driving taskmaster God who has high demands of his leaders and little concern for their health and well-being. Is this the God we serve? Does God care about relationships?

God is a Relational God

God exists as a Trinity. Although the Bible does not use the word "trinity", God has revealed himself to humanity as a trinity both in human experience of God and in the

biblical description of God. The doctrine of the Trinity is foundational to our theology

and spirituality.

It has been hard work for the church to describe the Trinity over her history. In his

book, *Experiencing the Trinity*, Darrell Johnson writes,

> Yes, thinking about God as Trinity is hard work. But it's worth it! For when we enter into the intellectual process by which the church arrived at the Trinity, we very soon discover that we are not thinking human thoughts about God; we are thinking God's thoughts about God. "Trinity" is God's way of being God. On page after page after page of the record of God's self-revelation we encounter three-fold-ness. We encounter what church historian Jaroslav Pelikan has called 'footprints of the Trinity.' (Johnson 2002, 38)

It is not an easy concept for the human mind to grasp, but as Johnson writes it is worth

pursuing. The church has had great discussion over the Trinity; there is not space in this

paper to go into the rich history of the Trinitarian debate.

The focus will be on presenting a relational perspective that reveals,

1. God is a relational God,

2. God created humanity for relationship

3. Jesus, God in relationship

4. John the Relational Gospel

Relationship is at the centre of God's being. His image is relational. God is

Trinity—and he lives in Trinitarian community. The three persons—Father, Son, and

Spirit—live in loving relationship with one another. Stanley Grenz (2000) in *Theology*

for the Community of God, concluded,

> The doctrine of the Trinity forms the heart of the Christian conception of God. Rather than being of secondary importance, this doctrine is central to our faith. The implications of this conception are immense. Above all, it suggests that God is himself relational. The Father, Son, and Spirit are the social Trinity. Therefore, community is not merely an aspect of human life, for it lies within the divine essence. (Grenz 2000, 76)

The doctrine of the Trinity is central to understanding God and ourselves as his creation. It reveals a relational God who is a Trinitarian community. Grenz summaries the doctrine of the Trinity in four statements: *God is one*, *God is three*, *God is a diversity*, and *God is a unity*.

1. *God is One*, declares that there is but one God.

2. *God is Three*, affirms that this one God exists in threeness—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each of the three is deity, sharing together in, and together constituting, the one divine essence. The one God, therefore, is not an undifferentiated, solitary oneness, but subsists in a multiplicity, the three members of the Trinity. In fact, there is no God but the triune God; God is none other than Father, Son and Spirit.

3. *God is Diversity*. Within the nature of the one God there is the diversity of three distinct persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity means that the one God is differentiated and hence is a diversity within unity. The Threeness of the one God means that the differentiations God has chosen to reveal to us are eternal, and they are internal to his nature. Father, Son, and Spirit actually belong to the divine essence throughout eternity. But further, these differentiations constitute actual diversity in the one God. The Father, Son and Spirit are different from each other, and in the one God they differentiate themselves from each other. The differentiations in the one God represented by "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" constitute a diversity which is both ontological and economic.

4. *God is a Unity*, The three Trinitarian persons are a unity that is diverse.

(Grenz 2000, 66-67)

The divine persons are diverse, yet belong to one another as a unity of one divine essence, one God.

Royce Gruenler, in *The Trinity in the Gospel of John* writes,

> …how impressive is the biblical disclosure of God's Triunity and the revelation that God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is essentially social and inexhaustibly dynamic quite apart from the creative world. Scripture implies that God is the divine Community who is at once one and plural in everlasting love and fellowship. It is the Triune Society of divine persons in absolute unity that is original and archetypal and leaves its stamp of dynamic oneness and plurality on every thing that is created. (Gruenler 1986, Vii)

God is relational internally in his being and externally with his creation. He relates within himself, and he relates outside his being to all creation. Gruenler points to God's conversation as a sign of relationship, "In the larger view of Scripture God is heard to converse not only with his people but also within himself as divine society" (Gruenler 1986, 2-3). He points to God's conversation with his creation and between the three persons of the Trinity.

The Bible is a story of relationships—God in relationship with his creation. Community is a central message of the Bible. The relational social nature of God shapes his creation. God is the God of relationship and community. God exists in loving Trinitarian community of three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God's character is relational. Loving, interactive relations exist between the three persons of the triune God. "Hospitality and being there for the other are, according to the Gospel of John, distinctively characteristic of the persons of the Triune Family in their relationship to each other within the essential unity that constitutes them as one God" (Gruenler 1986,1-2). There is distinctness and there is unity. "What does it all mean? It means that in the

deepest mystery of his being God is an intimate relationship, a fellowship, a community of love" (Johnson 2002, 51).

God Created Humanity for Relationship

Creation is a relational act, and an expression of God's relational character. In the creation story of Adam and Eve in Genesis, it is clear that God wanted a creation with which he could be in relationship. Grenz asks the question, "What characterizes the manner in which the triune God enters into relationship with the world he creates?" According to Grenz when we ask about the being and attributes of God, "we are asking about the relationships within the one God and also about the triune God in relations with us" (Grenz 2000, 77).

God created Adam, and later Eve, in his own image: with free will, and the ability to choose. God has given humanity his relational image. The ability to relate exists in four ways: to God, to self, to others, and to creation:

> The Genesis story discloses that the human family did not appear as a result of chance collocations of atoms but by design of the divine Family: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion.... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them' (Gen. 1:26-27). In this important thematic text, the generic terms *God* and *man* are defined in terms of social plurals (God is in the plural form, and the plural personal pronouns *us* and **our** identify the social nature and conversation of God; while 'man' is actually 'them,' male and female in social communion (cf. the social term *man* in Gen. 5:2, which includes male and female). God creates a man and woman in the image of the conversing divine community. (Gruenler 1986, 12)

The second relationship is self-relationship. God created humanity so that it would have the ability of self-perception, self-reflection and self-relationship. In the beginning, human self-perception and relationship were rooted in relationship to God. Relationship with God and self were in unity. Adam connected and belonged to God. Adam perceived

himself as part of God's good creation. His identity flowed from his relationship to his creator. He lived in dependence and harmony with God. It was a mutual relationship, but not an equal one. Adam was dependent on God, but God was not dependent on Adam.

God, seeing that "it was not good for man to be alone" and that animals were not adequate companions, created Eve, also in his image, to be in relationship with himself and Adam. This is the third relationship, relationship between humans. Adam and Eve learned to connect and belong to one another with mutuality and equality. In Genesis, we see that God created humanity for relationship—relationship to God, self, and others. There is one more relationship, and that is humanity's relationship to creation: how humans interact with all of creation.

When the Fall occurred, sin entered creation and all four relationships were broken. The relationship between God, Adam and Eve, and creation before the fall and after the fall were very different. Before the fall, God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve. There was a sense of relationship, intimacy, and harmony, but after the fall God went looking for them, but they were hiding. Knowledge of good and evil allowed them to see themselves apart from God. No longer did they see themselves as God's good creation. They were now self-conscious—aware of themselves apart from God. They were now autonomous individuals aware of their own being, actions, and thoughts external to relationship with God. Their identity was no longer found in God but in knowledge of themselves.

The protective shield of God's love had been torn asunder, and the brutal reality of good and evil was now theirs to contend with. Although Adam and Eve did not physically die or externally die, a death occurred in the interior of their souls— their

innate belonging and trust in God was destroyed by knowledge and all its powers. Adam and Eve no longer saw themselves or God through the eyes of innocence and trust. Now the knowledge of good and evil revealed a new reality with all its fears, anxiety, and uncertainty.

Before the fall, "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame" (Gen 2:25 NIV). There was no shame or self-consciousness, only innocence and trust. After the fall, "… the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid'" (Gen 3:9-10 NIV). Shame appeared, afforded to them by their new knowledge of good and evil. There was a new self-consciousness and awareness that was no longer innocent but tainted with shame:

> Shame is a consequence of sin. Feelings of guilt and shame are subjective acknowledgments of an objective spiritual reality. Guilt is judicial in character; shame is relational. Though related to guilt, shame emphasizes sin's effect on self-identity. Sinful human beings are traumatized before a holy God, exposed for failure to live up to God's glorious moral purpose. The first response of Adam and Eve to their sinful condition was to hide from God, and consequently from one another (Gen. 3:7–8; cf. 2:25). Christ's unhindered openness to the Father was both a model for life and the means of removing humanity's shame. Christian self-identity is transformed in him. (Mullen, 1996)

Shame corrupted Adam and Eve's identity as God's good creation. Trust was damaged, and self-protection and fear were created. Shame also caused human beings to hide from themselves—separated from their own souls. Sin and shame corrupted relationship with God, self, others, and creation. After the fall, the original bond of connection and belonging was destroyed. The sin of disobedience corrupted all relationships. Blame and mistrust developed. Shame inhibited belonging and birthed alienation. The Fall created an internal emptiness and a compulsive need in the soul of humanity to fill the void once filled with God, with things other than God.

Grenz in his systematic theology based on the integrative theme of *community* describes the alienation that sin has created. He views interpersonal relationships as a metaphor of the effects of sin. The results of sin are seen in relationship to God, self, others, and creation. God intended that humanity live in relational harmony finding identity as God's children. Sin is therefore failure to live according to the divine purpose. Reality is that sin has effected the loss of relationship and community. This loss of community is evident on the interpersonal level. Sin destroys relationship with others. The result is exploitation and power struggles. Humanity is robbed of dignity and sense of worth. (Grenz 2000, 207)

Sin alienates. On the level of relationship with God sin alienates humanity from God. Instead of living as friends of God in deep loving relationship in His presence, "We live in fear, presuming that God is hostile toward us, although we are in fact the hostile ones and project our hostility on God. Despite our infinite dependence, we run from the only one who can overcome our fear, brokenness, and hostility, the one who can fulfill our deepest needs." Sin is the enemy of relationship to God, self, others and creation. It works against the divine plan of loving relationship and community. "And we are the responsible persons. Because of the unmistakable loss of community, we do not fulfill God's design for us. Consequently, we are alienated from our own true selves. We simply are not who we are meant to be" (Grenz 2000, 207-08).

Adam and Eve no longer felt worthy of God's love and belonging because of sin. They were fearful. Harmony with self was broken. Self became the enemy and self-rejection, self-hate, etc. were given space to grow in the fertile field of shame. This was the beginning of *soul neglect*.

Sin has left humanity in a state of alienation from God, self, others, and creation. Alienation is the opposite of belonging. Soul neglect leads us to become alienated from God, self, and others. Adam and Eve were cursed by their sin and expelled from the Garden of Eden by God. They were forced to toil, to suffer independently from God. Relationship with God was no longer automatic. Loving relationship was no longer the norm. They were cut off from divine blessing.

Through Adam and Eve, and later through God's covenant with Abraham, God created a people for himself. Leviticus 26 is one passage that describes the relationship,

> I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you. You will still be eating last year's harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new. I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high. (Lev 26:9-13)

Through his covenant with Abraham God chose the people of Israel to be his chosen people, who were set apart to belong to him. They were his people and he was their God. They belonged to one another through covenant relationship. God initiated the covenant with Israel. It was a mutual covenant but it was not an equal covenant. They needed to respond with their whole being: heart, mind, and body. In the Old Testament's story of the people of Israel and their relationship with God, we see the blessings and the curses of belonging. The blessings were given by God often in response to Israel's obedience to God and the curses were in response to Israel's disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15ff). It is very evident that relationship and belonging matters: relationship with God, relationship with one another, and relationship to the world.

Jesus—God in Relationship

Del Colle (1997) in his chapter "The Triune God" concludes, that three considerations are important in developing an adequate doctrine of the Trinity. First,

> … what God is in his saving activity is what God is in the divine being itself. … Second, in the revelatory events of the sending of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit there clearly exist dialogical relations of Christ and the Spirit to the Father and to each other. … Third, the nature and personhood so important for a Christian understanding of the human person and of ecclesial life would then be grounded in the very nature of the divine being, both revealed in the economy of salvation and implanted in human being by virtue of God's creative act culminating in the image of God. (Del Colle 1997, 137-8)

God is relational in his saving activity. Salvation is through relationship with the person Jesus Christ—Emmanuel, God with us. Salvation comes through ceasing to belong to the world and starting to belong to God. In God's immanent being, there is belonging between the persons of the Trinity. Humanity has been created in God's relational image. In relationship and belonging, it reflects the relational image of God.

Humanity could not satisfy a righteous God by maintaining the law nor attain the promises of the covenant with God. Powerless against sin and shame, humanity could not measure up. In Jesus, who is fully God and fully human, God comes to humanity as the restorer of relationships, the redeemer of souls, and the reconciler of community and all creation. Through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, humanity is restored to God, to self, to others, and to God's creation. Jesus came to re-establish relationship by opening the way for humanity to connect and belong to God. Jesus' life on Earth models and teaches what it means to live in intimate relationship to God, to self, to others, and to creation in ways that honour and glorify God. Our Christology must not only focus on what Jesus did but also on how he related—his belonging with God and with humans. Jesus is God in

relationship. Jesus is the way for humanity to once again experience relationship and belonging to God.

Jesus is God in relationship

Unlike many of our spiritual leaders today, Jesus was not an isolated solitary figure. Jesus was sent from the divine communion of the Trinity into the womb of a woman—beginning his incarnation with the most primal of relationships – that of child and mother. Existing in time and space, his human body was the visible sign of an invisible God's personal mission. Jesus grew up with an earthly mother and stepfather in a family and as part of a community. This is significant to Jesus' human identity. He was not found in the desert or raised by wolves. He did not appear on earth as a fully-grown human. Jesus was incarnated into human relationships and community. He grew up in a Jewish family, an extended family, and a close community. "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people" (Luke 2:52 NLT).

While on earth, Jesus modelled a life in relationship. He spent his earthly life and ministry in relationship with family and friends, disciples and followers. He also related to women, to enemies (political and church leaders), evil forces (Satan and demons), groups (crowds and mobs), and those he met in ministry (poor, sick, disabled, mentally ill, demon-possessed). Jesus lived in relationship and valued belonging. The four Gospels tell the story of Jesus' life on earth: his birth, life, ministry, leadership, crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

John's Gospel pays special attention to Jesus' interactions and relationships with individuals along the way. The Synoptic Gospels *Matthew, Mark* and *Luke* emphasize Jesus' public ministry as he talked to the crowds, though they do lay considerable

emphasis on the training of the disciples. John's descriptions of Jesus' personal

encounters are the most intimate and detailed accounts of Jesus in relationship:

> The personal interviews are rather widely distributed through the earlier part of the Gospel: Nicodemus in Jerusalem (3:1-15), the woman of Samaria (4:1-26), the nobleman of Cana (4:43-53), the paralytic in Jerusalem (5:1-15), the blind man (9:1-38), and Mary and Martha in Bethany (11:17-40). These interviews represent different classes of society, occur at different times during Jesus' career, and have different occasions followed by varying appeals. All of them, however, whether implicitly or explicitly, illustrate the nature and consequences of belief. Some, like the interview with Nicodemus, were with people who became Jesus' lasting followers; others, like the one with the paralytic, seem to have been wholly casual. Each interview is included in some narrative of action and the person interviewed is not simply a wooden figure or puppet used to make an abstract point. All of the interviews depict Jesus' personal concern for people. (Gaebelein 1998, 9e)

Jesus had friends; this is evident in Jesus' relationship with the siblings Martha, Mary,

and Lazarus in John 11-12. The stories of Lazarus' death and resurrection, and of Mary

washing Jesus' feet show the depth of relationship Jesus had with these siblings,

expressed in deep emotion, interactions and actions. Jesus responded to them in heartfelt

ways. For example, when Jesus arrived after Lazarus had died, he had deep emotions of

anger and sorrow; he even wept.

Jesus also had many enemies. He did not avoid his opponents, but engaged them even

when it involved conflict. John records Jesus' encounters with hostile people:

> At least six conflicts with "the Jews" are mentioned (2:18-20; 5:16-47; 6:41-59; 7:15-44; 8:31-58; 10:22-39). The title "The Jews" apparently is not given solely for the purpose of distinguishing their nationality from Samaritans or Gentiles but to identify Jesus' opponents. The Pharisees are included under this title in 8:13-29 and in the text of 8:3-9 also. Each of these instances indicates the progress of unbelief that leads to the climax of the cross. The interview with Pilate is the only instance of a hostile individual confrontation in this gospel, and Pilate's hostility is due more to his political dilemma than to personal enmity. (Gaebelein, 1998, 9e,)

Jesus knew the experience of alienation and rejection. "He came into the very world he

created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they

rejected him" (John 1:10-11 NLT). He was rejected by his hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4: 14f).

Jesus related to both friend and foe. His greatest conflicts are with the Pharisees over the nature of belonging. They refused to accept that Jesus was the Son of God and belonged to God the Father, and that they did not belong to God but to the devil (John 2:18-20; 5:16-47; 6:41-59; 7:15-44; 8:31-58; 10:22-39). Jesus even engaged Satan in the wilderness. He did not treat Satan with contempt or dismiss him, but rebutted his accusations with truth (Luke 4).

Jesus lived a life of relationship on earth, not a life of accomplishing tasks. His mission was—at its core—about relationship: his relationship to the Father and God's relationship to humanity. Jesus is the reconciler, mediator, and facilitator of relationship. In Jesus' life, *being* always preceded *doing*, and doing *proceeded from being*. His soul is rooted in relationship to the Father.

John: The Relational Gospel

A fresh reading of The Gospel of John gives one insight into Jesus as God in Relationship. Jesus' mission from the Father is a relational one—to make a way for God to be reconciled to his people by being the bridge between creator and creature. Jesus' life and ministry declare that intimate relationship with God is possible.

In this study, The Gospel of John will be the primary focal point for several reasons. Its theme is relational and it consistently uses relational language. John's relationship with Jesus is one that deserves our attention. He was known as the "beloved disciple". Throughout his account of Jesus' life, John writes about community. He focuses on the

Trinitarian character of God and provides a unique in-depth description of Jesus'

relationship with his disciples:

In John, Jesus models, teaches, facilitates, and encourages the disciples to enter into

deeper relationship with God and one another. It is in his relationship with the disciples

that one can see how he was forming them to be relational and resilient spiritual leaders.

The Beloved Disciple

The writer of John's Gospel is generally thought to be the beloved disciple of Jesus

(Michaels 2010, 751). He knows the value of relationship and writes from a deep

personal well of experience with Jesus. There has been on-going discussion about the

identity of the beloved disciple and the author of the Gospel of John. Many biblical

scholars lean towards the Apostle John as the beloved disciple, but many say nothing is

conclusive:

> The traditional inference from the other Gospels has been that Peter, James and John
> were viewed as a kind of inner circle of three among the twelve apostles (see, for
> example Mk 9:2; 14:33), that this 'beloved' disciple is distinguished from Peter
> (v.24), and must therefore be either James or John, that he cannot be James because
> James was martyred early (Acts 12:2), and that he must therefore have been John the
> son of Zebedee. Such considerations, while intriguing and deserving of respect, are
> far from conclusive. This disciple whom Jesus is said to have 'loved,' like a number
> of other significant characters in the Gospels, remains anonymous, and the reader has
> no choice but to respect his anonymity. (Michaels 2010, 750)

More important than the identity of the disciple is what he represented, and so he will be

called John for this paper. This disciple represented a deep connection and belonging to

Jesus. John had a unique perspective on Jesus and his relationships. He was intimately

acquainted with Jesus on a deep personal and experiential level. He experienced deep

communion with Jesus and the other disciples. John represented true connecting and

belonging:

It is more essential here to note that the beloved disciple also serves an idealized literary function. As Jesus resided in the Father's bosom (1:18), so the beloved disciple rested in Jesus' bosom (13:23), yet, by implication, the same is true of believers (cf. 14:23; Luke 16:22). So also believers, like the "beloved" disciple (13;23; 19:26;20:2, 21:20), were special objects of Jesus' affection (14:21; 15:9, 12; cf. 3:16; 11:15,36), including in the immediate context (13:1,34). Other disciples such as Martha, Mary, and Lazarus also receive the same title of affection (11:15); rather than meaning "favorite" to the exclusion of others, it may be the voice of one marveling that he is the object of such love (cf. Gal 2:20; 1Tim 1:12-16; 1John 4:10-11). (Keener 2003, 918)

John was not only a member of the twelve disciples, he was also part of Jesus' inner circle of three disciples:

- John along with Peter and James were present at the transfiguration (Luke 9:28ff, Mt 17:1ff).

- Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him when he went to pray in Gethsemane and he confided in them his deep distress (Mark 14:32ff).

- Only Peter, John, James, and the girl's parents were present when little girl was healed. (Luke 8:51f).

- Jesus sent Peter and John ahead to prepare the Passover meal (Luke 22:8.)

John is described as being relationally and physically close to Jesus:

- John sat closest to Jesus at the Last Supper, "The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table" (Jn 13:23 NLT) signifying deep relationship. The other disciples were aware of John's close relationship with Jesus.

- He is the one whom Peter asked to ask Jesus about the identity of the betrayer (Jn 13:24).

The beloved disciple is the only disciple mentioned that remained at the cross of Jesus:

- He remained beneath the cross with Jesus' mother Mary and the women (John 19:26-).

- It is also John whom Jesus entrusted his mother's care (John 19:27).

John's Community

The writer of John's Gospel recognizes both the importance of being and of relationship. He writes his Gospel from this orientation. He knows that the people who will read it are hungering and thirsting for a deeper relationship with God. Malina & Rohrbaugh in their *Social Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*, refer to John's community as an "antisociety" who have their own "antilanguage".

They write,

> An antisociety is a social structure based on interpersonal relationships, on persons and their significance, on mutual trust and loyalty. It is not as a society based on truths; it is little concerned with ideological propositions or statements of doctrine. Hence, the main question involved in Johnannine antilanguage is, how do its vocabulary and its referents facilitate interpersonal bonding?" (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 47)

In essence, John's community is a counterculture with its own meaning and worldview within the greater culture. They are committed to the Gospel and the kingdom of God. They are committed to being in relationship with God and each other. They identify with Jesus and the disciples. They are interested in seeing Jesus in relationship, because they value relationships. It follows that this audience would be very interested in the upper room discourse. It was relevant to their reality.

Jesus and Disciples

John reveals that the Father gave the disciples to Jesus (Jn 10:29) and that Jesus is fulfilling his responsibility to protect them and teach them the things of God (Jn 17:6-12). In light of this, it is crucial that he prepare them for the turmoil they will experience.

The farewell discourse, chapters 13 through 17, comprises about 20 percent of the text of John's Gospel, with 5 chapters and 155 verses. In the Synoptics, the same time period is covered by 1 chapter or less, comprising 30 to 50 verses. John saw these last few hours of interaction between the disciples and Jesus as significant for his audience of new Christians.

Jesus spent time with his disciples, especially the Twelve, preparing them to be leaders in the kingdom of God. The four Gospels record the story of Jesus and the disciples. Out of the four Gospels, John's Gospel is the relational Gospel that puts the spotlight on Jesus and his relationships. Ninety percent of the material in John's Gospel is not in the Synoptics.

John focuses on Jesus in relationship with the Father, the disciples, individuals, groups, the religious leaders, and the world. He uses relational language and focuses in on Jesus' personal encounters with individuals. This is especially true of Jesus' relationship with his core group, the twelve disciples. John describes the intimate relations between Jesus and the disciples and shows us Jesus' care and concern for his friends.

Chapter 3

Invitation to Belonging

Stumbling Precaution: A New Challenge

*"I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling." (*John 16:1 NRSV*)*

What is it that Jesus said, modelled, and taught that would prevent the disciples from stumbling under the weight of the coming adversity? Like today's spiritual leaders, the disciples felt ill equipped to deal with the looming crises of their world. The disciples were focused on what they thought their task was—to protect and care for Jesus their master; however, Jesus was not a typical master. They were not the ones who would protect and care for Jesus. It was Jesus who would preserve, protect, and transform their lives.

How did Jesus prepare his friends for the soul emergencies that they would soon face? I would suggest that in his last discourse in John 13-16, Jesus intentionally taught and formed the disciples to become resilient spiritual leaders for the kingdom of God. These are lessons that can also help form spiritual leaders today, who, much like their ancient counterparts, are in danger of stumbling and falling in the face of overwhelming ministry challenges. Jesus knew that if these newly appointed leaders relied on their own resources, they would shrink and stumble under the weight of the challenges ahead of them. In his statement in John 16:1 near the end of his last discourse, Jesus explained why he had led them on this intense formation experience.

John 16:1 states, "I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling" (NRSV). This verse is translated with various nuances of meaning: "so that you won't abandon your faith" (NLT); "to prepare you for rough times ahead" (MSG); "so that you will not fall away" (NIV); "to keep you from being afraid" (CEV); and "so that you should not be offended (taken unawares and falter, or be caused to stumble and fall away). [I told you to keep you from being scandalized and repelled.][2]" (AMPC).

The Greek verb *skandalizó* means "to put a snare (in the way), hence to cause to stumble, to give offense". It also means "'to hinder right conduct or thought; *to cause to stumble*'–literally, 'to fall into a trap' (*Abbott-Smith*)". It is "to put a stumbling-block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall; to be a stumbling-block; in the New Testament always metaphorically" (Biblehub.com 4624).

John 16:1 has the only occurrence of the form *skandalisthēte* in the New Testament. It means "to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey; to cause to fall away" (Biblehub.com 4624).

Skandalisthēte represents a relational process of cause and effect. The stumbling block can be seen as the coming adversity about which Jesus has been warning the disciples, an adversity that will have a negative impact on their relationship with their master. This crisis will come to them because they are his followers. The adversity has the potential to cause them to distrust Jesus and no longer to be in loving relationship and obedience. The deciding factor will be their relationship with Jesus. Jesus' warning was given to prevent the action of stumbling and falling away.

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[2] Square brackets are part of original quote.

Stumbling as expressed by Jesus is not just tripping a little, but stumbling and falling. It is the *breaking* of relationship akin to Judas' betrayal. (It is not Peter's experience of denial of Jesus. That was simply "a stumbling" in which there was eventually a re-establishment of their relationship.) Jesus wants to prevent the potential of the disciples falling away from relationship with him, the Father, the Holy Spirit and each other. This is not just about running away in fear from Jesus for a time, but a total breaking of relationship with Jesus (i.e. the disconnected branch) *and* those connected to Him.

Jesus was expressing his desire that they not betray their relationship with Him, but stay connected, remaining in relationship in spite of the adversity. His hope was that they would remain constant, faithful and with him forever (John 14).

Jesus' intention for the teachings in these chapters was to prepare the disciples for difficult times ahead, so that they would be still standing steadfast in their relationship to him, the Godhead and each other. This was an intentional process facilitated by Jesus with a deliberate purpose, "to you to keep you from stumbling" (NRSV).

Stevick writes,

> The indefinite expression 'I have said these things' doubtless refers at least to the Discourse since 15:18. But if the Johannine Jesus speaks in order to keep Christians from staggering, such an intention makes a reader attach additional significance to the emphases of the first half of the Discourse, 15:1-17. The "abiding" that was spoken of in 15:4-10 is an urgent matter. The conditions under which the people of Jesus believe, love and obey are very difficult; remaining in the Messiah is not a passive, but a courageous and an intentional act. Those branches that did not abide in the vine (15:6) were not just careless. They were ordinary, believing persons, under great pressures. Being fools for Christ's sake simply, at some point, became more than they could bear. The entire Second Discourse should be read as an encouragement to constancy. (Stevick 2011, 237)

Stevick confirms that the emphasis is on relationship and how to remain in Jesus. I would suggest that this discourse is more than an *encouragement* to constancy; it is actually a

master class in constancy. It is teaching about spiritual formation *and* how to be spiritually resilient. Jesus was actively modeling, leading, teaching, facilitating, forming, inviting and praying. He was intentionally shaping and equipping the disciples. When Jesus made this statement, he was not just referring to part of his discourse but to all he had said and all they had experienced during this final retreat. It was much needed training in how to be spiritually resilient leaders in Jesus' physical absence. Jesus had not only imparted information, but he had been forming them in relationship to himself, the Trinity, each other, and the world. It is through the medium of relationship and experience of belonging they will remain steadfast and faithful.

Jesus was introducing a new paradigm of what it meant to live in God. From John's perspective, Jesus would lead the disciples into a unique formation experience, teach a new theology and model of new relationship, grant them a new identity, and ultimately invite them into a new spiritual reality through him and the Holy Spirit.

To understand the significance and impact of Jesus' teaching and coaching, we must understand the following:

1. Divine Belonging

2. The Final Retreat Context

3. The Foot Washing Challenge

4. Divine Invitation: The Character of Belonging

5. Divine Care: The Flow of Belonging

Divine Belonging: John 13 -16 Commentary

A final Retreat: the Final Discourse

The farewell discourse contains Jesus' farewell conversations and teaching with his disciples in an upper room. These were not public lectures, but a closed private experience of intimate conversations between Jesus and the ones he had invited to be his intimate friends and future leaders. Through these personal conversations, Jesus prepared the disciples for the shock and trauma his death would bring and the new responsibilities that would fall to them. Jesus would experience separation from the Father. The disciples would witness the one they loved being arrested, put on trial and executed in a cruel and inhumane way. Master and follower would both be helpless to change their circumstances: Jesus by choice, and the disciples because of their relationship to Jesus. It is worth noting that Jesus did not express any sense of defeat, or any anticipation that the disciples would fail in their mission. He was confident they would be resilient.

On the day before Passover, Jesus had chosen to be with his intimate circle of twelve disciples in an upper room. Rather than being alone in isolation or with the crowds in public, he elected to spend this time in community with those he loved. Reclining, he shared an intimate meal with his closest friends. Jesus—by his example in being, in word, in action, and in posture—was emphasizing that God's kingdom is a personal kingdom where relationships matter. He emphasized the significance of close relationships and community for himself and for others. The relational importance was evident even in John's description that Jesus "… had come from God and was going to God" (13:3b). Malina and Rohrbaugh describe Jesus' 'coming out and going in' as horizontal symbols

signifying "belonging and solidarity, because he came out of God and goes into God. They describe "horizontal movement [as]… a natural symbol of the interpersonal. This dimension indicates that the emphasis in chapters 13-17 is on the interpersonal in terms of solidarity, loyalty, belonging, and mutual commitment (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998, 219).

Luke's Gospel (22:8) tells us that Jesus sent Peter and John ahead to prepare the Passover meal in a large, furnished upper room. It was in the evening that they gathered (Matthew 26; 20) in an intimate setting away from crowds and other followers. Luke captures Jesus' eagerness to be with his disciples (Luke 22:15). The atmosphere is sombre, intimate, intense, and pressing. Jesus had intentionally gathered his disciples in this place of retreat to share his heart (including his anguish) and to prepare, preserve, and protect them for the future. Jesus had an agenda.

   Jesus said all of this to prepare his friends to be resilient in the face of coming danger. John 13 is a transition point in the Gospel. "At this point in the Gospel we move out of the streets into the quiet of a room. "The noise of the cosmos has died away: the stillness of the night prevails" (Bultman). And yet, in [that] quiet room, Jesus is preparing his disciples for the mission to the world on which he will send them. Lesslie Newbigin, The Light Has Come, 167" (Bruner 2012, 747).

Bruner titles his commentary on John 13 -17, "Jesus' Discipleship Sermon(s) or Discipleship course" (Bruner 2012, 747). Beasley Murray entitles the last discourse of Jesus as, "A Ministry of Jesus to the Disciples in the Upper Room (13:1-17:26)" (Beasley Murray, 1987, 222). Metzger writes,

I have titled John 13:1–17:26 'Preparations' because Jesus is preparing his followers for his passion, death and resurrection through which he returns to the Father and through which he prepares a lasting home for them. Before he talks about his return to the Father and before he prepares a place for them, Jesus prepares his followers to be leaders in his kingdom here below by giving them an example to follow—washing their feet (Jn 13:1-17). Such training should make clear to them that they are dealing with a very different Messiah and a very different kingdom order. Jesus also prepares his followers for some possible hindrances to accomplishing his mission—hindrances that are, in fact, anticipated and incorporated into his grand strategy of inaugurating his kingdom: Judas's betrayal (Jn 13:18-30) and Peter's denial (Jn 13:31-38). (Metzger 2010,161)

John introduces Jesus' last discourse acknowledging that Jesus was very aware that his time on earth was quickly coming to a close. Jesus knew the value of these last fleeting hours and was intentional about devoting them to the equipping and formation of his disciples. "A servant leader sets the example for what servanthood looks like. Let's be clear: the leader in question doesn't simply lead servants—the leader is a lead servant. He or she leads others into a lifestyle of service by laying down his or her life for them. That's what we find in John 13. Here Jesus prepares his followers for what is to come" (Metzger 2010,163). This ancient upper room retreat still holds meaning for spiritual leaders today. Knowledge and understanding of Jesus' approach are necessary to equip spiritual leaders today–men and women who are able to stand firm and thrive with resilience in the gap between the uncertainty of a sometimes hostile world and God's coming kingdom. I propose that Jesus' farewell discourse in the Gospel of John presents us with an example of spiritual leadership and a primer on how to become resilient spiritual leaders during rough times. John chapters 13-17 is an intensive, spiritual formation course on how to live in the midst of difficult times. Jesus used his last precious hours before his arrest and crucifixion to prepare his disciples to be resilient in the coming crisis.

There are three areas in which Jesus recognized that the disciples must be formed: 1) their understanding of what it means to belong to him, 2) the quality of relationship required to live in him, and 3) the divine source of their life and well-being.

Although the disciples had been with Jesus for some time, they still did not know who Jesus was or his purpose in being on earth. The disciples simply viewed Jesus as the messiah—someone who would come as a political power to overthrow the current government. They had failed to realize that Jesus was God in human form breaking into the world to bring the opportunity for deeper relationship with God. It was the spiritual realm breaking into the physical world. The disciples only knew of the physical realm of life. Jesus had come to make them aware that there was a spiritual reality that they can choose to enter through him.

But first Jesus must help the disciples understand what it means to belong to him, to be part of him. The disciples must recognize that the kingdom that Jesus represents does not follow worldly values. They must be challenged to choose which values they will follow and to which kingdom they will belong. Belonging to Jesus represents choosing kingdom values and seeking God's kingdom.

During the Upper Room "retreat", Jesus instituted a new relational reality for those he had chosen to be his own. In Matthew, Mark and Luke this new relational reality was called the new covenant in Jesus's blood. It was celebrated in the Lord's Supper. In John's Gospel, it is represented by divine hospitality and initiated with the washing of feet.

Jesus—like any master teacher—began with where the disciples were, in their immediate circumstances. Jesus had chosen to spend time with his intimate core group. His purpose was to form and prepare them for the coming events. He recognized that there were internal and external factors that would affect their ability to remain faithful. The internal factors and relational factors included their relationship to Jesus, their relationship to one another, and their relationship to their own souls. He would challenge the disciples with three choices: 1) kingdom values or world values, 2) commitment to him or to the world, and 3) connection to one another or isolation. He would use the physical experience of foot washing to facilitate the disciples understanding that his mission was not about worldly power but about the power of God's love expressed through relationship in connection and belonging.

The disciples were alone with God. Away from crowds, even away from the other followers, they were alone with Jesus—not for the first time, but for what would ultimately be one of the most significant. This upper room retreat was an experience of divine hospitality. Jesus the host had gathered his beloved friends around him for his last meal. Eating together was a sign of relationship, fellowship, and intimacy.

Jesus interrupted their dining with an unusual act of divine hospitality and love. Jesus took the common, ordinary practice of foot washing and transformed it into an exercise in choosing and belonging. In this ancient culture, the task of washing feet was relegated to someone who had little status and value—a woman, a servant or a slave. It was unheard of that a man of great status and high societal value would stoop to the level of a slave and wash the feet of those of lower standing. When Jesus washed the disciple's feet, he was deliberately raising several issues: First was the issue of power and how those in

power behave. Second, what it meant to belong to him. Third, what it meant to belong to each other. Fourth, he reminded them of their need for continuous forgiveness and cleansing.

Foot washing in this instance was both a physical and spiritual exercise in receiving divine hospitality. It was all about relationship building. Jesus physically connected with the disciples individually through washing their feet—literally cleansing and touching their souls through the soles of their feet. It was a relational act. The disciples were challenged to allow Jesus to love them on his terms, not theirs. Receiving God's love was uncomfortable and caused them to break social norms. God's expression of love was holistic: physical, emotional, and spiritual. They were humbled in the face of God's love. Not to receive Jesus' hospitality was a rejection of being part of Jesus. Receiving from Jesus was a sign of being part of Jesus.

Choosing Kingdom Values

Jesus' actions caused confusion and discomfort among his disciples. The disciples knew that this behavior was not acceptable in their society. Jesus was modeling a new understanding of power and position. He was showing that power is found in the ability to love others at their point of need by using his power to *meet* their need. God the Father in Jesus Christ was meeting the world at its point of need, the need to belong to the Father. This is the power of love in action. It was out of love for the disciples that Jesus humbled himself and took on the role of a slave. He was showing the disciples that his love for them was greater than maintaining a position of power. He was also showing that that his identity was not based on the world's definition of who he is or how he should behave. Jesus' identity was rooted in his relationship with the Father. Jesus knew

where he had come from, and Jesus knew where he was going. He came from his loving Father, and he was returning to his Father. In this knowledge that the Father was always with him, Jesus was secure in his identity and purpose. Because Jesus was secure in his identity and his purpose, he was able to lovingly serve his disciples without any expectation that they would serve him, despite the fact that he knew that one would betray him. The others would serve him by serving one another.

Jesus surprised the disciples by laying aside his position as master to take on the role of a servant. This was unheard of in ancient culture. A master would never become a servant to his disciples. This would be humiliation for both the master and for the recipient disciples. A master never served his disciples; he was to be served by his disciples—especially when it came to foot washing. To wash someone's feet was to be soiled by all the dirt and filth of the ancient world—the excrement of humans and animals that lay on the roads—as well as all other garbage and dirt the person encountered on his journey. The one doing the foot washing would also become soiled by the dirt that was being removed. Jesus was doing the unthinkable—stooping to be a lowly slave who washed feet, being soiled by the dirt of the world. What would people think if they knew that Jesus did this? How would their respect for Jesus change? What would they think of disciples who would allow their master to do such a thing? (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998, 220)

The foot washing was no accident or whim. Jesus knew exactly what he was doing and why he was doing it. He was beginning his master class by purposely placing the disciples in a crisis situation. This move on Jesus' part would cause the disciples to experience an internal crisis that would pit their minds and hearts against each other. In

their minds (their thoughts and feelings), they knew the social norms and the consequences of disobeying them. In their hearts (their spirits and wills), they knew Jesus was different—that he was the Messiah. But would Messiah act this way? Should they choose what they know to be right—society's norms—or should they choose to trust Jesus' kingdom values and his choice to serve them? It is the dilemma that every spiritual leader must confront—whether to choose worldly or kingdom values.

By now the disciples had spent considerable time with Jesus, following him, watching him, and listening to him. They had come to love him and value his leadership, at least most of them. But could they trust him enough to turn their back on worldly values of social order and power?

Jesus chose to put aside who he was—a God who is worthy of being served—to put on the mantle of a servant and serve the needs of those he loved. This God who loves and values relationship is willing to put aside his right to be served in order to serve others. This is God in relationship. A master serving his disciples is unheard of (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998, 220). It is a total break with social norms and turned the disciple's world upside down. Jesus is testing whether their trust and belief in him was stronger than their adherence to the norms of society. The societal norm says that one who is in power and has power is to be served by others. Here we have a God who is all-powerful and who chooses to serve others. Jesus is introducing new kingdom values about what it means to be a disciple of God. The first step is: Choose to be loved and served by God. The second is: Love God more than societal norms. It is a transformation process of breaking free of the world's values and control and then taking hold of the kingdom and the freedom it offers (Bruner 2012, 763).

Choosing to Belong to Jesus

Peter was the only disciple who was truly honest. The other eleven disciples were perplexed and uncomfortable. The foot washing would have created shame, causing the disciples to feel embarrassment and humiliation for Jesus. Believing that what Jesus was doing was not right, Peter was the only one who was willing to voice his objection. He desired to protect Jesus' dignity by refusing to allow his master to wash his feet. Peter thought that he was protecting Jesus. He did not want to allow Jesus to disgrace himself. He protested. But Jesus told his well-intentioned disciple that Peter neither understood his actions nor his relationship to his disciples. Things are not as they seem.

Peter was uncomfortable with Jesus' vulnerability in taking on the role of a servant. It was not proper protocol. Peter resisted Jesus' attempt to wash his feet. "Peter says to him, 'You will never ever wash my feet—ever!'" Peter is giving orders here, not Jesus, and once again it is not because Peter is so proud, but because he is so humble" (Bruner 2012, 765). He emphatically told Jesus he would not wash his feet. Peter was rebelling against this unheard of action of Jesus. He was actually trying to control Jesus by telling him what he could not do based on society's rules. Peter was attempting to put things in proper order. Jesus informed Peter that Peter did not understand the meaning of Jesus' actions and that the stakes were very high. "Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me" (Jn 13:8b NLT). "Unless I wash you, you have no part with (in) Me [you have no share in companionship with Me]" (AMPC). "Both by his tone and by his continuing service, Jesus wants to make it clear to Peter, to the other disciples, and, in John's record, to all future disciples that Peter's 'humble' protest is, in fact, the behavior that is out of order. Some humilities are deepest arrogance" (Bruner 2012, 764-65). Jesus' response defines the meaning of the foot washing. Keener writes, "This indicates that the

washing symbolizes allowing Jesus to serve his followers by embracing his death for them. Social inferiors expected help from patrons, but not service from them; such a reversal of roles created discomfort. Yet true dependents on Christ cannot have his gift without his sacrifice and must acknowledge their dependence. The seriousness of the matter is evident from the context" (Keener, 2003, 909).   It was about connecting and belonging to Jesus (John 15:4-9). Foot washing as Jesus presents it to the disciples was about more than clean feet. It was about a right relationship with Jesus:

> The imagery of water and cleansing and Jesus' remark that he must wash those who are to have a share with himself (v. 8) suggests that he is speaking of a deep relation with himself, not just of getting dust from the feet of dinner guests. Jesus says (v. 19) that his action meant more than could be grasped at the time, but that subsequent events would make its significance clear: later you will understand (v. 7). A simple moral lesson about serving others could have been grasped readily by a devout Jew. (Stevick 2011, 596)

Peter was stuck at the superficial level of meaning and did not understand that Jesus was performing a loving act of divine hospitality. Peter still did not fully understand his relationship to Jesus and believed he had a deeper connection to his master than actually existed. He did not know his need for Jesus and his forgiveness. It was not until much later that Peter would come to terms with his lack of self-awareness and his spiritual needs.

Peter was shocked by Jesus' response that unless he received Jesus' foot washing he would not be in relationship with Jesus. Peter was fearful, keenly aware of the danger of not belonging to Jesus. He was startled and immediately recognized that he was in danger of being cut off from relationship with Jesus. This was unthinkable for Peter. He immediately made a 180° degree in attitude. He quickly abandoned his worldly values and over enthusiastically asked for Jesus to wash not only his feet but his face and hands.

Peter was oblivious to what Jesus was doing. He focused only on maintaining his relationship with Jesus. Although Peter finally accepted the foot washing of Jesus, he did so with the mistaken notion that it was Jesus who needed him. Peter did not fully see his need for a relationship with Jesus, and—in fact—denied this need. He was unaware of the quality of his relationship.

In an instant, Peter decried the social norms he was only a moment previously trying to protect. The relationship with Jesus was more important. Peter and the disciples all seemed to value love for Jesus over social norms. They reluctantly allowed Jesus to serve them. Permitting him to serve them represented more than his washing their feet. It was also permitting Jesus to cleanse their hearts from sin and an acknowledgement of their need for God.

Peter believed Jesus needed him, not that he needed Jesus. Peter saw himself in the role of Jesus' protector.

- He wanted to protect Jesus from dying. (Mt 16:22f, Mk 8:33).

- He believed he could protect Jesus' reputation by preventing him from washing his feet. (Jn 13:6-10)

- He believed he could go with Jesus and even die with him, if need be. Jn 13:36f

Peter in his own heart and mind had appointed himself Jesus' protector. He saw Jesus as needing to be protected and taken care of. It was the duty of the disciples to care for and protect their master. Peter took this very seriously. Peter did not see himself receiving from Jesus. But, Jesus was a different master. He protected and cared for his disciples, not the other way around.

> The most glaring expression of Peter's lack of understanding is found in his [final two] words, ["*I am going to lay down my life <u>for you] hyper sou</u>*": he does not know

that he cannot enter the field "*for*" the Revealer, but only the Revealer for him (compare 17: 24)! It is therefore clear that the following of Jesus is not an act of heroism. Whoever should think that [it is] — [and] this is the meaning of the prophecy of [Peter's] denial — will come to grief; the world will very quickly become lord over him, as it was really lord over Peter already. Rudolf Bultmann, John, 597– 98

   Peter does not estimate correctly his own weakness or the difficulty of following Jesus, for the death to which Jesus goes involves a struggle with the Prince of this world. Only when Jesus has overcome [this Prince] can others follow. Raymond E. Brown, *John*, 2: 616. (Bruner 2012, 799-800)

Peter's view was that Jesus needed *him*. He thought that Jesus needed the disciples to take care of him and protect him. Peter did not see his need for Jesus. He had a false sense of being powerful. Later on, Peter declared, "Lord I am willing to die for you". Jesus told him that he would in fact deny him. Peter believed that he had a deeper spiritual resilience and relationship to Jesus than he really had. It was when he denied Jesus that he was brought to the end of himself and recognized he was not who he had thought himself to be. Psychologically and spiritually, he was brought to his knees weeping in the face of his need for Jesus, his need for a saviour, and his need for God. This is the place—the end of ourselves—that each of us must come to more than once. "Peter, humanly, attributes too much to his own strength. Let us learn to distrust our own strength. John Calvin, *John*" (Bruner 2012, 799). Peter represents the many pastors. Christian leaders have a hard time allowing God to serve them. To see God on his knees before their eyes, to see Jesus on the cross before them is to feel humiliation. It is to acknowledge that they are desperate for God and that they are a people in great need. Christian leaders need a saviour. Pastors need God's love if they are to receive from God. Deep down, they want to believe that they are independent and self-sufficient.

   Jesus knew that the first experience the disciples needed was that of being confronted with their need for God, their need to be clean. They had to be confronted with the

uncomfortableness of being served by God—one who does not need to serve. This master who deserved to be served loves them to such a depth that he was willing to take the position of a servant and wait upon them. They were confronted with God's love for them and the choice —would they receive or reject his love? Peter is an example of Christian leaders and how they want to protect God's honour. In doing so, they are trying to control God. Like Peter, they find it very difficult to release and relinquish themselves to God. They attempt to control God to keep things comfortable, understandable and under control.

Lessons Learned

The lesson the disciples had to learn was the willingness to receive from God even if it put them in conflict with social values. Receiving God and receiving from God were foundational to their relationship with God. Not receiving from God was in fact the same as not being in relationship with God. Receiving from God represented being in relationship with God. God serves those he loves. The believers' trust in God to serve his people is an expression of their love for God.

Salvation through Jesus Christ at its core is God the Father serving the desperate need of his people for salvation through the Son's broken body and shed blood. Through foot washing, Jesus was bringing the disciples face to face with the God who serves, the God who cleanses his people from sin. If the disciples were unwilling to receive and learn this lesson about God, then they could not be Jesus' disciples.

As far as we know, Judas allowed his feet to be washed, but his heart was far from God. This was expressed in an earlier foot-washing incident where Mary washed and anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume and dried them shamelessly with her hair.

On that occasion, Judas protested out of greed against such behaviour, as wasting of money that could have been given to the poor. (He had been stealing money all along from the common purse). Jesus confronted Judas by pointing out that what Mary was doing was preparing him for his burial. Mary was responding with love to the reality that Jesus would soon die. She was honouring her lord while he was yet with her and preparing him for what was to come. Jesus was also modelling to the disciples what it meant to receive loving hospitality. Jesus was preparing the ones he loved for the future.

Judas had chosen the world's values over kingdom values. The belief that Jesus requires of his followers is a belief in Him to be all that they need. It is a willingness to receive from Jesus, to be dependent on Jesus, to believe in the all-sufficiency and powerfulness of God. It is a belief that they *need* Jesus. Judas and his betrayal represent the rejection of belonging. Judas did not chose to belong, but instead abused his position of trust to steal and rob for his own personal gain (John 12:6). Judas went through the motions of being a disciple, appearing to be in relationship, when in fact he was rejecting both relationship and God's love. Judas cut himself off from relationship with Jesus by choosing the world and its riches over the treasure of God's love and his kingdom. Judas personifies the betrayal of relationship and the rejection of belonging to Jesus and his community of followers.

On that night in the upper room, Jesus began the final formation of his disciples with the unheard of experience of washing their feet. The disciples were both humiliated and humbled as well as confused and cleansed by what they had experienced. Jesus had become an even bigger mystery for them. Who was this master who could defy all social norms?

In accepting the values of the kingdom, the disciples were disowning the values of the world. In belonging to Jesus, the disciples no longer belonged to the world. Jesus, in washing the disciple's feet, was performing a loving self-giving act. Jesus was interacting with each disciple individually and intimately in the midst all the other disciples. Each disciple was experiencing Jesus personally as he washed his feet. In that instant, Jesus was intimately connected with each disciple externally. The washing represented the interior connection that he was inviting them to receive. Each disciple was experiencing a relationship through which he was receiving from God. He was experiencing God meeting him at his point of need. The disciples' need for clean feet represented their need to be forgiven and cleansed from the sin of the world. In this instance, Jesus was transforming the meaning of foot washing from an external, routine, daily chore, to an interior spiritual exercise of being washed clean from the everyday sin of the world. As bread and wine were transformed from everyday objects into symbols of Jesus' broken body and shed blood, representing salvation, foot washing was also redefined. It now represented the ongoing cleansing that was necessary because we live in a sinful world. This ongoing cleansing is necessary to continue to belong to Jesus.

Belonging to Jesus involves three things: choosing kingdom values, choosing to receive from God, and being cleansed from the sin of the world. The foot washing exercise helped the disciples to discover these three prerequisites to a genuine relationship with Jesus. In the act of accepting their master's foot washing, the disciples were choosing to receive from God, to accept the values of the kingdom and to be cleansed from sin.

This beginning of the *upper room experience* was about a transition from being *with* Jesus in his ministry to Jesus being *in them* and the disciples *in Jesus* by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual exercise was an invitation to move from an external relationship with Jesus to a deeply spiritual and interior relationship. It was a transition that began with a close encounter with Jesus that presented the choice between world or kingdom values. It was a decision to choose or not to choose to belong and to be part of Jesus.

Receiving and giving hospitality is a sign of belonging to Jesus. This is particularly problematic for Christian leaders. They may become so focused on the needs of others and the sense of fulfillment that they get from serving others that they may lose sight of their own need for God and to receive his ministry. Further to this, they become convinced that God needs them to do for him. It is not until God brings them to their knees, the end of themselves, that they recognize their deep, deep need for God.

> Jesus' salvation is free (and undeserved) or it is nothing (and we should then forget the Christian faith). We can never earn this standing, this cleansing. We must resist the instincts of our proud 'humility' and of our 'upright' conscience and let Jesus be our Lord and Savior by being, as he clearly wishes to be here (and often), our servant. And this service is not just once-for-all, it is once-for-all-time ('The person who has had a bath doesn't need anything else at all'). (Bruner 2012, 765)

Kingdom Living: A New Example & A New Commandment

How do we define what Jesus has done? Many commentators have pointed to the foot washing as an act of humility and service. They believe Jesus was telling the disciples to humbly serve each other. I would suggest more than this: Jesus was speaking of relationship and belonging to him and each other. He was commanding the disciples to help one another to remain in loving relationship with him and each other. In other words, Jesus wanted them to help one another remain clean in their relationship with him, and thus remove all hindrances to belonging. It was also a command to remain a part of each other as a witness of Jesus' love. Jesus teaches that remaining clean is not just an individual act but requires the support of other disciples.

After he washed the disciple's feet, Jesus resumed his attire and position as the master at the table. He then began to teach them the meaning of what he had done and this new experience. He admonished them "For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:15). What had Jesus done? He had shattered their image of what a master should be. He had tested their willingness to follow him. He had washed away the everyday sin and grime of life and ministry from their feet and lives. He served them in their place and point of need. He had given them an example of a master who humbles himself in strength and humility to serve and care for his disciples.

The purpose of this troubling experience was made clear. Jesus was forming their understanding of who he was and who they were in relation to him. Jesus is God in relationship. He is the God who serves. The serving was not so much about the task of foot washing as it was about relationship with Jesus and one another. The disciples must now see themselves as those who follow this God by recognizing their need for God and receiving from him, as well as their need for each other. Following Jesus' example meant

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being willing to keep one another clean in the process of ministry—humbling themselves to meet one another's need.

It is true that Jesus' cleansing salvation is once and for all. However, Christians do—in the process of daily living—pick up the dirt and grime of the world. It is then not the whole body that needs cleansing but just the feet. The disciples are to help one another remain in good standing in their relationship with Jesus by keeping one another clean. They need one another to be clean. If Jesus who is God could humble himself to serve them, then they can humble themselves to serve one another. It is in doing this that they will be blessed. In their serving, they are exhibiting that they belong to him. They are also expressing that they have been sent by him and are his representatives. Jesus affirms that he has chosen them—with the exception of Judas, the one who will betray him. He has not been chosen.

> The Johannine foot washing delivers the meaning of worship, of the Synoptic Supper, and of the entire four-Gospel message in just thirty verses: (a) the cleansing forgiveness of sins in the washing away of our dirt; (b) a model for our way of living; and (c) a salutary admonition, as the following Foot washing gospel (vv. 6– 11), Foot washing ethic (vv. 12– 20), and foot washing warning (v. 21– 30) will proceed to show us by means of Jesus' gracious acts and his very arresting conversations during and after them. (Bruner 2012, 757-58)

From the exhortation to follow Jesus' example came a new commandment to love one another. Jesus modelled for the disciples what it meant to choose love over position. He wanted them to choose relationship over betrayal and denial. He modelled what it meant to serve others in love, and what it meant to deny societal norms to show the love of God. Jesus' new command was to choose love and serve one another in love. This would show the world that they were his disciples. They would be following his example,

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obeying his command, and showing his love when they remained in relationship to him and one another.

In a world of ministry that champions rugged independence, this is a significant point. Christian leaders need each other. To follow Jesus' example, they must serve one another by helping each other stay clean – by helping one another to recognize that they have dirty feet and that they need to receive from Jesus and from one another. Jesus validates that leaders need each other and that it is part of his plan for preserving his disciples in a dirty world. This is a blessing that many Christian leaders are not receiving because they are not following Jesus' example with one another. In fact, they are not following Jesus' command to love one another. They preach it to their *congregations*, forgetting all the while that it was Jesus' example and command to the first *leaders* of the church. In summary, the foot washing challenge is about kingdom values versus world values, relationship versus task, belonging to Jesus versus not belonging, and obedience versus disobedience. Would the disciples follow Jesus' example and keep one another clean and stay close to him and each other? Jesus had begun the preparation of the disciples by drawing them into relationship with himself and with one another. Belonging to Jesus and loving one another is foundational.

Divine invitation: The Character of Belonging John 14

Jesus refocused the disciples' attention away from their confusion about him leaving, Judas's departure and the predicted denial of Peter. He changed the focus to what they would receive by his going to the Father. He had not only chosen them for relationship here on earth, but he was inviting them to be with him and the Father forever. He addressed their fear by making them aware that they did not need to be troubled because he was not going to abandon them. In fact, he was only going ahead to prepare a place for them to be together eternally (v.3).

Jesus had already assured his disciples through the act of foot washing that they were part of him and that they belonged to him and to each other. He had established the reality of their connectedness. Now he invited them to reorient themselves on a spiritual compass where God is true north. They were no longer to be at home in the world. Their home now was with Jesus in the Father's house. Belonging to Jesus was not temporal; it was an eternal togetherness with Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. It was not a onetime receiving of divine hospitality and love, but an eternal living in the midst of God's presence and love. It was a Trinitarian belonging. Jesus revealed the characteristics of belonging: the character, the way, the home, the model, and the blessings of belonging in him.

The Character: "Believing, Knowing, Hearing, and Seeing"

Superficial relationship was not enough. In John 14, Jesus invited the disciples to enter into a deeper spiritual reality in the Trinity through him. He began first by calling the disciples to believe and trust in God. It was entrusting their whole selves into the care

of God. It must be their whole being: soul, heart, mind, and body. This was not only an act of the mind—thought and feeling, but it was an invitation to the heart—spirit and will (choice)—and the soul to find rest in God. To believe in God was to respond to God with their whole selves—with hearts, minds, bodies, and souls. It was the response to the first part of the greatest commandment to love God with all their hearts, minds, soul, and strength. It was an invitation to belong through *believing, knowing, hearing, and seeing*. "The Evangelist often uses these words as though, in the crucial matter of establishing a relation between Jesus and the Father and Jesus' people, they come to much the same thing" (Stevick 2011, 142).

Stevick draws attention to these strong deep words, *believing, knowing, hearing, and seeing*, in the Fourth Gospel that represent avenues through which we are formed. These are the ways of experiencing God. Jesus was inviting the disciples to experience God at a greater depth. To belong to God is to believe, know, hear, and see God. It is an active creative process. (Stevick 2011, 143)

The self comes to know God, others, the world, and itself through the acts of *believing, knowing, hearing, and seeing*, "All these terms…which might be thought to constitute the 'epistemology' of the Fourth Gospel, can be used for a range of human experience. … To explore this vocabulary as an aspect of Jesus' Farewell, one should examine not only these terms as they are used in the Fourth Gospel, but also, at least at an ordinary-speech level, the human experience to which they point (Stevick 2011, 144). Stevick explores each term and how it is used in the fourth Gospel. The terms are not static, but relational in nature—to give depth and character to understanding what it means to belong to God.

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Believing

"Believe", the Greek word *pisteuo*, occurs more than ninety times in the Fourth Gospel

(Stevick 2011, 144),

> But believing, in the Johannine sense, involves a 'seeing' or a 'knowing' beyond
> anything derivable from sensory experience alone. Believing is like insight,
> imaginative grasp, or recognition. 'Believing in' another person (as Jesus asks people
> to 'believe in' him) means gathering the resources of self and coming to an
> unreserved commitment to the other. Such 'believing in' is always a venture. In 6:35,
> *believe in me* is equated with *come to me*; it can be described in spatial terms as a
> decisive moment of the self in establishing a trusting relationship with another
> person, …. Validation develops, if it does, on the basis of commitment. One does not
> seek to know first and then to extend one's trust. As the Fourth Gospel sees it,
> believing is prior to and provides access to knowing. (Stevick 2011, 145)

Believing is a whole being enterprise, a commitment of heart, mind, body, and soul. It is

an act of deep trust in the one believed in. It is a relational quality. Believing is deeming

the one believed as trustworthy and believable. A commitment of one's being to the truth

and reality of what is believed. To believe is to risk the whole self to embrace, belong to

the other.

Knowing

"To know," is represented by two Greek words *ginosko* and *oida*, each of which is used

about sixty times. Only the verb forms are used. (Stevick 2011, 146) Stevick points out

that,

> In the thought of the Bible, knowing does not arise from a subject making a detached
> examination of an object and drawing careful tentative conclusions. The knowing that
> matters to us is less a cognitive perception than it is our passionate, involved relation
> with a thing or person we seek to come to know. It is knowing in which we venture
> ourselves and in which we become known to ourselves. Such knowing has an
> indefinite capacity to grow. (Stevick 2011, 146)

Knowing is also a relational process of revelation. Knowing comes mainly through experience, deep involvement with what or whom one desires to know.

> The Fourth Gospel describes the relation between Jesus and his people as a mutual and profound knowing: *I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father (10:14-15; on that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you* (14:20). Jesus is saying that to know him is to be united with him. One knows that Jesus' life is shared with the Father as one is brought into that life oneself. In the terms of the Fourth Gospel, one does not begin to believe where knowledge reaches its limit, but believing is a mode of knowing. (Stevick 2011, 146)

Jesus invited the disciples to know him, the Father, and the Spirit through believing, hearing, and seeing. It is a continuous process.

Hearing

The word "To hear, *akouo*" is used 31 times in the Gospel and 4 times in the farewell discourse. In the Fourth Gospel, revelation is often through speaking and hearing is the response. "Hearing is a primal human act" (Stevick 2011, 146).

> In the Fourth Gospel, hearing is virtually an equivalent of believing [8:46-47]; the appeal to hear is an appeal to believe. The hearing that is believing is not superficial taking in of words but a deeply formative response. … The Fourth Gospel puts forward a relational fabric that is constituted in speaking and hearing: Jesus hears the Father; others hear Jesus; the Father hears Jesus; those who hear Jesus hear the Father; those who hear the Father come to Jesus; the Spirit hears and speaks; the Father hears the asking believer. (Stevick 2011, 147)

Hearing is a formation process that forms the hearer and establishes relationship with the speaker. Speaking and hearing are a kind of relational dance. God speaks, and if we believe, we will hear. We ask, and if we believe, God will hear.

Seeing

Three Greek words *blepo, theaomai*, and *horao* are used in the Fourth Gospel for

seeing. *Blepo* is used in the Fourth Gospel nineteen times, *theaomai* twenty-nine times,

and as *horao* more than sixty-five times. (Stevick 2011, 149)

> Through this powerful metaphor of seeing, the author speaks confidently of the
> mystery of seeing that which cannot be seen: 'seeing' life (3:36), 'seeing' the Spirit
> (14:17). Or 'seeing' the kingdom of God (3:3, a "seeing" which is also an entering,
> 3:5). If you believed, you would see the glory of God (11:40). All culminates in the
> seeing of the Father (14:7,9) …. To see in this final sense is to be united with what
> one sees. (Stevick 2011, 149)

Seeing is belonging. When one sees the Father, one belongs to the Father.

The character of belonging to God is the ability to "believe, know, hear, and see"

Jesus and God the Father. They are active processes facilitated and empowered by the

Spirit. *Believing, knowing, hearing*, and *seeing* deepen and form our experience of God,

self, and others.

<div align="center">Jesus Models the Way Home</div>

Jesus the Son is the way, who models how to live at home in God. Jesus is the way to

belonging, God is the home where disciples belong, and Jesus' relationship with the

Father is a model for how to live.

Jesus: The Way of Belonging

The disciples are looking for traveling directions. Jesus surprises them with the powerful

self-declaration, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father

except through me" (John 14:6 NLT). The way is not a road, but a person. It is not

material, but relational. Every word of this self-declaration has meaning. Stevick writes,

> 'I'—one who acts and speaks within. God initiates encounters with human selves, making liberating demands and opening severe possibilities (Stevick 2011,125).

> The expression *I am* depicts Jesus as so rooted in God and so attuned to the speech of God that he can take to himself without presumption this distinctive, authoritative divine self designation (Stevick 2011,125).

> The crucial term 'way' in this place is to be understood not as a manner of life but as revelations, as offer, as gospel. … The 'way' as Jesus speaks of it, like the Jewish Torah, is gift or invitation (Stevick 2011,126).

> "The way is in him and through him; indeed, he *is* that way" (Stevick 2011,126).

Jesus was extending an invitation to the disciples to know him more deeply, to begin the

interior journey to life in Jesus and in the Father. "In this case the 'way' is no longer

purely ethical but Christological" (Keener 2003, 941). The disciples must transition from

their temporal, physical understanding of Jesus and belonging to him to experiencing an

interiority of divine life that can only be found in him and through him.

John's understanding of truth is from the Hebrew which sees truth as "characteristics

of persons and of relationships among persons. The root term carries the meaning of

firmness or durability, suggesting personal characteristics of faithfulness, trustworthiness,

sureness, constancy, or reliability" (Stevick 2011,127). Jesus has offered a way, a

relationship that is dependable, authentic, and certain. Keener explains that, "John

probably has in view primarily God's character revealed in Jesus (1:14-18; 8:31-32); only

in truth could God be worshipped, through Jesus and, after his earthly ministry, through

the Spirit of truth (4:23-24; 14:17)" (Keener 2003, 943). Jesus is the true way to worship

the Father.

The disciples could not find their way on their own. They must depend on Jesus. "Rather than being the one who tells how life can be found, he is the life" (Stevick 2011,128). There is no other way. "In the Fourth Gospel, life is in God. In the Johannine view, humanity is made for God, and it only truly lives in relation to God. Apart from a conscious, trusting relation with God, life is a life without living, a pseudo-life" (Stevick 2011, 128). *Life*, the term, is "appropriate for a 'way' of behavior but also appropriate to the one who brings them life (11:25; 14:19; 1 John 1:2; cf. Deut 30:20), the very source of their ability to walk in God's way (John 15:4-5)" (Keener 2003, 943). 'Truth' and 'life' illuminate the 'way' in this passage; "as in Jewish wisdom tradition, God's ways were truth and life (e.g., Prov 2:19; 3:2, 16, 18; 4:10. 13, 22)" (Keener 2003, 943).

Jesus made it clear, that the 'way' (14:6), is the way leading to the Father's presence. It is because of who Jesus is in his identity and character that he can be the way for the disciples. The disciples will come to the Father by means of Jesus and his relationship to the Father, and their participation in Jesus. "The disciples 'know the way' (14:4) precisely because they know Jesus, who is the way (14:6), whether or not they understand the implications of the fact; in the same way, the expected Spirit was already with them and known by them (14:7) because he was present in Jesus (1:33)" (Keener 2003, 939-40). Jesus is the only way to connecting and belonging to God.

The Father: Home where we belong

Jesus is the way and the Father is the destination—our true home. (Michaels 1989, 259). The Father's house is where the Father is present. To live in the Father's house is to live in the Father's presence.

Jesus leads his own to the Father's house, revealing the truth about the goal of existence and how it may be reached, and making its attainment possible by granting entrance in to life in the Father's house. … 'No one comes to the Father except through me' indicates that Jesus is the *way to the Father*, and therefore the way to the Father's house; that means that Jesus is the way to God in the present. (Beasley-Murray 1991, 252)

The Father's house is the place for the disciples to belong with Jesus. Jesus makes it clear that he would not leave or forsake them, that they would be with him in the Father's house. This is a familial image of close intimate relationship between Jesus and the Father and Jesus and the disciples. Jesus is drawing the disciples into his family the Trinity, by promising to take the disciples to his Father's house. "The departure of Jesus is for the purpose of preparing a place for the disciples within that 'home'; the latter is viewed as existing already, but by his death and exaltation the Lord is to make it possible for his own to be there with him" (Beasley-Murray 1991, 249).

Jesus was doing what was required to bring humanity home. "… Jesus' followers *are* his ministry. He doesn't use them to do the ministry; they, and the people to whom they minister, *are* his ministry. How many ministers would want the people to whom they minister to come and live with them forever? This is radical: Jesus is relational to the core of his ministerial being (Metzger 2010, 174).

Father-Son: Our Model of Belonging

The invitation that Jesus extended to the disciples was beyond their previous understanding or experience. They were in uncharted waters, as humans. The reality of living in God in the present, not just in the future when they went to heaven, was a major paradigm shift. It was clear that the disciples still did not know Jesus at the depth he wanted to be known. They were only at an entry level of relationship, whereas Jesus had

invited them to enter into deep, intimate relationship. "The desire of the disciples, voiced by Philip, to see the Father indicates that although they *have been with Jesus all this time*, insofar as they have not recognized the Father in him, they still *have not known* him. Long association has not brought the sort of perception that Jesus says it might have brought" (Stevick 2011,132). The idea that the Father is present in Jesus was revolutionary. The disciples were being forced to see a reality far beyond anything they had thought or imagined. It was then that the disciples realized that they did not truly know Jesus. Peter must have been awestruck. (He thought he had Jesus figured out!) This new model of belonging is the model of relationship between the Father and the Son.

In their book, *Father, Son and Spirit*, Köstenberger & Swain describe,

Father – Son is the dominant, controlling metaphor used for Jesus' relationship with God in the Fourth Gospel. The two persons of God the Father and the Son are thoroughly and inextricably intertwined. … Emphatically, it is Jesus himself who refers to God as 'the' Father and in close to 20 instances even as 'his' Father. The Father is Jesus' natural, almost unselfconscious, way of referring to God. Particularly prominent are references to the Father's sending of Jesus. (Köstenberger & Swain 2008, 73-74)

Jesus' knowing of himself is in relationship to the Father. Jesus lives in the Father. The Father is the source of his being.

The Johannine writings … use the idiom of mutual indwelling—describing persons as 'in' one another. The words I am in the Father, and the Father in me are repeated twice (vv. 10a and 11a; and compare 10:38 and especially 17:21). The 'in' formula speaks of two personal centers that are distinct and nameable. But the two intend and act as one; they are bound in mutual loving, listening, understanding, willing, and giving. The Son is utterly, transparently grounded in—is one with—the Father (10:30), and at the same time, the Father is uniquely, fully present and manifest in Jesus (14:8). The Father speaks and acts in the words and actions of Jesus. In Jesus' words and deeds, the unheard, unseen God is made audible and visible (1:18). These two, although they are distinct, are so for one another that neither can be known or dealt with apart from the relation. The Father and the Son interpenetrate; to know or 'see' Jesus truly is to see him in his mutuality with the Father. It is to be brought through him to 'see' the Father. Contrarily, if one looks at Jesus and sees no more than Jesus, one has not truly seen Jesus. (Stevick 2011, 134)

When they are in Jesus, they are in the Father. When they have seen Jesus, they have seen the Father. When they have known Jesus, they have also known the Father. When they believe in Jesus, they are also believing in the Father. "Clearly, this indicates a very close personal family relationship. What is in view here is not an identity of persons, but a unity of purpose. … [T]heir relationship is one of intimacy, love and trust" (Kostenberger & Swain 2008, 71).

Jesus expressed the interiority of his connection to the Father, and the interior character of the relationship that Jesus had invited the disciples into, through their connection with him. It was an invitation for them to root all that they are in Jesus, as Jesus is in them. Jesus invited them to believe, which means to trust; to know him, which is to be in deep relationship; to enter through him to relationship with the Father; to see the Father in him; to ask in his name from the Father what they need. Jesus was teaching them how to be in him: to have life in him through believing, knowing, seeing, and asking—and in going through him to the Father. Through him they know, see, experience God the Father. The fact is, "to see Jesus is to see the Father not as if Father and Son are the same person (see 1:1b) but because they are one (10:30). Here because they dwell in one another so thoroughly, and Jesus remains so utterly dependent on the Father's will, that their character is indistinguishable, as his works demonstrate (14:10)" (Keener 2003, 945). Jesus' followers are to also reflect the divine glory by showing the character of Jesus that come from his indwelling presence (17:23). It is by keeping Jesus' commandments that the way to intimacy is found (Keener 2003, 945).

The Spirit: The Blessings of Belonging

Jesus promised the disciples that they would be blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit

not only being with them but living in them. "If you love me, obey my

commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who

will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot

receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know

him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you" (Jn 14:15-17). The disciples

would experience Jesus through the Holy Spirit guiding them. Metzger concluded that

Jesus and the Spirit are intimately related (Jn 14:16-17). While Jesus was on earth the

Spirit dwelt with the disciples and when Jesus returned to the Father, then the Father and

Jesus would dwell in the disciples through the Spirit. (Metzger 2010, 176)

> Stevick describes new relationships that are made possible by the Spirit,
>
> The fuller knowledge that becomes available to believers by the Spirit is knowledge
> of the life in a fabric of new relationships—knowledge of Jesus' relation to the Father
> and to his people, and knowledge of themselves in relation to him, and through him
> with the Father. …The theologian Robert Jenson remarked: 'The Christian God, the
> triune God, has room in himself for us, in our full communal and individual
> personhood as the spouse of the Son the respondents of the Logos.' The knowledge
> which is pledged for 'that day' is a sharing in life; the relationship will be understood
> and its divine character will be authenticated because Jesus' followers will
> themselves be participants in it. Jesus' relation with the Father becomes known as it
> reaches to include his people. (Stevick 2011,156)

In the final analysis the disciples would be brought into intimate relationship with the

Trinity. The Godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit comes to be present in the believer.

(Kostenberger & Swain 2008, 71)

Divine Care: The Flow of Belonging John 15

Jesus was introducing a transition. He introduced the Holy Spirit, who would empower the disciples to live in him. It was not by their own strength or agency that they could enter into God. It was through relationship with the Holy Spirit, causing the transition from being with God to being in God. It began with the Holy Spirit transitioning from being *with* the disciples to being *in* the disciples.

The Discourse is introducing a new life, which is described as a complex of new relationships. But the Evangelist does not devise a new quasi-technical vocabulary; rather he uses words from common speech. The terms that he employs—*coming to, seeing, knowing, indwelling, loving, being loved, disclosing oneself, and keeping the word of another*—flow from one into the next, touching and enriching one another. (Stevick 2011,151)

This also describes the flow of relationship between Jesus and the Father and now Jesus and the disciples through the Holy Spirit. It was a flow of divine life and relationship into which the disciples were being invited. It was the flow of belonging. Jesus' relationship with the Father would flow into the hearts of the disciples through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus used familiar, concrete symbols to teach intangible spiritual truths. Initially, he used foot washing to symbolize belonging. Now in John 15, Jesus presented the disciples with the familiar symbol of the vine. However, in this instance it was an object lesson about their relationship to Jesus, the Trinity and one another.

Jesus introduced a new paradigm; no longer does the vine represent Israel, the rootstock that God had planted. Jesus is the new vine, the genuine legitimate planting of

the Father. The rootstock of this new vine is not human, but the very life and nature of God. From this authentic rootstock flows the very life of God. Jesus the Son of God—the very nature of God—was and is the genuine true vine of God. God had planted Jesus on earth as the true vine. God the Father is the vinedresser, the one who cares for the vine and the branches. The vine and its branches do not care for themselves, but are cared for. The vinedresser nurtures the vines and the branches. The vinedresser cares for the vine by attending to the quality of the branches. The vinedresser prunes the branches that are of good quality to bring even greater quality of life and harvest. The vinedresser removes the poor branches that do not produce a harvest; he cuts off these branches to preserve the life of the vine.

The branches symbolize those who are chosen by Jesus and the Father to be grafted, joined in relationship, to the vine—Jesus. The disciples are those branches chosen for relationship in Jesus. The quality of the grafting process depends on the ability of the branch to be connected to the vine. If the branch is well connected it will draw up nurture from the vine and be fruitful, but if the branch is not vitally attached, it will not be nurtured adequately and therefore become unfruitful. This grafting process would have been common knowledge for the disciples. Jesus is conveying the importance of being well connected in relationship in him. Just as the branch that is genuinely grafted is able to bear much fruit, so will the disciples be fruitful if they abide in a vital relationship in Jesus. When this was the case, Jesus assured them that he would also abide in them as would his word, his love and joy. His life would flow through them. This mutually abiding relationship was foundational to the fruitfulness that glorifies the Father.

This paradigm of connection was not new; Jesus had talked about it throughout this discourse. It was the proven paradigm of his life in the Father. Jesus abides—is well-rooted—in the Father's love, and he is nurtured. Jesus knows the life of dependence and obedience. He was teaching the disciples the way of life that he has known. This was not *do as I say*, but *live as I live*. This is formation by example. Fruitfulness is what brings glory to God. It is determined by God's will for each branch.

Abiding means a deep interiority. It contains the notions of continuing to be present, of unbroken fellowship, of being permanently established, not departing, of being constantly present, and of rootedness. This is not a fleeting one-night stand type of relationship. It is to be established deep inside another, and to take up permanent residency. It is a continuous fellowship where believers are present to God and God is present to them. It is a rootedness that permeates every fibre of their being with the being of Jesus. It is their souls rooted and integrated in Jesus. It means that their beings are inseparable from Jesus' being. When believers are present, Jesus is present. When people see Christians, they see Jesus. When people know believers, they come to know Jesus. When they hear Christians, they hear Jesus. Christians' lives in Jesus mirror Jesus' life in the Father. They are then united as disciples because they are in Jesus. This is the oneness Jesus prayed for in John 17. Jesus establishes himself permanently within the believer's soul, and always exerts his power in believers (Biblehub.com 3306). "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (Col 2: 6-7). This is an analogy of deep interiority and of a dependent intimate relationship. Jesus married together the tangible symbol of the vine and the

intangible new spiritual reality of life in Him. Jesus was forming the hearts and the minds of the disciples beyond the limited master-servant relationship. He was ushering in a new paradigm as well as an era of a deeper relationship between God and his people. It is a relationship rooted in the inner life of Jesus and the Trinity. Jesus was opening the way for the disciples to be rooted in the Trinitarian communion of God. Here the disciples find the care of the Father, the nurturing sustenance of the Son, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

There is a well-ordered flow to the divine life. Jesus receives from the Father. Jesus through the Holy Spirit gives to the disciples. The disciples' souls are formed and filled to overflow to one another. Then the overflow pours out into the world through the loving witness of the disciples.

New Identity

To mark this relational transition, Jesus gave the disciples a new identity. It was a blessing of belonging. He would no longer see them as slaves and servants who were unaware of the master's business. They were now his friends. They were no longer external to God; they were rooted in God. Their identity, like Jesus' identity, was formed through relationship. Jesus' identity was formed by his connection with the Father. The disciples' identity would now be formed by their connection with Jesus. They were now intimately a part of Jesus and Jesus was intimately a part of them, although the process would not be complete until Jesus returned to the Father and the Holy Spirit descended.

The disciples were entering into friendship in God. They were transformed from being only servants to becoming friends of Jesus. To be friends of Jesus they must live in Jesus and Jesus must live in them. It was not a relationship of equals. Jesus was the all-

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sufficient one who was sharing his sufficiency with his friends. The disciples were receiving from Jesus' abundance, what he had received from the Father. Through their relationship with Jesus, the disciples were being enlightened about the Father and his will. (Köstenberger and Swain 2008, 72)

Summary

Jesus used an intentional process to form the disciples in Trinitarian belonging. The process included Jesus challenging the disciples to choose between the world values and kingdom values through the spiritual exercise of foot washing. It was a heart, mind, and body formation experience that disoriented the disciples from their attachment to the world, and their self-sufficiency. Jesus reoriented them through presenting the characteristics of belonging: the character, the way, the home, the model, and the blessings of belonging to God through him and the Holy Spirit. The disciples were being formed into resilient spiritual leaders who would stand firm in the Trinity and not fall in the face of adversity.

What does all of this have to do with leaders today in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches? What is the health and wellness of today's leaders? Are they standing firm or stumbling in ministry? Are leaders living in connection and belonging to God, self, and others?

Chapter 4

Research Study:

Clergy Relationship with God, Self, & Others

Background

Ministry seems to be having an increasingly negative affect on the health and well-being of pastors, pastoral families, and even the church body itself. There has been considerable research into the factors that effect clergy health in recent years. The research literature supports this perception of negative impact.

Most studies describing the well-being of Christian leaders present a picture of significant health issues for clergy and the church. They point to a growing health crisis. The issues of clergy health are not unique to any denomination, but cross the boundaries of denominations and countries. They are evident, for example, amongst Methodists, Baptists of various kinds, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and other Protestant denominations. Health issues touch clergy in the United States, Australia, Europe, and Canada. They cross gender lines, affecting both male and female clergy.

Symptoms of this crisis are evident among clergy in the growing rates of stress and burnout, divorce and family break ups, clergy leaving ministry prematurely, professional misconduct and abuse as well as physical and mental illnesses, especially depression. The health crisis can also be seen in the low levels of ministry satisfaction and effectiveness.

It appears that too many clergy are not resilient. In fact, they are burning out. Ministry has become stressful and destructive to the health and well-being of pastoral leaders.

Many denominations are taking the issues of clergy health very seriously. For example, the United Methodists have received a 12-million-dollar Lily Foundation grant and launched a seven-year study to improve the health and well-being of their clergy in North Carolina. They have done a number of research studies and launched "Spirited Life," a multi-year clergy well-being project. (Proeschold-Bell et al. 2011, 2012; Meek et al 2003)

Researchers often point to relationships in the form of social supports or social stressors as a major factor in clergy health. Morris and Blanton (1994) cited five significant clergy stressors: mobility, financial compensation, social support, time demands, and intrusions on family boundaries. Rowatt (2001) reported 4 categories of clergy stress: vocational stressors, intrapersonal stressors, family stressors, and social stressors. (Proeschold-Bell et al. 2011)

The study, *Clergy Well-Being: Seeking Wholeness with Integrity*, completed in 2003, used a sample of 338 clergy from Ontario. Relationally, the researchers found that clergy had few personal relationships, and those they did have were most often weak and inadequate to respond to the inner needs of clergy. This was especially true in times of stress and crisis. This study concluded that the problem of clergy distress is rooted in distorted personal identity that is formed in an unhealthy or often absent relational milieu (Irvine 2003). In 2006, Dr. Bill Morrison & Associates conducted a study of Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches clergy; they made several best practice recommendations including the areas of denominational support, balance & healthy lifestyle, and social

support. Social support was acknowledged as a strong predictor of personal well-being for clergy (Morrison 2006).

Method

The purpose of this study was to explore clergy health from a relational perspective. The key question focused on gaining a greater understanding of what impact the spiritual leaders' relationships to God, to self, and to others have on their level of burnout, general well-being, resilience, and total health.

Hypothesis 1: Clergy who have strong relationship with God, self, and others will have better health outcomes, represented by lower burnout, higher well-being, higher resilience, and higher total health.

Hypothesis 2: General well-being, resilience, and total health will impact the level of burnout. High levels of the variables result in low levels of burnout. Low levels result in high levels of burnout.

Hypothesis 3: Younger clergy and/or those in the first years of ministry will have lower well-being represented by lower health outcomes and a higher risk of burnout.

The importance of this study is its potential to help pastors, churches, denominations, and seminaries become more aware of the importance of relationship to God, self, and others in the creation of leadership health, resilience, and well-being. This could lead to

greater emphasis being placed on teaching leaders the importance of having and maintaining healthy relationships and the need to balance *being* and *doing* in ministry. Also, it could lead to a greater relational understanding of the purpose of spiritual leadership as a modeling and facilitating of relationship with God, self, and others while being resilient and maintaining well-being. It also has the potential to change how the church sees stress and burnout in ministry.

Participants

Participants were 156 active male and female pastors recruited from the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches (CABC). The CABC includes churches in the Canadian Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick (NB), Nova Scotia (NS), Prince Edward Island (PE) and Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). This region has approximately 450 churches and nearly 500 active pastors. The vast majority of participants were from CABC churches in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Procedures

A variety of research instruments gathered information on the demographics, resilience, well-being, total health, self-esteem, social supports, and burnout levels of the participants. Most of the instruments used a Likert scale. The survey was completed online with the Canadian company Fluid Surveys and took approximately 35 minutes to complete. A clergy newsletter contained an advance advertisement that informed active pastors about the research project, telling them to expect the survey email. About a week later, the survey was sent out as a link in an e-mail that included a letter from the executive minister of the denomination and a letter from the researcher. Participation was

anonymous and voluntary. There were approximately 500 surveys sent out, 236 surveys received, and 162 surveys completed. At the end of the survey period, the results were compiled and analyzed. (Six surveys were removed because of outliers.) A total of 156 surveys were used in this analysis.

Measures

All instruments appeared as a single online survey (refer to appendix 1). There were a total of ten measures, six scales designated as Health Outcomes and four scales as Relationship Measurers. The following measures were designated health outcomes:

1. Resiliency Scale (Res)

2. Ministry Burnout Inventory (BO)

3. Psychological General Well-Being Schedule (GWB)

4. Self-esteem (SE)

5. Total Health Scale (TH)

6. Total Health Satisfaction Scale (THS)

The following scales were designated Relationship measures:

1. Relationship to God (RG)

2. Relationship to Self (RS)

3. Social Support Ministry Questionnaire (SSM / SSM18)

4. Social Support Ministry Satisfaction (SSMb / SSMb18)

Resilience Scale (Res)[3]

This survey instrument was designed by Gail M. Wagnild & Heather M. Young, ©
1987, and was used with permission. It is a strength-based measure that determined
resiliency by focusing "on positive psychological qualities rather than deficits." (24) It
included 25 items and used a seven-point Likert scale that ranged from *strongly disagree*
to *strongly agree*. Higher scores indicated greater resilience, and lower scores less
resilience.

Each person has some degree of resilience—the capacity to respond to adversity with
resilience. This means not only the ability to bounce back from adverse experiences, but
also having the resources to learn and grow stronger from the experience. The strength of
Resilience Core determines how well one responds. A strong Resilience Core is needed
to respond to adversity in ways that produce growth and positive adapting. Those with a
strong Resilience Core have a healthier response to adversity. (Wagnild & Young 1987,
17)

Ministry Burnout Inventory (BO)

The Clergy Burn-Out Inventory was developed by Roy M. Oswald of the Alban
Institute, Inc. It was published in Oswald's 1991 book, *Clergy Self-Care: Finding A
Balance for Effective Ministry* (61-64). It is a simple assessment tool that measures levels
of burnout in clergy. The original instrument had 16 questions and used a six-point Likert
scale. The instrument was adjusted after surveys were returned by the removal of
question 12, which asks about sexual activity, because 39 survey participants indicated

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that the question was not applicable to them. The scoring was also adjusted to take the

change into account. The scoring is as follows:

Table 1. Burnout Inventory Scoring

Original	Adjusted	Interpretation
0-32	0-30	Burnout not an issue
33-48	31-45	Bordering on Burnout
49-64	46-60	Burnout is a factor
65-80	61-75	Extreme Burnout

Psychological General Well-Being Schedule, (GWB)

The GWB was developed in 1970 by Dr. Harold J. Dupuy and is one of the most

widely used for patient self-report outcome measures. The GWB was developed to

evaluate perceived well-being and distress. The General Concept is well-being as quality

of life. The Theoretical Construct is psychological general well-being, and the specific

construct is self-representations of psychological general well-being (44). It ranges from

0 (poor quality of life) to 110 (good quality of life).

The GWB does not assess physical health. It includes six dimensions: Anxiety,

Depressed Mood, Positive Well-Being, Self Control, General Health, and Vitality. There

are 22 items that use a 0-5 six-point Likert scale. It provides a total score for general

well-being. The maximum score is 110. The higher the score the higher the perceived

well-being. The scoring includes: severe distress (0-60), moderate distress (61-72) and

positive well-being (73-110). (MAPI 2004,9)

Total Health Scale (TH)

Total Health Satisfaction Scale (THS)

The TH and the THS scales were designed by the researcher for the purpose of providing a global health score and a global satisfaction with health score based on the leader's perception. Two categories were included, namely leader health and ministry health. The areas of health evaluated were chosen from the clergy health research (refer to chapter one and the research overview): Leader health—spiritual, physical, relationship, emotional/psychological, family, and Ministry health—leadership and ministry. Both scales used a one to seven, seven-point Likert scale. The TH scale asked: *What is your degree of health in the following areas?* It used a scale from "not very healthy" to "excellent health". The THS scale asked: *How satisfied are you with your health in the following areas?* It used a scale of "not very satisfied" to "very satisfied". A higher score indicated greater health or satisfaction. The two scales were found to be highly correlated so to avoid collinearity; the total health satisfaction scale was not used in the multiple regression.

Self-esteem Scale (SE)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was developed in 1965 by Dr. M. Rosenberg. It is a ten-item scale that uses a four-point Likert scale that ranges from *strongly agr*ee to *strongly disagree*. The SE "measures global self-worth by measuring positive and negative feelings about self." (Fetzberg Institute). Low scores indicate higher self-esteem; high scores indicate lower self-esteem.

Social Support Ministry Questionnaire (SSM)(SSM18)

Part B: Social Support Ministry Satisfaction (SSMb)(SSMb18)

The SSM and SSMb were adapted from the six-item **Social Support Questionnaire 6 (SSQ6)** developed by Sarason, Shearin and Pierce (1987). The questionnaire asks about people in the subject's life who provide help or support in the named situations. Each question has two parts. For the first part, the subjects are asked to list all the people they know, excluding themselves, who they can count on for help or support in the manner described. The second part asks the subjects to rate how satisfied they are with the overall support they have. (Sarason et al 1987)

In the present study, the researcher created the SSM by using the six items from the SSQ6 along with twelve additional items specifically related to clergy in ministry, for a total of eighteen items. Instead of listing names, the subjects were asked to give a number of how many people on whom they could count for help or support in the manner described. For "Part b" of the SSMb**,** the subjects were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall support they have in the particular area using a six-point Likert scale ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. Scores have been reversed. High scores indicated greater satisfaction, and lower scores signified less satisfaction.

When analyzing the results, the scores for six participants were so extreme they were considered outliers and were not likely to be representative of the rest of the group. Therefore, the scores of these participants were not used for statistical analysis.

Relationship to God, (RG)

The RG is an instrument designed by the researcher to assess relationship with God. The content areas covered are: perceptions of the Trinity, experience of God, experience

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of God's love and forgiveness, sense of purpose and spiritual practices. The scale includes fifteen items that use a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The subjects were asked to rate statements about their relationship with God, e.g. "I know I am loved by God", "I'm intentional about my relationship with God".

Relationship to Self (RS)

The RS is an instrument designed by the researcher to assess relationship with self. Content areas include: self-esteem, self-value, self-reflection, self-care, and self-expectation. It includes twelve items that use a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The subjects were asked to rate statements about their relationship with self, e.g. "I like the person I am becoming", "I take time for myself".

Results

Demographics

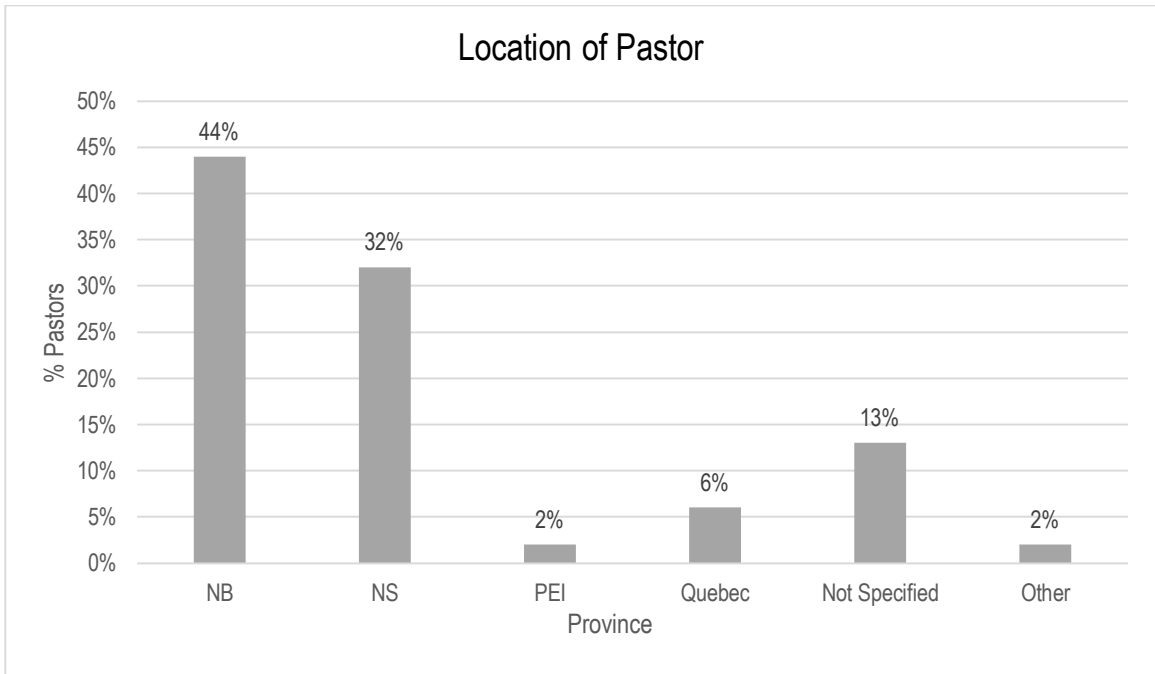The following charts, figures 1-15, represent the demographics for the 156 participants:
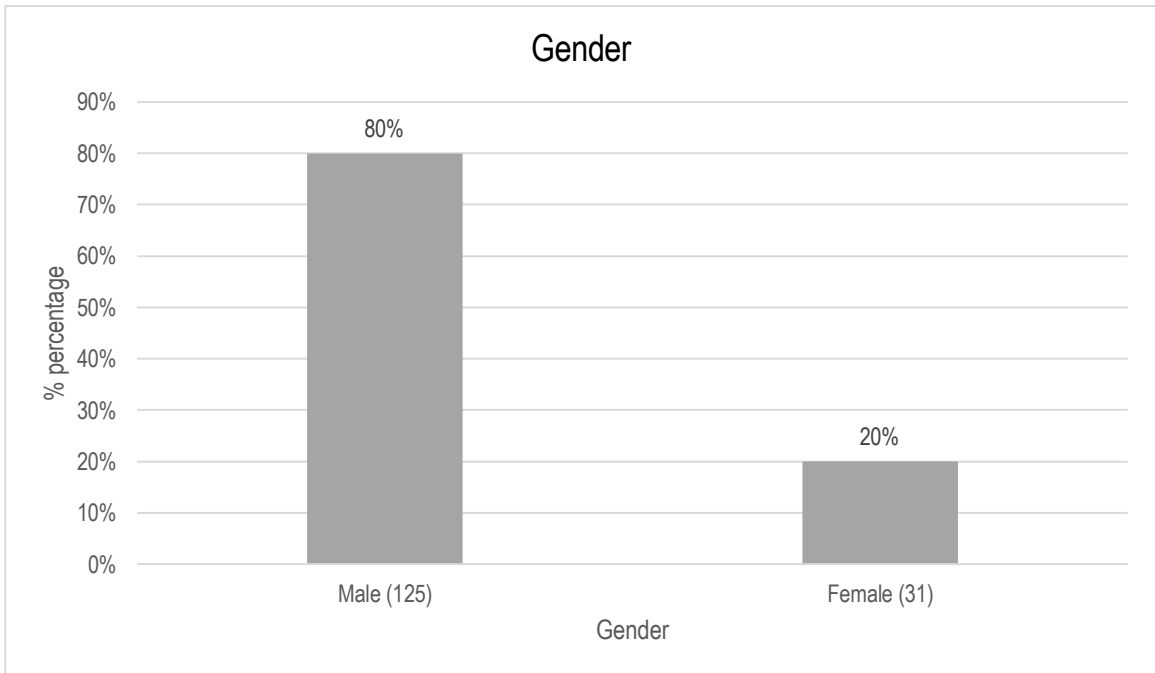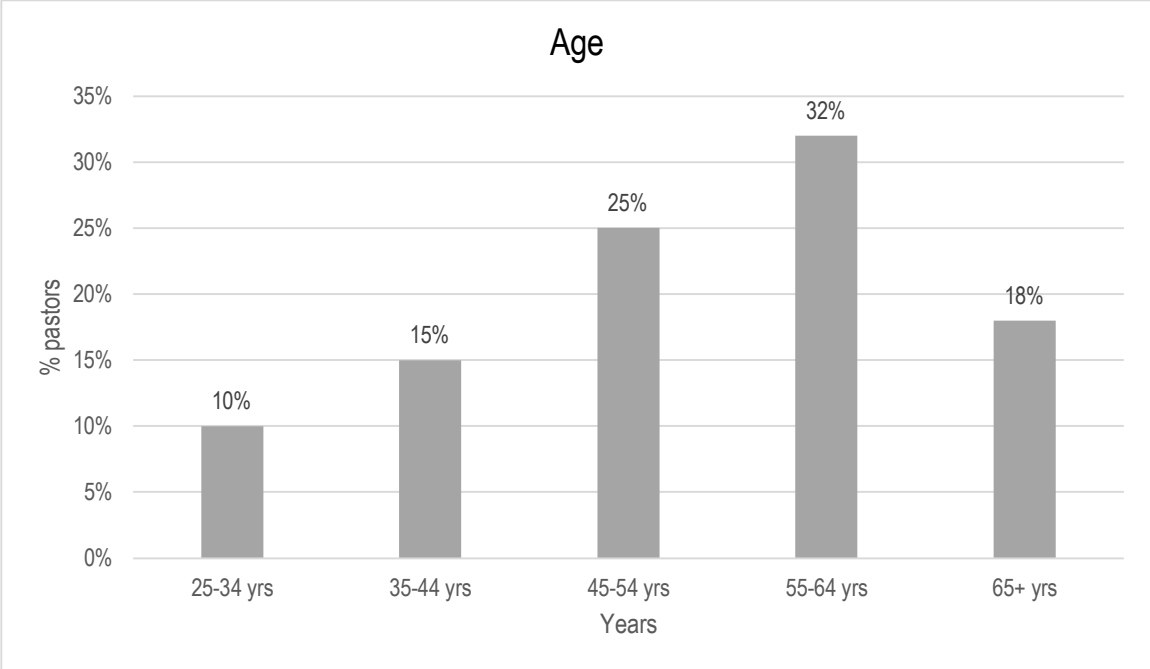
Figure 1 Location of Pastor
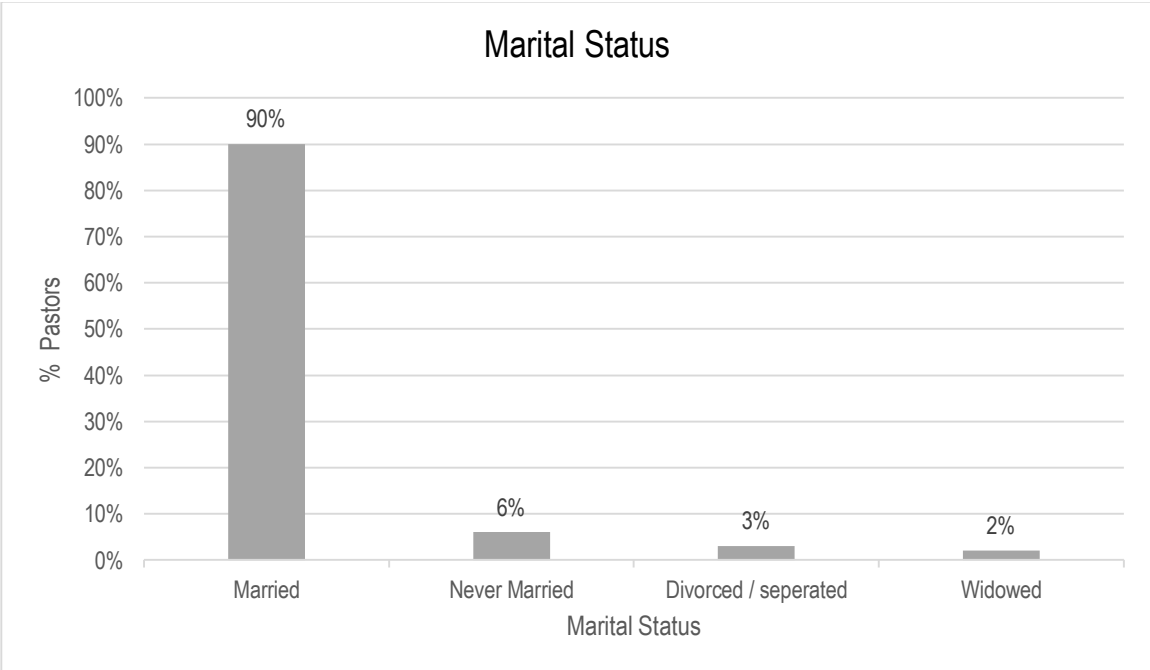

Figure 2 Gender
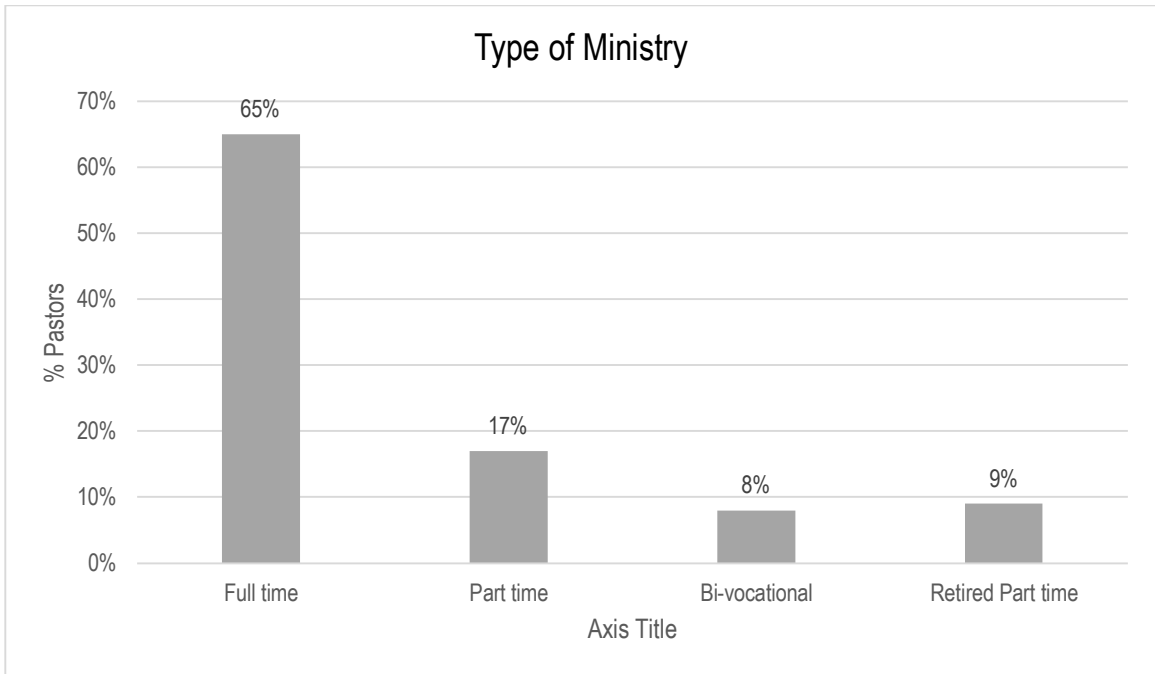
Figure 3 Age

Figure 4 Marital Status

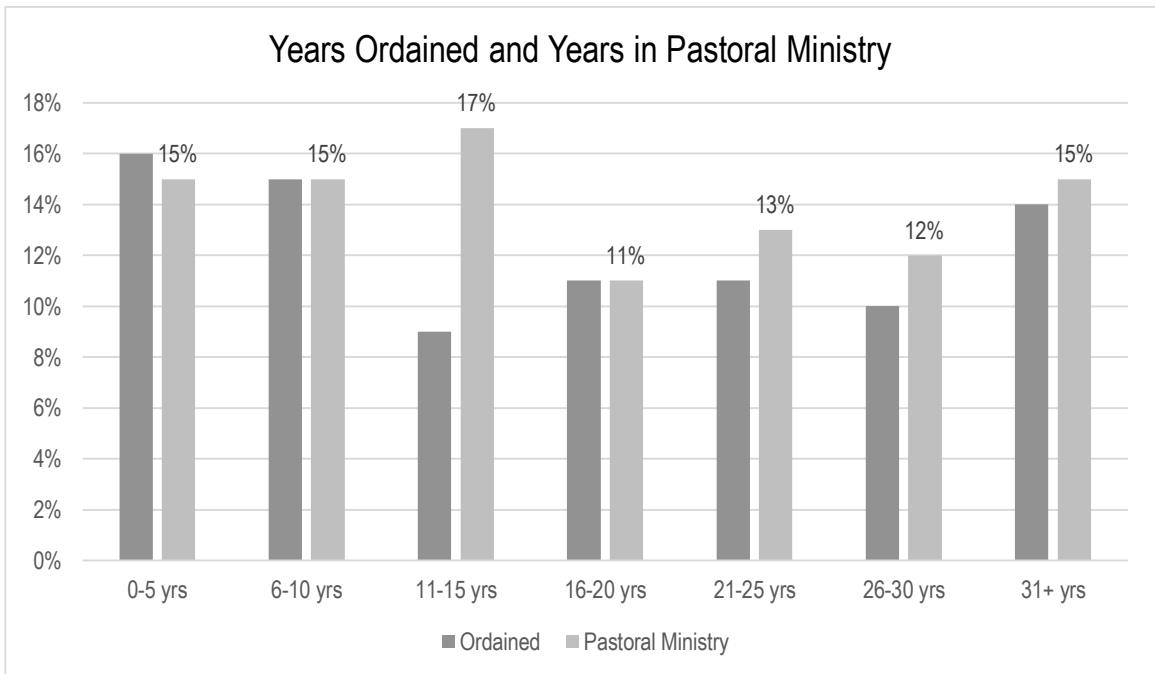*Figure 5 Type of Ministry*

Figure 6 Years Ordained and Years in Pastoral Ministry

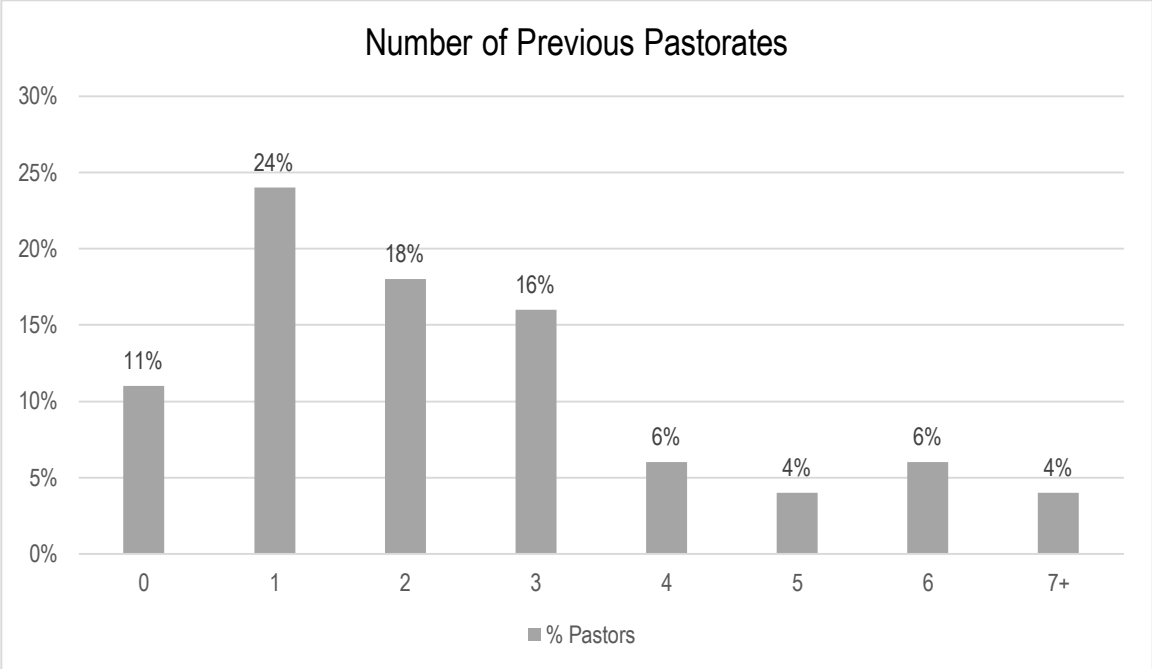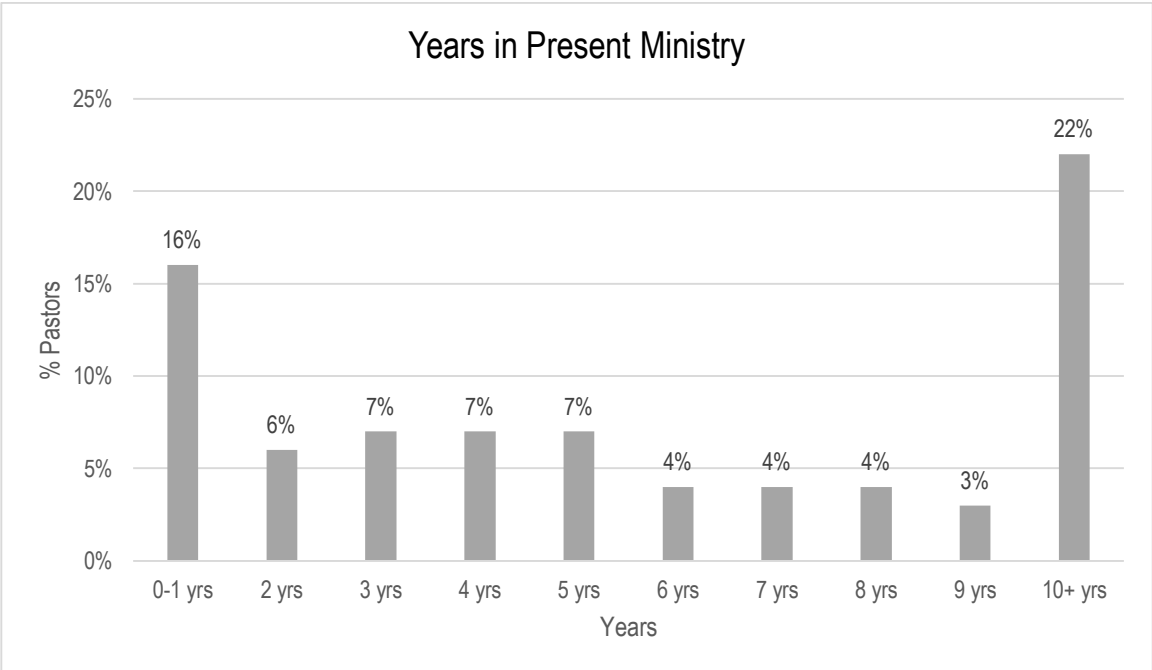*Figure 7 Number of Previous Pastorates*
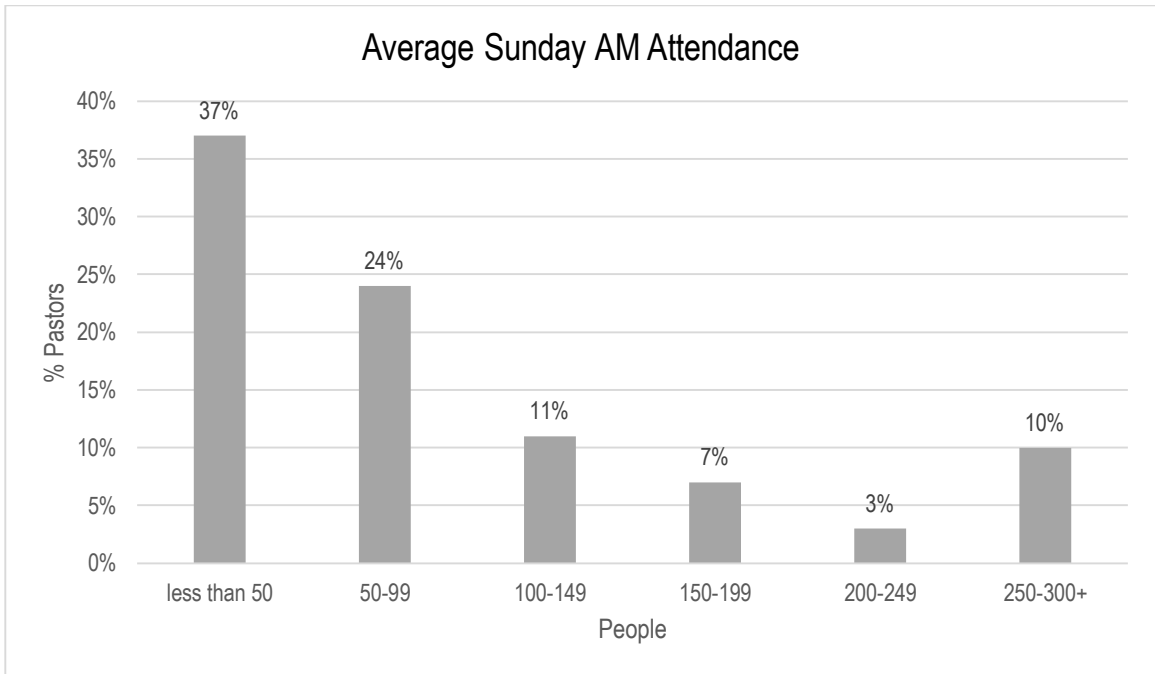

Figure 8 Years in Present Ministry

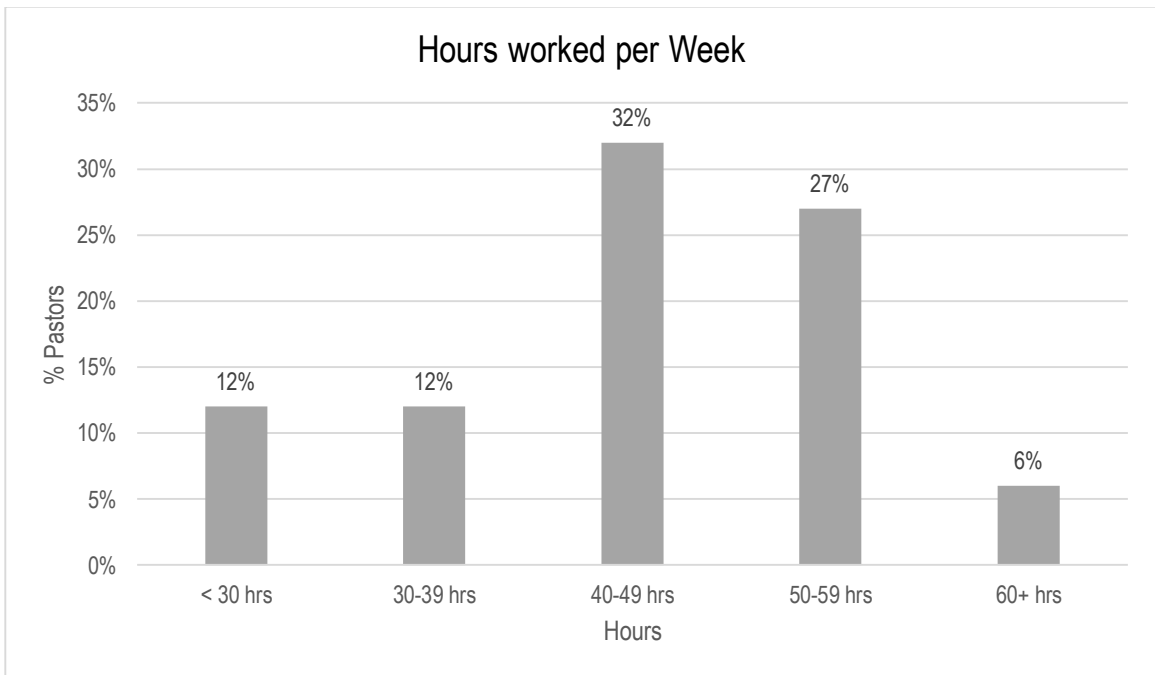*Figure 9 Average Sunday AM Attendance*

Figure 10 Hours Worked per Week

Figure 11 Location of Ministry
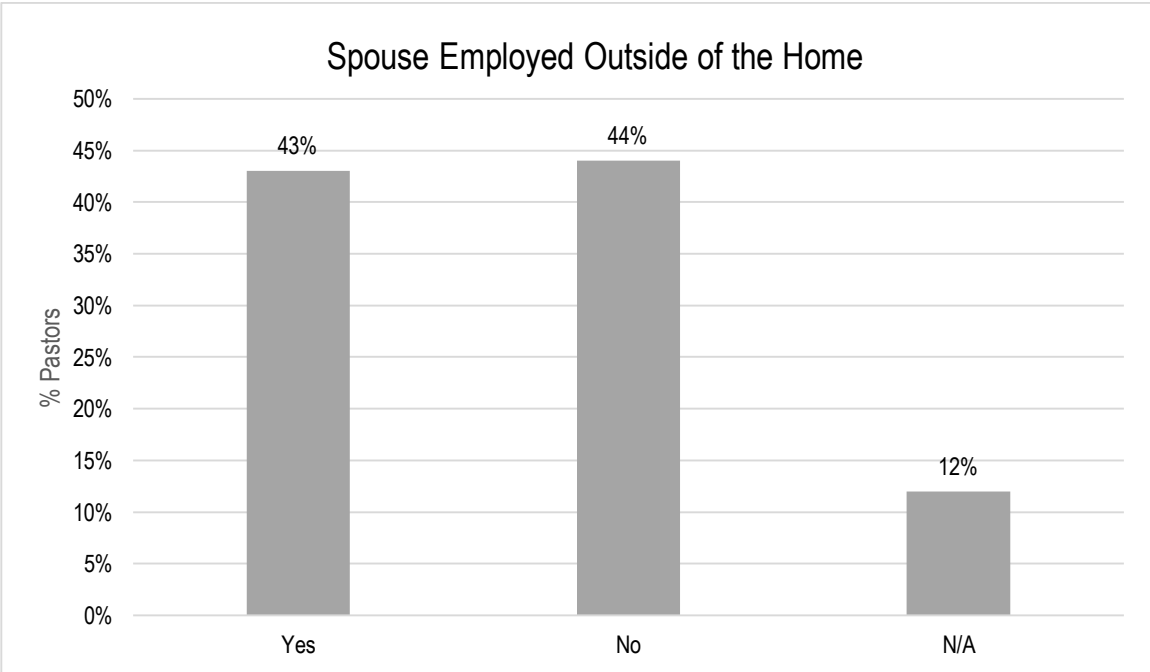
Figure 12 Spouse Employed Outside of the Home
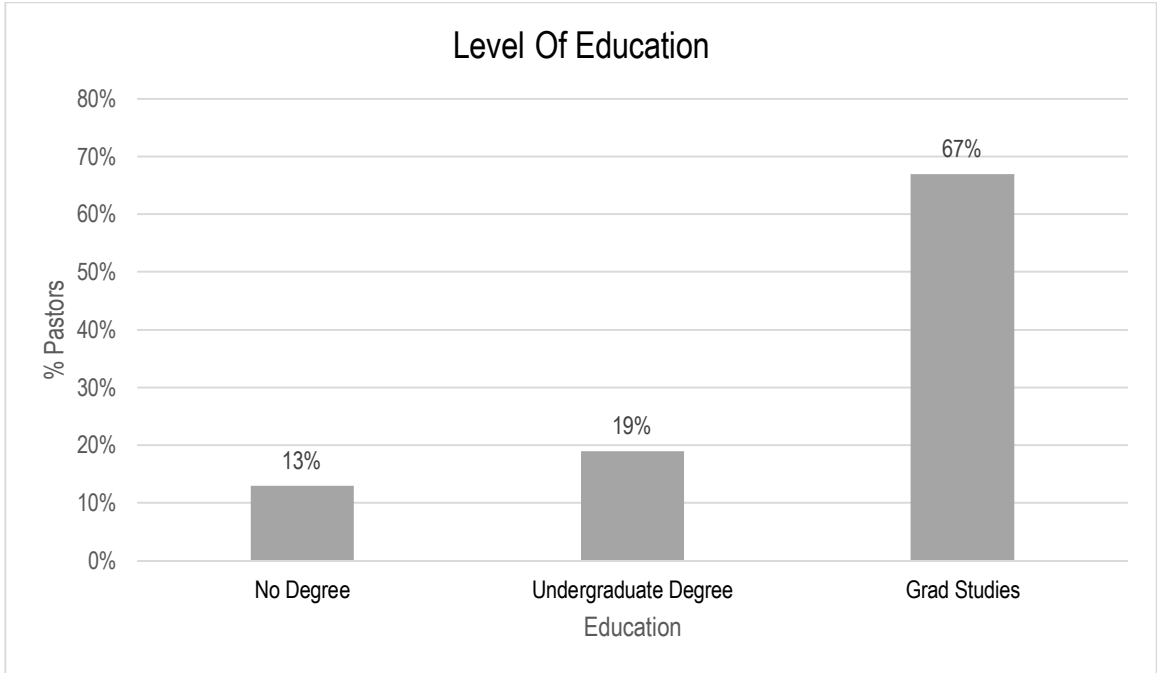
Figure 13 Level of Education
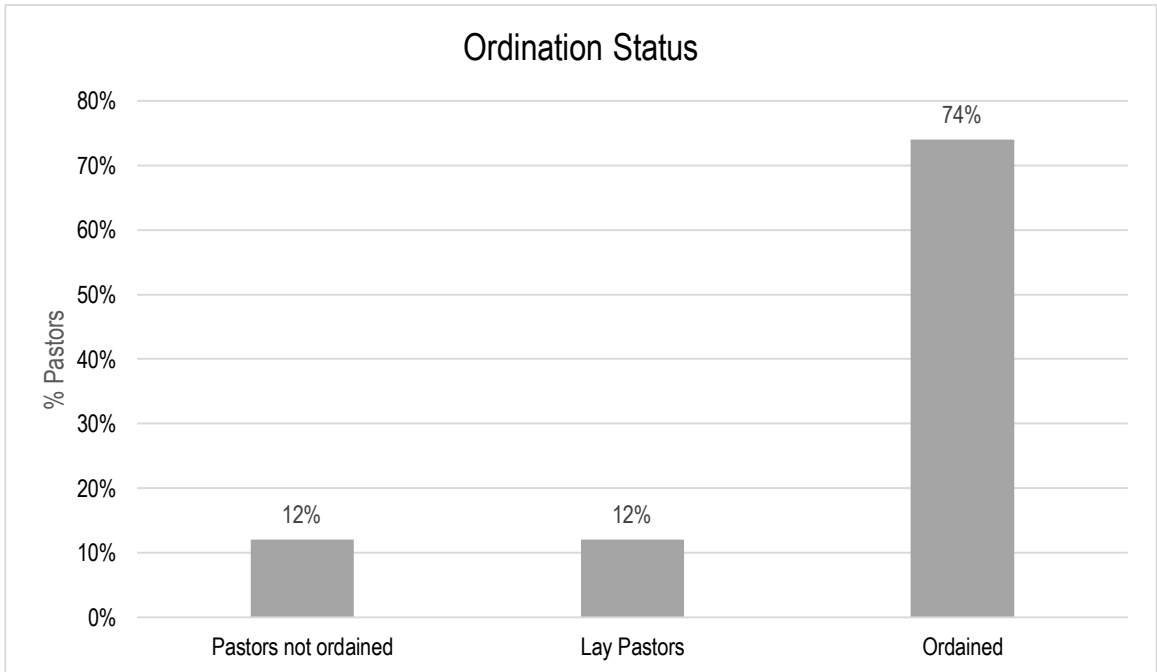
Figure 14 Ordination Status
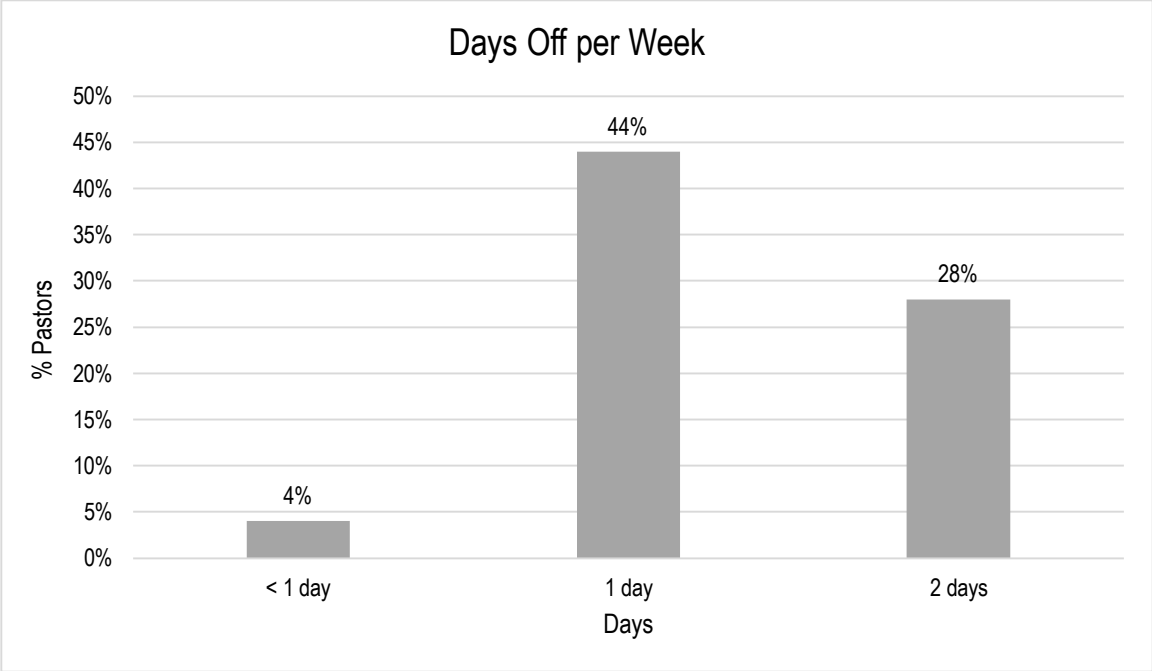
Figure 15 Days Off per Week
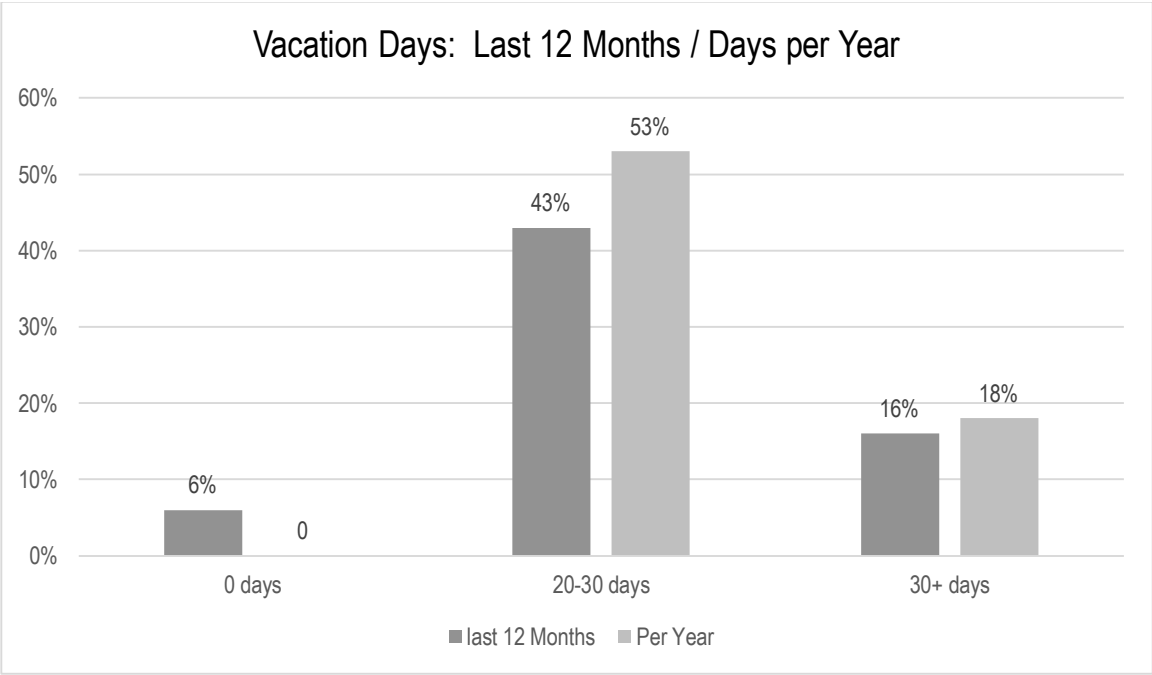
Figure 16 Vacation Days: in Last 12 Months / Days per Year

Scale Results

Following are the Scale results. Table #2-13 shows the overall means and standard

deviations for the measures used in this study.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Total BO	38.0962	12.80059	156
Total Res	137.4167	14.09734	156
Total GWB	75.546	15.4929	156
Total Health	34.9744	6.47073	156
Total Satisfaction	31.3179	8.11778	151
Total RG	88.3782	9.63016	156
Total RS	60.7885	10.49055	156
Total SE	19.4423	5.71499	156
Total SSM	75.2244	52.85642	156
Total SSMb	88.5385	18.37087	156

The following Tables 3 - # shows the range of scores for each individual measure.

Table 3. Ministry Burnout Inventory (BO)
6pt scale, 15 questions

% Pastors	#Pastors	Interpretation	Range
31%	31	No BO	0-30
39%	61	Borderline BO	31-45
26%	40	BO factor	46-60
3%	6	Extreme BO	61-75

Table 4. Psychological General Well-Being Scale (GWB)
22 questions, 6pt scale

% Pastors	# Pastors	Interpretation	Range
14%	21	Severe distress	0-60
22%	35	Moderate distress	61-72
64%	100	Positive Well-being	73-110

Table 5. Resilience Scale[4] (Res)
7pt scale, 25 questions

% Pastors	# Pastors	Interpretation	Range
1%	2	Very low	25-100
6%	9	Low	101-115
18%	28	Low moderate	116-130
50%	78	Moderate	131-144
19%	30	Moderate high	145-160
5%	9	High	161-175

Table 6. Total Health: What is your level of health? (TH)
7 items, 7pt scale, created scale

% Pastors	# Pastors	Interpretation	Range
0	0	7-13	Very poor health
12%	19	14-27	Poor health
30%	46	28-34	Low Health
46%	72	35 -41	Moderate health
12%	19	42- 47	High health

Table 7. Total Health Satisfaction: How Satisfied are you with your health? (THS)
7 items, 7pt scale, created scale

% Pastors	# Pastors	Interpretation	Range
2%	3	7-13	Very dissatisfied
28%	42	14-27	Dissatisfied
31%	47	28-34	Neutral
30%	45	35 -41	Satisfied
9%	14	42- 47	Very satisfied

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Table 8. Relationship with God (RG)
15 questions, 7pt scale, created scale

% Pastors	# Pastors	Interpretation	Range
0	0	Very low	15-59
8%	12	Low	60-74
43%	67	Moderate	75-89
50%	77	High	90-105

Table 9. Relationship with Self (RS)
12 questions, 7pt scale, created scale

% Pastors	# Pastors	Interpretation	Range
12%	18	Very low	12-47
29%	45	Low	48-59
46%	72	Moderate	60-71
14%	21	High	72-84

Table 10. Self-esteem (SE) (reversed)
10 questions, 4pt scale

% Pastors	# Pastors	Interpretation	Range
6%	9	Low	30-40
41%	64	Moderate	20-29
54%	74	High	10-19

Table 11. Social Support Ministry Questionnaire (SSM18)
Average number of Support people 18 questions

Avg. # Sup Peoples	% Pastors	# Pastors
1	12	18
2	19	30
3	20	30
4	17	27
5	10	17
6	4	6
7	4	6
8	4	6
9	5	7
10+	5	8

Table 12. Social Support Ministry Satisfaction (SSMb18)
18 questions, 6pt scale

Interpretation	# Pastors	% Pastors
2 Dissatisfied	5	3%
3 Somewhat Dissatisfied	14	9%
4 Somewhat Satisfied	18	12%
5 Satisfied	64	41%
6 Very Satisfied	55	35%

Table 13. Support Received in the last 6 months?

Type of Support	Yes %	No %
Family	89	11
Friends	89	11
Other Pastors	83	17
Church Leaders	81	19
Church Staff	46	54
Congregation Members	90	10
Denominational Leaders	42	58
Counsellor or Psychologist	14	86
Medical Professionals	45	55
Spiritual Director/mentor	28	72
Leadership Mentor	20	80
Other	14	86

Summary of Scale Results:

On the **Burnout Scale** 31% of pastors did not show levels of burnout. For 26%, burnout was a significant factor; 3% showed extreme burnout, and 39% were borderline. On the **General Well-being schedule**: 14% were in severe distress, 22% in moderate distress; 64% of the sample had positive well-being. **Resilience** was low for 25%, moderate for 50%, and high for 24%. On the **Total Health scale,** 58% rated moderate to high, 30% low, and 12% poor TH for total personal and ministry health. The **Total Health Satisfaction Scale** showed that 30% were dissatisfied, 31% neutral, and 39% were *satisfied* to *very satisfied* with their overall personal and ministry health.

The pattern of means was very similar for TH and RS. Total Health scores were poor to low for 42%, moderate for 46%, and high for 12%. Relationship with self was low for 41%, moderate for 46%, and high for only 14%.

Relationship with God score was high for 50%, moderate for 43% and low for 8%. **Self-esteem** was high for 53%, moderate for 41%, and low for 6%. It is suspected that both the RG and SE scales may be impacted by a ceiling effect.

The pattern of scores for RG and RS were reversed. High: RG 50%, RS 14%, Moderate: RG 43%, RS 46%, and low: RG 8%, RS 41%.

The negative picture of pastors' health shows that 29% of pastors have a significant degree of burnout. 36% of pastors have well-being distress. 25% have low resilience. 42% have low total health. 41% of clergy have a low relationship with self.

The positive picture of clergy health is that 31% did not show signs of burnout, 64% had some degree of positive well-being, 24% had high resilience, and 58% had moderate

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to high total health. 93% have a moderate to high relationship with God. 94% have moderate to high self-esteem.

Social Support Ministry:

On the SSM scale, 31% of pastors had one or two support people on average, 37% had three or four support people on average, and 32% had five or more support people. On the **social support ministry satisfaction** (SSMb), 76% rated their satisfaction with the level of support at 5 or 6 on a six-point scale, where 6 signified *very satisfied*.

Received support in the last 6 months:

In the six months before the survey, 89% received help from family and friends, 83% from other pastors, 81% from church leaders, 90% from congregation members, 42% from denominational leaders, 45% medical professionals, 28% from a spiritual director, 20% from a leadership mentor, 14% from a counsellor, and 14% from "other".

Left the Pastorate:

In answer to the question, **"Have you ever left pastorate primarily because of difficult circumstances?",** 42% replied yes, and 53% replied no.

Seminary Prep:

Sixty-seven percent of participants said that **seminary training did not prepare them to deal with the stressors of ministry;** 21% said that it did prepare them.

Multiple Regression Results

The purpose of this study is to establish the impact of relationship to God, self and others on burnout, well-being, resilience, and total health in Christian ministry. It also investigated the role that key variables (relationship with God, relationship with self, self-esteem, social support and social support satisfaction) played in predicting burnout, well-being and resilience. Four linear regressions were performed using dependent variables: burnout, resilience, general well-being, and total health. A linear regression was also performed using burnout as the dependent variable and General Well-being, Total Health, and Resilience as the predictor variables.

Dependent Variable Total Health:

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict Total Health based on predictors listed above. A significant regression equation was found (R^2 of .477, $F (5, 150) =$ 27.399, $p<.001$). Relationship with God RG ($\beta=.123$, $p<.05$.), Relationship with Self RS ($\beta= .217$, $p<.001$.), Self-Esteem SE ($\beta= -.145$, $p=.05$.), and Social Support Ministry satisfaction SSMb ($\beta= .057$, $p<.05$.) were significant positive predictors of Total Health; and Social Support Ministry SSM ($\beta=.008$, $p>.05$.) was not.

Dependent Variable General Well-Being:

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict General Well-Being based on predictors listed above. A significant regression equation was found (R^2 of .493, $F (5, 150) = 29.191$, $p<.001$). Relationship with Self RS ($\beta= .511$, $p<.001$.), Self-Esteem SE ($\beta= -.347$, $p=.05$.), and Social Support Ministry satisfaction SSMb ($\beta= .288$, $p<.001$.)

were significant positive predictors of General Well-Being; Relationship with God RG (β=.080, p>.05) and Social Support Ministry SSM (β= -.010, p>.05.) were not.

Dependent Variable   Burnout:

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict burnout based on predictors listed above. A significant regression equation was found (R^2 of .343, $F(5, 150) = 15.639$, p<.001). Relationship with Self RS (β= -.295, p<.05.) and Social Support Ministry (SS_M) (β= -.037, p<.05.) were significant positive predictors of burnout. Relationship with God RG (β= -.169, p>.05.), Self-Esteem SE (β= .291, p>.05.), and Social Support Ministry satisfaction SSMb (β= -.099, p>.05.) were not.

Dependent Variable Resilience:

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict Resilience based on predictors listed above. A significant regression equation was found (R^2 of .403, $F(5, 150) = 20.274$, p<.001). Relationship with God RG (β= .515, p<.001.), Relationship with Self RS (β= .350, p<.05.), and Self-Esteem SE (β= -.525, p<.05.) were significant positive predictors of Resilience. Social Support Ministry SSM (β=.021, p>.05.), and Social Support Ministry Satisfaction SSMb (β= -.061, p>.05.) were not.

Dependent Variable Burnout:

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict burnout based on predictors listed above. A significant regression equation was found (R^2 of .566, $F(3, 152) = 66.049$, p<.001). General well-being GWB (β=. -329, p<.001), Resilience Res (β=. -243, p<.001), and Total Health TH (β=. -457, p<.05) were significant predictors of burnout.

Multiple Regression Results Summary

RS was found to be the most consistent predictor of all the dependent variables. RS
significantly predicted GWB (β= .511, p<.001.), TH (β= .217, p<.001), Res (β= .350,
p<.05) and BO (β= -.295, p<.05.). RG was significant in predicting RES (β= .515,
p<.001.) and TH (β=.123, p<.05.).

SSM predicted a small portion of BO (β= -.037, p<.05). SSMB was a significant
predictor of GWB (β= .288, p<.001.) and to a small degree TH (β= .057, p<.05). SE was
significant in predicting Res (β= -.525, p<.05.), GWB (β= -.347, p=.05), and TH (β= -
.145, p=.05.).

The relationship between the various predictors and the health outcomes are summarized
in Table 14 below.

Table 14. Regression Results Summary

Variables	RG	RS	SSM	SSMB	SE
TH	β=.123, p<.05	β= .217, p<.001	β=.008, p>.05	β= .057, p<.05	β= -.145, p=.05
GWB	β=.080, p>.05	β= .511, p<.001	β= -.010, p>.05	β= .288, p<.001	β= -.347, p=.05
BO	β= -.169, p>.05	β= -.295, p<.05	β= -.037, p<.05	β= -.099, p>.05	β= .291, p>.05
Res	β= .515, p<.001	β= .350, p<.05	β=.021, p>.05	β= -.061, p>.05	β= -.525, p<.05

TH, Res, and GWB, were significant predictors of BO. See Table 15 below.

Table 15. BO Regression summary

	TH	RES	GWB
BO	β=. -457, p<.05	β=. -243, p<.001	β=. -329, p<.001

Demographics and Health Analysis of Variance

Type of Ministry

An ANOVA was performed for type of ministry groups and the different Health

Outcomes. No significant difference was found for TH, $(F\ (3,152) = 1.10)$, p>.05), RS (F

$(3,152) =1.03$, p>.05), (SE $(F\ (3,152) =.504$, p>.05), Res (F $(F\ (3,152) =1.09$, p>.05), BO

$(F\ (3,152) =1.33$, p>.05), GWB $(F\ (3,152) =.37$, p>.05), SSM18 $(F\ (3,152) =.76)$,

SSMb18 $(F\ (3,152) =.65$, p>.05). A significant difference was found for THS $(F\ (3,152)$

$=3.54$, p<.05). Most outcomes did not differ across Type of Ministry groups; only THS

showed a significant difference. Inspection of the means showed that there was a

tendency for Full time and Part time to report lower THS than the Retired part time

group.

Sunday Morning Average Attendance

An ANOVA was performed for Sunday Morning Average Attendance and the different

Health Outcomes. No significant differences were found for TH, $(F\ (13,142) = .83)$,

p>.05) THS $(F\ (13,142) =.74$, p>.05), RS $(F\ (13,142) =1.472$, p>.05), (SE $(F\ (13,142)$

$=.97$, p>.05), Res $(F\ (13,142) =.46$, p>.05), BO $(F\ (13,142) =.58$, p>.05), GWB (F

$(13,142) =.93$, p>.05), SSM18 $(F\ (13,142) =1.71)$, p>.05, and SSMb18 $(F\ (13,142) =1.50$,

p>.05). Health outcomes did not differ across Sunday Morning Average Attendance groups.

Gender

An ANOVA was performed for Age and the different Health Outcomes. Significant differences were found for TH (F (1,154) =5.60), p<.05, GWB (F (1,154) =8.67), p<.05 and SSMb18 (F (1,154) =11.85), p<.05. No significant differences were found for THS (F (1,154) =2.92), p>.05, RS (F (1,154) =1.93), p>.05, SE (F (1,154) =3.70), p>.05), Res (F (1,154) =1.33), p>.05), BO (F (1,154) =1.87), p>.05, RG (F (1,154) =.28), p>.05 and SSM18 (F (4,151) =2.0), SSMb18 (F (1,154) =2.63), p>.05.

Most outcomes did not differ across gender; TH, GWB and SSMb showed significant differences. Inspection of the means showed that there was a tendency for males to report higher health outcomes on TH, GWB and SSMb than females. The results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16. Gender ANOVA

Variable	Means		F statement
	Male N=125 (80%)	Female N= 31 (20%)	
TH	35.58	32.55	(F (1,154) =5.60), p<.05
THS	31.88	29.07	(F (1,154) =2.92), p>.05
RS	61.37	58.45	(F (1,154) =1.93), p>.05
SE(reversed)	19.01	21.19	(F (1,154) =3.70), p>.05
Res	138.06	134.81	(F (1,154) =1.33), p>.05
BO	37.40	40.90	(F (1,154) =1.87), p>.05
GWB	77.32	68.39	(F (1,154) =8.67), p<.05
RG	88.18	89.19	(F (1,154) =.28), p>.05
SSM18	4.37	3.42	(F (1,154) =2.63), p>.05
SSMb18	5.05	4.37	(F (1,154) =11.85), p<.05

Age

An ANOVA was performed for Age and the different Health Outcomes. No significant differences were found for Total Health, (F $(4,151)$ = 1.46, p>.05), THS (F.4,151) =1.77, p>.05), SE (F $(4,151)$ =1.05, p>.05), Res (F $(4,151)$ =1.00, p>.05), BO (F $(4,151)$ =1.94, p>.05), SSM18 (F $(4,151)$ =2.0), SSMb18 (F $(4,151)$ =2.30, p>.05). RS (F $(4,151)$ =5.84, p<.000), RG (F $(4,151)$ =9.31, p<.000) and GWB (F $(4,151)$ =2.42, p=.05) were found to be significant.

Most outcomes did not differ across age groups. RS, RG and GWB showed significant differences. Inspection of the means showed that there was a tendency for older people to report higher RS, RG, and GWB. The results are shown in Table 17.

The 65+ age group had the highest mean score for RS; this is a moderate level of RS. The 35- 44 years' age group had the lowest mean score for RS, which is low level of RS. The 65+ years age group had the highest mean score for relationship to God and had high relationship with God. The 35 - 44 years age group had the lowest mean score for relationship to God and had a moderate level of relationship with God. The 55-64 years age group had the highest mean score for GWB and had positive well-being. The 35-44 year age group had the lowest GWB score and scored in the moderate distress range.

Table 17. Age ANOVA

Variable	Mean Scores (Age group)					F statement
	25-34yrs	35-44yrs	45-54yrs	55-64yrs	65+yrs	
	N=15 (10%)	N=24 (15%)	N=39 (25%)	N=50 (32%)	N=28 (18%)	
TH	33.80	32.46	35.13	35.78	36.10	$(F_{(4,151)} = 1.46)$, $p > .05$
THS	29.60	28.30	30.87	32.44	33.66	$(F_{(4,146)} = 1.77)$, $p > .05$
RS	56.80	53.62	60.33	64.24	63.53	$(F_{(4,151)} = 5.84)$, $p < .000$
SE (reversed)	21.13	20.08	18.74	19.94	18.07	$(F_{(4,151)} = 1.05)$, $p > .05$
Res	135.33	134.46	141.00	137.00	136.89	$(F_{(4,154)} = 1.09)$, $p > .05$
BO	42.33	42.37	34.51	37.38	38.42	$(F_{(4,154)} = 1.94)$, $p > .05$
GWB	72.60	67.54	76.51	78.54	77.28	$(F_{(4,151)} = 2.42)$, $p = .05$
RG	84.33	79.46	89.90	91.00	91.42	$(F_{(4,151)} = 9.31)$, $p < .000$
SSM18	3.98	4.45	4.34	3.92	4.29	$(F_{(4,151)} = 0.20)$, $p > .05$
SSMb18	4.56	4.48	4.96	5.09	5.13	$(F_{(4,151)} = 2.29)$, $p > .05$

Left Pastorate

An ANOVA was performed for the variable Left Pastorate and the different Health Outcomes. Significant differences were found for TH $(F_{(2,153)} = 6.32)$, $p < .05$, THS $(F_{(2,148)} = 6.39)$, $p < .05$, RS $(F_{(2,153)} = 4.52)$, $p < .05$, SE $(F_{(2,153)} = 3.05)$, $p < .05$, BO $(F_{(2,153)} = 4.74)$, $p < .05$, GWB $(F_{(2,153)} = 9.77)$, $p < .000$, RG $(F_{(2,153)} = 3.86)$, $p < .05$ and SSMb18 $(F_{(2,153)} = 7.65)$, $p < .05$. No significant differences were for Res $(F_{(2,153)} = 2.65)$, $p > .05$ and SSM18 $(F_{(2,153)} = 2.42)$, $p > .05$.

Most health outcomes did differ across Left Pastorate groups. But Res and SSM18 did not. Inspection of the means showed that the Yes group showed higher health outcomes in TH, THS, RS, SE, BO, GWB, RG, and SSMb18. Results are shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Left pastorate primarily because of difficult circumstances?

Variable	Means scores		F statement
	Yes	NO	
	N=66 (45%)	N=82 (55%)	
TH	33.56	36.55	(F (2,153) =6.32), p<.05
THS	28.88	33.49	(F (2,148) =6.39), p<.05
RS	58.45	63.10	(F (2,153) =4.52), p<.05
SE (reversed)	20.48	18.40	(F (2,153) =3.05), p<.05
Res	135.71	139.54	(F (2,153) =2.65), p>.05
BO	40.33	35.46	(F (2,153) =4.74), p<.05
GWB	70.39	80.45	(F (2,153) =9.77), p<.000
RG	85.94	90.27	(F (2,153) =3.86), p<.05
SSM18	3.60	4.66	(F (2,153) =2.42), p>.05
SSMb18	4.63	5.20	(F (2,153) =7.65), p<.05

Seminary Prep

An ANOVA was performed for the variable Left Pastorate and the different Health

Outcomes. Significant differences were found for TH (F (2,153) =4.26), p<.05, THS (F

(2,153) =3.33), p<.05, BO F (2,153) =4.70), p<.05, GWB (F (2,153) =5.90), p<.05, and

RG (F (2,153) =3.75), p<.05. No significant differences were for RS (F (2,153) =2.94),

p>.05, SE (F (2,153) =0.87), p>.05, Res (F (2,153) =0.02), p>.05, SSM18 (F (2,153)

=0.75), p>.05 and SSM18 (F (2,153) =3.04), p>.05.

Half of the health outcomes did differ across Seminary Prep groups. The Yes group

had significantly higher health outcomes than the No group in TH, THS, BO, GWB, and

RG. Results are shown in Table19.

Table 19. Seminary training prepared you for dealing with the stressors?

Variable	Mean Scores		F statement
	Yes	No	
	N=33 (21%)	N= 104 (67%)	
TH	36.85	33.93	(F (2,153) =4.26), p<.05
THS	33.81	30.14	(F (2,153) =3.33), p<.05
RS	63.70	59.36	(F (2,153) =2.94), p>.05
SE (reversed)	19.21	19.79	(F (2,153) =0.87), p>.05
Res	137.73	137.42	(F (2,153) =0.02), p>.05
BO	32.67	40.14	(F (2,153) =4.70), p<.05
GWB	81.64	72.63	(F (2,153) =5.90), p<.05
RG	91.45	86.91	(F (2,153) =3.75), p<.05
SSM18	4.38	4.00	(F (2,153) =0.75), p>.05
SSMb18	5.30	4.80	(F (2,153) =3.04), p>.05

Gender

Males (35.6) had slightly higher total health than females (32.5), and males (5.05) were more satisfied with Social Supports (4.37). Males (77.3) scored in the range of positive GWB while females (68.4) scored in the range of moderate distress. The difference in sample sizes could have impacted results, Males (n=125), females (n=31) for a total of 156. Results are shown in Table 20.

Table 20. Gender Mean Scores

Variable	Mean Scores	
	Male	Female
TH	35.6	32.5
GWB	77.3	68.4
SSMb	5.05	4.37

Have you ever left a pastorate primarily because of difficult circumstances?

Those who have ever left a pastorate because of difficult circumstances had slightly lower TH, RS, SE, and SSMb. GWB showed the greatest difference. They also had higher burnout. Results are shown in Table 21.

Table 21. Left pastorate primarily because of difficult circumstances?

Variable	Mean Scores	
	Yes	NO
	N=66 (45%)	N=82 (55%)
TH	33.56	36.55
THS	28.88	33.49
RS	58.45	63.10
SE	20.48	18.40
BO	40.33	35.46
GWB	70.39	80.45
RG	85.94	90.27
SSMb	4.63	5.20

If clergy had left a pastorate because of difficult circumstances and did not feel that seminary prepared them for the stressors of ministry, then they were more likely to experience more burnout, and less TH, THS, RG and GWB.

Seminary training prepared you for dealing with the stressors of ministry?

Participants who felt that seminary prepared them for the stressors of ministry had slightly higher TH, THS, GWB and RG. They also had less burnout. Those who felt seminary did not prepare them for the stressors of ministry had lower mean score in TH, THS, GWB and RG. The greatest difference was in GWB. They also had higher burnout. Refer to Table 22 for results.

Table 22. Seminary training prepared for dealing with the stressors?

Variable	Mean scores	
	Yes	No
	N=33 (21%)	N=104 (67%)
TH	36.9,	33.9
THS	33.8	30. 1
BO	32.7	40.1
GWB	81.6	72.6
RG	91.4	86.9

<div align="center">**Discussion**</div>

Demographics

The present study focused on examining the correlation between clergy relationships to God, to self and to others, and the health outcomes: TH, Res, GWB, and BO. Several areas of demographics were also explored.

The population studied were Canadian Baptist clergy who were majority male (80%), ordained (74%), married (87%) and from New Brunswick or Nova Scotia (66%). Fifty percent were age 55 or older; most had advanced degrees (67%), were full time (65%), ordained 10 plus years (55%), and in pastoral ministry 10 plus years (68%). Most had two or more previous pastorates (54%), had been in their present pastorates more than 5 years (61%), worked less than 50 hours per week (67%), had one day off a week (44%), and had 20 plus days vacation per year (71%). Most had less than 100 people for an average Sunday attendance (61%), and 50% are in a rural or semi-rural setting.

Scale Results

The **ministry burnout inventory** showed that burnout was a significant factor for 29% (3% extreme), and 39% were bordering on burnout. Only 31% showed no signs of burnout. Burnout is an issue for the majority of participants (68%). This result supports the clergy research that has indicated burnout is a significant issue for clergy. There are three distinct groups of clergy: one group is experiencing the symptoms of burnout in a significant way that is affecting life and ministry, another group is on the borderline of burnout, and a third group is not experiencing burnout.

The Psychological General Well-Being Scale (GWB) showed that sixty-four percent had positive general well-being while 32% were toward the lower end of positive.

A total of 36% of pastors were found to be in *well-being distress*, 22% *moderate*, and 14% *severe*. The majority of participants **(68%)** perceived their GWB to be *low positive* or *in distress*. There are also three distinct groups: those in distress, those with low positive and those who are moderate to high positive.

The Resilience Scale showed that **50%** of pastors have a moderate capacity to respond to adversity with resilience, and only 24% had moderate high-to-high resilience capacity. The higher the resilience, the greater the capacity to respond well and grow from adverse circumstances.

Total Health Scale is a global measure that looked at the participants' perceived level of health in the areas of spiritual, physical, relational, emotional and psychological, family, leadership and ministry health. It found that 58% rated themselves as having moderate to high total health. This left 42% who rated themselves as having low or poor total health. Looking at the data, the lowest mean scores were for physical health and spiritual health.

THS Scale is a global assessment that looked at *satisfaction with health*. Thirty percent were *dissatisfied with health*, and 31% were neither *satisfied* nor *dissatisfied*. This could be a reflection of the angst that clergy have concerning their personal and ministry health.

On the **RG Scale,** 93% of pastors scored moderate (46%) to High (50%). This indicated that the vast majority had a high relationship with God. Only 12% scored low. It could be that this scale has a ceiling effect, causing it not to be sensitive to differences amongst participants. Doolittle (2007) found that a higher spirituality score correlated with greater emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, which are factors in burnout.

The RS Scale found that 60% of participants had a *moderate* to *high* relationship with self, while 40% of pastors had a *low* to *poor* relationship to self.

The Rosenberg SE Scale measures global sense of self worth; 95% of pastors were found to have moderate (41%) to high (54%) SE.

On the **SSM Scale,** which measures the number of people who provide support, 31% of pastors have one or two support people and 37% have three - four support people on average to whom they turn for support. Since most are married, this would most likely include the pastor's spouse, leaving some with few or no other supports. Seventy-six percent of pastors are *very satisfied* to *satisfied* with their social supports (**SSMb**).

When asked the question, "**Have you ever left the pastorate primarily because of difficult circumstances?**", 42% have left a pastorate primarily because of difficult circumstances. This implies relational stress; it could potentially set the stage for future burnout and poor well-being.

Sixty-seven percent responded "no" to the question, "**Has seminary training prepared you for dealing with the stressors of ministry**?". 21% responded "yes" (the question was *not applicable* to 12%). This would imply that many pastors have felt unprepared to deal with the stressors of ministry. This could add to the stress of ministry and the potential for negative well-being. This result also points to the need to research what is required to help prepare pastors for the stressors of ministry.

Summary of Regressions and Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1:

When a pastor's relationship to God, self and others is strong, there is lower burnout, higher well-being, higher resilience and higher total health.

This hypothesis was partially supported. Relationship to self was found to be a significant predictor of all the dependent variables (BO, GWB, Res, TH). SE was significant in predicting Res, GWB, and TH. However, Relationship to God was only found to be a predictor of Resilience. (A ceiling effect is suspected to have impacted the RG variable). Social Support Ministry and Social Support Satisfaction were significant for predicting GWB, but accounted for very little of the variance.

A significant group of pastors were high in relationship to God, high in SE, but low on relationship with self. This could point to issues around theology and the valuing of self. They may not see self as valuable, but only a means to doing ministry.

Hypothesis 2:

General Well-being, Resilience, and Total Health impact the level of burnout. High levels of the variables result in low levels of burnout. Low levels result in high levels of burnout. This hypothesis was supported by multiple regression analysis. GWB, TH and Res were found to be strong predictors of burnout and were negatively correlated. High levels of the variables indicate low levels of burnout and low levels of the variable indicate higher burnout.

Hypothesis 3:

Younger clergy and/or those in the first years of ministry will have lower well-being and higher risk of burnout. This hypothesis was partially supported by analysis of variance. Compared to older clergy, younger clergy were not found to have significantly higher levels of burnout, but did have lower health outcomes in RS, RG and GWB, especially the age group of 35-44 years. One's years in ministry were not found to be a significant predictor.

ANOVA Overview

Most demographics were not predictors of health outcomes. The following were found to be significant:

Gender

Females scored significantly lower than males on the health outcomes TH, GWB and SSMb18. Females scored in moderate distress on GWB, while males scored in lower level of positive well-being. Females' total health was in the low range; for males it was in the moderate range. Males were also more satisfied with social supports than females. These results could be affected by the large number of males (80%) and the small number of female (20%) participants. None the less, it is important to consider the differences in healthy outcomes between females and males.

Age

Younger pastors scored significantly lower than older pastors on health outcomes RS, GWB and RG. The groups 35 - 44 and 25 - 34 scored in moderate distress while other age groups were in the low positive well-being range. On RS, the 35 - 44 and 25 - 34 groups scored low, while older age groups scored in moderate range. The 35 - 44 and 25 - 34 groups scored moderate on RG, and older age groups scored in the high range. Consistently on the significant outcomes, 35 - 44 year old group had the lowest health outcomes and 55 years+ group had the highest outcomes. This is supported by the research.

Type of Ministry

Full time and part time groups had the least satisfaction with TH. Retired part time had the greatest satisfaction. This could be due to the fact that retired pastors have more flexibility and choice about ministry.

Has seminary training prepared you for dealing with the stressors of ministry?"

The Yes group had moderate TH and the No group low TH. Both groups had low satisfaction with TH. The Yes group was low borderline BO and the No group was moderate borderline BO. In the area of GWB, the Yes group were moderate positive GWB, while the NO group was low positive GWB. The Yes group had high RG while the No group had moderate RG. It seems that those who have felt that seminary did not prepare them for the stressors of ministry are experiencing more negative health outcomes than those who felt seminary had prepared them. From the data, one cannot

determine if this is a perceived sense of not being prepared or actually not being prepared. Further study is required to explore this.

Have you ever left pastorate primarily because of difficult circumstances?

The Yes group had low TH, and the No group moderate TH. Both groups indicated *low satisfaction*. The Yes group had low THS and the No group had high low THS. The Yes group had low RS, and the No group moderate RS. SE was *moderate* for the Yes group and *high* for the No group. The Yes group was moderate borderline BO, and the No group was low borderline BO. GWB for the Yes group was in moderate distress and for the GWB for the No group low positive.

The Yes group had moderate RG while the No group had High RG. The Yes group was *somewhat satisfied* and the No group was *satisfied* with SS. It would appear from the analysis of variance that those who have left because of difficult pastorates have been negatively impacted in several areas of wellness compared to those who have not left a difficult pastorate.

Conclusions

The research shows that there are three groups roughly similar in size within the CABC pastor population: a first group is in crisis, a second group is in moderate health, and a third group is in very good health. Relationship with God and Relationship with self were found to be significant. Relationship to self was found to be the most significant. It seems that there may be a disconnect between relationship with God and Relationship with Self. The positive benefits from RG do not always seem to positively impact the leader's RS. The flow of relationship from God does not seem to lead to the blessing of RS. Since RS has been found to be a great indicator of health and wellness and a significant factor in health outcomes, it will be important to further investigate the relationship between RG and RS. Biblically, relationship flows from the Father to the Son, through the Holy Spirit to the leader who is blessed and transformed in a way that should also impact the leader's RS. It is from the leader's RG and RS that the leader then enters into relationship with others. RS could be what is hindering many leaders from not experiencing health and wellness.

BO was found to be high for 29% and another group of 39% are considered on the verge of BO. This is a warning sign that a group of clergy is in crisis. Age was not found to be a factor in BO for this study. GWB was in distress for 36%. TH was found to be low or poor for 42%. TH points to a significant group who, overall, did not see their lives and ministries as healthy. Resilience was not high or low for 50% of pastors; it was low for 24%. The more resilient leaders are, the more likely they will be able to cope with adversity and grow from such experiences. There is a need to build up resilience among pastors. These outcomes are affected by a number of personal, environmental, relational

and spiritual factors. In this study BO was found to be significantly predicted by GWB, TH and Res.

THS maybe describing an angst that clergy have concerning their health. Thirty percent were dissatisfied; 31% were neutral, and only 39% were satisfied or very satisfied with their personal and ministry health.

Relationship with God

RG was found to be high for most, but a significant difference was found between moderate and high levels of RG. From the analysis of variance, RG showed significant differences when compared with age, Left pastorate, and seminary prep conditions. Those who were younger (<44yrs) had a moderate relationship with God while those who were older (45yrs +) had a high level of RG. The 34-44 year group was the lowest, and the 65+ year group was the highest in RG.

For those who had left a pastorate due to difficult circumstances, the level of RG was moderate compared to those who did not leave a pastorate due to difficulty, who had a high level of RG. In the seminary prep category, those who felt that seminary prepared them to deal with the stressors of ministry had a high level of RG compared to those who did not feel prepared by seminary (they had a moderate RG).

From the data, it seems that RG is impacted by age, seminary preparation and the experience of leaving the pastorate. Those who are older (55+) and have felt prepared by seminary for the stressors of ministry (and/ or have not had a bad experience leaving a pastorate) have the highest levels of RG.

Those who are younger, have not felt prepared by seminary and have left a pastorate because of difficulties have a lower level of RG. One possible explanation for why older

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ministers had higher health outcomes than younger leaders could be that those pastors who had low and poor RG and RS did not remain in ministry. Another reason for the age differences could be that the younger group has not yet developed the spiritual tools and disciplines to sustain their relationship, and therefore it is a formation issue—or it could be that the younger group is so busy in ministry that they do not have time, which is also a formation issue. Those who do not feel prepared for the stress of ministry may be more likely to neglect their RG for ministry tasks to compensate for their sense of unpreparedness. Those who have had a negative experience leaving a pastorate may be emotionally wounded by the experience, and this causes them to feel distant from God and neglect their RG. This has implications for seminary and how pastors are formed in their RG as well as how they are equipped to deal confidently with the stressors of ministry. It also has significance for denominations, how pastors are supported during transition, especially when leaving difficult circumstances. It raises the awareness that pastors' RG is impacted by these factors.

Multiple regression found that RG was a significant predictor of Res and a weak predictor of BO.

Relationship with Self

The analysis of variance of RS showed that there were significant differences in the area of Age and Left Pastorate variables. Younger pastors (<45 years) had a low RS while older pastors (55+ years) had a moderate RS. Ages 35-44 had the lowest RS. Those who left a pastorate due to difficulty had low RS, and those who did not had moderate RS. RS is developmental and grows over time. Younger pastors are still developing their identity and RS more so than older pastors. It is important that younger pastors have the

formation tools to help in their development of RS and identity. Those who have left

pastorates due to difficult circumstances could be dealing with issues such as a sense of

failure, stress about what happened, etc., that affect the pastor's RS.

In the multiple regressions RS was found to be the most robust predictor of the

variables GWB, Res, BO and TH, followed by SE which predicted GWB, Res and BO.

This raises awareness of the importance of understanding relationship to self in the

formation process of pastors and in their overall health in ministry. These findings can

help in the pastors' seminary training and in the support pastors receive while in ministry.

Relationship with Others: Social Supports

Multiple regression analysis found that SSMb was a significant predictor of only

GWB. SSM was not a significant predictor. It was surprising that SSM was not as strong

a predictor of health outcomes as RG and RS. From the demographic data, 31% of

pastors had one or two support people and 37% had three to four support people on

average who they turned to for support. In the previous six months, 14% had consulted a

counsellor or psychologist, 28% a spiritual director or mentor, 20% a leadership mentor,

and 42% had consulted a denominational leader. The majority were satisfied with the

supports they had.

Limitations

The present study is limited by the population of CABC pastors studied; therefore, it may not be transferable. There is also a possibility that the pastors who took the survey were not representative, although the sample of 156 was 30% of the population. It is also limited by the instruments used. Some of the instruments were created by the researcher and were not validated. There are also inherent limitations on self-report scales. There was also the potential of ceiling effects on the RG scale. Even with the possibility of such limitations, this study does begin to describe the health and well-being of CABC pastors.

Future Research

This study points to the need for further research. Understanding more about Clergy health and wellness helps to support the formation of more resilient leaders. Some possible areas of future research are: what are the spiritual practices of pastors? How do pastors understand their relationship with God and relationship with self? What is the level of self compassion among pastors? What are the coping strategies that pastors use when faced with adversity in ministry? What expectations do seminary students and pastors have for preparation for the stressors of ministry? What are the differences between the wellness of male and female clergy? What is happening in the experience of younger clergy? How can younger pastors and clergy going through difficult transitions be better supported? What does spiritual resilience look like in pastors? How to build relationship with God and relationship with self among clergy? The impact of experiential learning on resilience? What does training need to include to help form mature resilient spiritual leaders? How does increasing clergy self awareness impact health and wellness?

Chapter 5

Soul Formation: Learning the Art of Belonging

Overview of Chapters 1-4

Soul Neglect: Crisis of Belonging

In chapter one, the journey began with exploring the present crisis among clergy, a crisis that crosses denominations and extends around the world. The major symptoms include burnout, stress related illness, clergy misconduct, and premature departure from ministry as well as poor health and well-being among clergy. Although many pastors appear fine externally, research supports the reality that internally they are in crisis. Some of the most dedicated and faithful leaders are stumbling in ministry. Ministry has changed and people have changed. Leaders are impacted by both the internal factors of who they are and the external factors related to the ministry environment. The effect of burnout is soul erosion, the wearing away of internal resources in the lives of leaders. It affects the whole person. Research studies on burnout and spirituality have found that Christian leaders' relationship with God is a crucial factor in their health and well-being. Many clergy are so overly involved in the *doing* of ministry and caring for others that they are neglecting their own souls. Soul neglect, the inattention to relationship with God, is a major factor in clergy distress. Soul neglect is the crisis of belonging.

Roots of Belonging

Chapter 2, the Roots of Belonging, focused briefly on the theology, anthropology and Christology of belonging, beginning with "God our relational God". God is relational and exists in a Trinitarian community of three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—who are diverse and a loving union of one essence. God is relational within himself and beyond himself with creation. God created humanity—male and female—in his image. Humanity bears God's relational image with the ability to relate to God, self, others and creation. Sin is the destroyer of relationship on all levels and the beginning of alienation and shame. Connection between God and his creation was destroyed by sin. This was the beginning of the crisis of belonging.

God, desiring to be reconciled with his people, sent Jesus, Emmanuel—God with us—to restore connection and belonging. Jesus was born into human community, living and ministering in community. Jesus' life and ministry is the story of God in relationship with his creation. John's Gospel provides the greatest examination of Jesus in relationship with the Father, the Holy Spirit, and humanity. With great detail, John focuses on Jesus' relationship with his disciples. These are of the roots of belonging.

Invitation to Belonging

Chapter 3 focused on Jesus before his arrest and crucifixion and how he intentionally led his disciples through a time of formation and preparation. This was a precaution against stumbling. It was training to prevent the disciples from falling away from their relationship to him. During the private retreat, Jesus modelled and taught the disciples about connecting and belonging to the Father and to each other. Jesus challenged the

disciples to choose between belonging to the world and its values, and belonging to him and kingdom values. The disciples were disoriented by Jesus' teaching and actions, and by Judas' departure. They discovered divine hospitality, the importance of receiving from God, their need for cleansing and how to love one another by keeping one another clean in Jesus. Choosing to belong is the challenge of belonging.

After the foot washing challenge, Jesus invited the disciples to enter into a new spiritual reality of belonging in the Trinity. Jesus taught about the character of "believing, knowing, hearing, and seeing". Through Jesus, they learned to experience God the Father. Jesus declared that through relationship in him they would live at home in the Father's presence, connecting and belonging for eternity. The model for the disciples' relationship with Jesus was the model of Jesus' relationship with the Father. The disciples were invited to live in the same kind of life-giving relationship with Jesus as Jesus existed in with the Father. The blessing of belonging to Jesus was also receiving the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit who would enable the disciples in their belonging. To belong to God, Jesus said, is to live in the flow of divine care—the care of the Father, the sustaining life of the Son and the guidance and empowerment of the Spirit. The flow of divine resources is from God to Jesus through the Holy Spirit to the disciples and from the disciples to the world. This is the flow of belonging.

CABC Research

The clergy of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches were surveyed for a research study. A total of 156 Christian leaders participated. The study found that RS and RG does impact health outcomes in the areas of Burn Out, Total Health, Resilience, and General Well-Being. Younger clergy had the lowest Relationship with God and Relationship with

Self. Those who left pastorates because of difficult circumstances in ministry had lower health outcomes in Total Health, Relationship with Self, Self-esteem, Burn Out, General Well-Being and Relationship with God than those who had not left a pastorate because of difficulty. Those who felt seminary did not prepare them for the stressors of ministry had lower health outcomes in Total Health, Total Health Satisfaction, Burn Out, General Well-Being and Relationship with God than those who felt they were prepared by seminary. Total Health, General Well-Being and Social Supports Ministry Satisfaction health outcomes were found to be higher for males than females. Relationship with Self was found to be the most robust predictor of health outcomes followed by Self-esteem. Total Health, Resilience and General Well-Being were all predictors of Burn Out. Overall results suggest that health outcomes for clergy are affected by their relationship to God, self and others.

The Journey home.

In this chapter we ask the questions:

Who are prodigal pastors? What is the meaning of belonging and home? What is the soul and its relationship to self? What is needed for a well-formed soul? And why do we need a spiritual theology? These are all questions that point the way from soul neglect to soul care, transformation and resilience.

A pastor's confession:

...So often I don't notice ..., there's a deep longing in my heart for more. Of course, we will always have a longing in this life that will remain unfulfilled until the new heaven and new earth. Yet, still, surely there's more even now. My struggle is in not knowing what I can expect from God. And I mean by way of intimacy with him. I think it's also true that I have issues with God, that despite my intellectual understanding of the gospel, of grace, of God's mercy and forgiveness, there's some part of me that doesn't experience his love, that can't quite accept it.

Doing ministry for God has become the addiction of the soul for too many spiritual leaders. They leave their home in God in search of bigger and better opportunities to serve God. They want more ministry and more success. They get a taste of accomplishment, making a difference, being important, being empowered, and being needed. Doing ministry becomes addictive and euphoric. They cannot get enough of the feeling of importance, being successful, being needed, accomplishing goals, being the hero, and the list goes on. These are all good things, but not to be had at the expense of relationship or connection with God. When the ministry "high" is over, pastors are left feeling empty, let down, hungover, and soon must find their next ministry "high" to feel good again for a little while. Each time they gain a little more of the world and lose another piece of their souls. They take on the burden of the world and make themselves a type of saviour. In their frenzy of "activism" for God, Christian leaders lose their way home to God.

Unhealthy leadership can be seen from two perspectives in Jesus' story of the prodigal son (Luke 15):

Prodigal Son Pastor

Ministry can take leaders away from home to the "far country" of dreams, success, accomplishment and importance. There they (like the prodigal, younger son) squander their inheritance. The soul's resources are squandered by doing what it was not called to do—leaving the spiritual leaders bankrupt and empty. Depleted of internal resources, they have sold their souls for the success of the world and soon discover that achievement is food for pigs. It is not the food that nourishes their souls. They have forgotten what true home feels like, looks like, sounds like, and they have forgotten the One who is waiting for them. Some clergy finally come to their senses and begin to find their way home again. Ministry should cause leaders to long for home and the nurture of God's presence, not the opposite.

Older Brother Pastor

In the case of the older brother leader, pastors do not leave and squander their inheritance, but instead they live like slaves in their Father's house. They work compulsively, trying to prove themselves worthy of the Father's love, unable to "be still" and to know and enjoy the Father's presence. Although the older brother leader is in the Father's house, he is not with the Father. There is little or no relationship because he does not know how to receive the Father's love. He lives in fear, like a servant trying to prove his worth, and not as a son already worthy and loved by the Father–not as a child with access to all the Father's love and resources. These kinds of leaders live like slaves of God and not as true sons and daughters. They do not know how to allow themselves to be loved. Their wounded self prevents them from receiving God's grace because of fear, shame, guilt, or something similar.

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Both these "prodigal son" leaders and "older brother" leaders have become blind to the fact that *doing for God* cannot replace the goal of *being in union with God* through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. When pastors forget this fundamental fact, the external world ravishes their internal landscape of deep connection and belonging, cutting their souls off from their source of life and strength in God. The inability of spiritual leaders to rest in God and their lack of wellness are signs of their "activism" and that they are not at home in God. Nouwen explains,

> All Christian action…is a manifestation of the human solidarity revealed to us in the house of God. It is not an anxious human effort to create a better world. It is a confident expression of the truth that in Christ, death, evil, and destruction have been overcome. It is not a fearful attempt to restore a broken order. It is a joyful assertion that in Christ all order has already been restored. It is not a nervous effort to bring divided people together, but a celebration of the already established unity. *Thus action is not activism. An activist wants to heal, restore, redeem, and recreate, but those acting within the house of God point through their action to the healing, restoring, redeeming, and recreating presence of God.* (Nouwen 1986, 35; italics mine]

The actions of spiritual leaders must point to God—his presence and power--not to themselves. Through the actions of healthy godly leaders, the world must see God. It would do well for Protestant clergy to consider a definition from a different Christian tradition. In the Catholic spiritual tradition, *activism* is "… about the danger—psychologically and spiritually—of [clergy] getting over-invested in the work that they are doing, of work becoming a compulsion, of forgetting the larger purposes of the work at hand and the larger meaning of life that brings [them]… to do …[their] particular work (Wang, 2011).

This is what is happening to some pastors within the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. Ministry is becoming an addiction. It is becoming workaholism in the name of Jesus. Such a work ethic denies the relational nature of God and humanity's creation in

His image. God is removed from his rightful place at the centre of life. "Ministry prodigal-ism" does not honour God. It only destroys pastors. The Good News is that prodigal pastors can come home. They can return to the Father's presence.

<center>Home</center>

> A Pastor describes his experience of spiritual homelessness and longing for home,
> *I don't know what to expect of my relationship with Christ. That is, I don't know what, if anything, I can expect to experience. God feels distant. Or I feel distant from him. Right now I feel isolated in my relationship with Christ. I have no accountability, no consistency, no encouragement. I don't know how to cultivate a genuine prayer life. I don't know how to incorporate Scripture into my life. I feel alright intellectually and theologically. I believe, but I feel like my faith has become impersonal. I feel like I'm on my own when it comes to my own walk of faith. More than at any other point in life, I feel lost and unable to find my way. (A pastor)*

Jesus recognized that the disciples' knowledge of him was incomplete and inadequate; it would not keep them from falling away from their relationship with him after he ascended to the Father. Their experience of him was not yet deep enough to sustain them. The disciples did not know, "The perfect love that drives out all fear is the divine love in which we are invited to participate. The home, the intimate place, the place of true belonging, is therefore not a place made by human hands. It is fashioned for us by God, who came to pitch his tent among us, invite us to this place, and prepare a room for us in his own house" (Nouwen 1986, 24-25). The disciples did not know that there was deeper life to be found in God. They did not know the Father as a loving relational God who longed to show them divine love and care. Jesus was going to prepare a home in God for them to belong with him eternally.

Jesus understood that the disciples did not know their way home to the Father's presence. He also knew that if he did not show them how to journey home to God, they

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would forever be lost wandering in the wilderness of spiritual alienation, stumbling and

falling, not knowing their way home. The reality is,

> Jesus, in whom the fullness of God dwells, has become our home. By making his home in us he allows us to make our home in him. By entering into the intimacy of our innermost self he offers us the opportunity to enter into his own intimacy with God. By choosing us as his preferred dwelling place, he invites us to choose him as our preferred dwelling place. This is the mystery of the incarnation. (Nouwen 1986, 25)

Christian leaders' spirituality defines what they consider home and how to get there.

Nouwen writes,

> Here we come to see what discipline in the spiritual life means. It means a gradual process of coming home to where we belong and listening there to the voice which desires our attention. It is the voice of the "first love." St. John writes: "we are to love … because God loved us first" (1John 4:19). It is this first love which offers us the intimate place where we can dwell in safety. The first love says: "You are loved long before other people can love you or you can love others. You are accepted long before you can accept others or receive their acceptance. You are safe long before you can offer or receive safety." Home is the place where that first love dwells and speaks gently to us. It requires discipline to come home and listen, especially when our fears are so noisy that they keep driving us outside of ourselves. But when we grasp the truth that we already have a home, we may at last have the strength to unmask the illusions created by our fears and continue to return again and again and again. Conversion, then, means coming home, and prayer is seeking our home where the Lord has built a home—in the intimacy of our own hearts. Prayer is the most concrete way to make our home in God. (Nouwen 1986, 27)

The belief that the leader must earn God's acceptance and love, when they have already

been chosen by God and are already the object of God's love and acceptance, prevent the

leader from returning home. The fears of not being worthy, not being good enough, being

too broken and not measuring up, keep leaders away from home. So many anxieties

obscure their view of home. They are afraid to trust because they fear being abandoned or

rejected. When pastors are at war with themselves, reject themselves, and have abandoned

themselves, it is hard to bring themselves home. It is not only pastors' relationship with

God that impacts their ability to return home, it is also their relationship with themselves.

Soul Neglect: The Rest of the Story

Soul Neglect is Neglect of Self

Soul neglect is rooted in more than just the neglect of a relationship with God, although that is its primary cause. Soul neglect also includes an abandonment of the emotional psychological, physical and social dimensions of the self and soul.

> 'Soul' … includes an individual's thoughts and feelings, along with heart or will, with its intents and choices. It also includes an individual's bodily life and social relations, which, in their inner meaning and nature, are just as 'hidden' as the thoughts and feelings.
>   The secret to a strong, healthy, and fruitful ministerial life lies in how we work with God in all of these dimensions. Together they make up the real person. They are the inescapable sources of our outward life, and they almost totally determine what effects, for good or ill, our ministerial activities will have. (Willard 2002, 11)

When the leader neglects the soul, it becomes disconnected from God by way of the spirit, the body, the mind, and heart (spirit/will), as well as the leader's social context. God's spirit is no longer giving life to all the parts of the person. The soul is alienated from God. It then seeks elsewhere for its source of life. Other sources can include ministry tasks, busyness, addictions, etc. Soul neglect, therefore, is both a neglect of relationship to God and relationship to self.

Poor Relationship with Self Hinders Belonging and Flow of God.

God's divine resources flow to the soul, the deepest part of the self. If the self is neglected, the soul is neglected, and God's grace cannot reach us. Some time ago the phrase "Loving Jesus, Others, and Yourself spells JOY" was very popular with Christians. The impact of the theology contained in this motto is still with us to this day. What the JOY principle promoted was an ordering of priorities in which one should love

God and others before one's self. The care of the self was the last responsibility of a good Christian. When put in the context of the job description for a Christian leader, this understanding of priorities would have a pastor love God first and then become a channel of God's love to others' souls before allowing it to flow to nourish the leader's soul. This is wrong. The self and the soul are the instruments that God's grace must flow through to reach others. The pastor who is ignoring self is ignoring connection and belonging with God. God's grace must flow into leaders, impacting their souls and identities, transforming the self and then overflow to others in love and ministry. When this does not happen, the soul is neglected, and the soul finds itself looking elsewhere for the nurture it needs, forgetting the God who loves the leader. This could be what is affecting pastors. They could be operating on the JOY principle when they need to operate on the GSO principle of God, soul, and others: receive from God, nurture soul, bless others (Jn 15). Christian leaders honour God with healthy souls and selves that *first* receive and *then* give.

The Great Commandment to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, NASB) describes what must be cultivated in order to care for the soul. "Our high calling and sacrificial service can find adequate support only in a personality totally saturated with God's kind of love, agape (see 1 Cor. 13)" (Willard 2002, 11-12). We are called to love God with our whole beings and this is only possible with God's indwelling presence. According to Willard trying to love without the Holy Spirit is impossible and causes anger and hopelessness. He writes that this is the state of many ministers and their families (Willard 2002). God's grace must transform all the

inner dimensions of the leader's self in order for the leader to be able to produce the fruit that brings God glory. To love God is to receive and be changed by God, so that one can become an instrument of God. A well-formed soul and self glorify God. This is especially true for spiritual leaders.

Soul Neglect is Sin

The harsh reality is that soul neglect is ultimately sin. By definition, sin is failure to live according to God's plan and God's rules (Grenz 2000, 207). God's plan for his spiritual leaders (and humanity) is that they live in his divine care, receiving his divine hospitality through deep connection and belonging via Jesus and the Holy Spirit (Jn 13-16). No matter how good or noble a thing may be, if it weakens the leaders' relationship with God, it is sin. The good is often the enemy of the best. Whatever distracts or hinders pastors from their primary relationship is a sin.

Jesus calls on leaders to allow God to act through them. They are instruments of God's action. Jesus was clear that his words and actions were not his own; they were from the Father. Therefore, if the Son's relationship with the Father is our model of relationship with Jesus, then the leaders' actions are to be the words and actions of Jesus. How can this happen if pastors are not in regular communication with God? When leaders avoid their *relationship with* God to *do for* God, they are sinning.

Leaders are running from God when they are commanded to run to God. The activism of addictive and compulsive ministry keeps pastors in the far country (the world) or in the vicinity of the house of God but not at home **in** God. Rather than being a service to God, pastors' activism is actually living in fear of God and being hostile to God. Activism

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keeps leaders busy so they do not have to listen to God or their own souls. Activism becomes god and the way of seeking to fulfill deepest needs. Sin destroys relationship with God, and it alienates leaders from their true selves. The pastor who is caught up in activism is also running from self. Soul neglect is sin and leads to alienation from God and self. It unleashes ultimately destructive elements into the leader's life. This is the soul emergency among clergy.

Jesus said, "And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry" (Jn 15:27). Leaders only have a testimony when they can testify about being with Jesus.

Leaders cannot lead if they are disconnected from God, their very source of life. When leaders are in relationship with God, they receive internal resources from the flow of God's divine resources. The leaders are empowered to live and lead. When there is disconnection, leaders' lives are eroded from the inside out. When leaders are separated from God, they must seek other sources to fill the void. This leaves pastors susceptible to activism and addictions. Nothing in the material world can supply the real sustenance and nurture that leaders need. (Black 2013, 94)

Dallas Willard believed that "… to live in the good news and from the resources of God, one must develop an understanding and appreciation for the [spiritual] realties and conditions of … all life and reality, … under God's control. … [This] spiritual, invisible reality is in, through, and by God and becomes experiential inside the governance of his kingdom" (Black 2013, 94). Leaders need to experience the Spirit's presence and the Spirit's transforming power to understand and appreciate their need of the Holy Spirit. Leaders must have a spiritual theology that helps them to know God intimately. It is

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God's plan for leaders to dwell in the Spirit. Soul neglect alienates leaders from the Holy Spirit, the presence and power of God.

Soul neglect, if taken to its ultimate conclusion, leads to spiritual death —total separation from God! This is not God's plan for his leaders. God desires spiritual leaders to be deeply rooted in him through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, drawing up into themselves the divine resources and power of God. Pastors, churches, denominations and seminaries can no longer ignore the destructiveness of soul neglect. It is crippling leaders; it is damaging ministry and churches. Soul neglect must be taken seriously if it is to be prevented, treated and eradicated. This is the church's crisis of belonging.

What is needed to help leaders embrace a new paradigm of divine action and not participate in activism? Leaders need a spiritual theology to form them in connecting and belonging in God.

A Spiritual Theology

A pastor's desire for a spiritual guide,

As I have thought about this, as much as having a mentor with whom I could discuss ministry and church matters would be valuable, I feel more isolated spiritually than professionally. In other words, I feel I could use someone who could be more of a spiritual director than mentor. Of more concern to me right now are not my leadership skills but my own walk with Jesus, my prayer life, the work of the Spirit in me. It can be difficult to cultivate one's relationship with God, when you're a pastor. So much time is spent focusing on the spiritual needs of others. And if I can be honest, our denominational tradition doesn't offer much support in this respect to its pastors. We're pretty much left to ourselves to figure out how to walk with Christ, at least practically speaking. (A Pastor)

Christian spirituality is how Christ's followers live out their connectedness and belonging to Jesus and the Trinity. It is about the life of the soul—the person's whole

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being—and how the parts of the self are integrated and rooted in God. It includes

believers' relationship with God, their own souls, and others. The goal of Christian

spirituality is for believers to be at home in God—for them to live in deep connectedness

and belonging in God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit with self and others. However,

the reality is that a number of pastors do not know how to become spiritually connected

or how to find their way home to intimacy in God.

Simon Chan in his significant work, "*Spiritual Theology,*" speaks directly to the need

of evangelical Christianity for a new kind of theological framework.

> The term spirituality is used more frequently than the term spiritual theology.
> Generally, spirituality refers to the kind of life that is formed by a particular type of
> spiritual theology. Spirituality is the lived reality, where as spiritual theology is the
> systematic reflection and formalization of that reality. Spiritual theology can be
> defined both broadly and narrowly. In the broad sense it refers to a certain way in
> which all theological reflections ought to be undertaken. In the narrower sense it
> refers to a distinct branch of theological studies concerned with the principles and
> practices of the Christian life. (Chan 1998, 16)

Spiritual theology is not a common term in Baptist circles; however, it can be a helpful

designation.

Chan believes that theology has lost its rootedness in the spiritual life and its purpose of

leading to godliness. Spiritual theology as a distinct branch of theology is a correction to

bring a balance between the rational and the experiential. "[W]e can only recover the real

function of theology, which is to lead us to godliness by giving the spiritual life a distinct

focus" (Chan 1998, 19).

Chan explains,

> In the narrow sense, spiritual theology is concerned with life in relation to God
> (supernatural life), whereas practical theology is more broadly concerned with action
> in the world. In the broad sense spiritual theology seeks to experience, whereas
> practical theology concerns the practical application of theology. … Thus spiritual
> theology stands between systematic theology and Christian praxis. ... Without the

mediation of spiritual theology, Christian praxis is reduced to activism. The result is what Richard Lovelace calls "the sanctification gap," which he identifies as a major failure in Protestantism. (Chan 1998, 19-20)

Unfortunately, the reality for many clergy is that their Christian praxis—acts which shape and change the world—has been reduced to the dangerous pursuit that Roman Catholic theologians define as *activism*. This is due largely to the absence of a spiritual theology to bring balance. This so called "sanctification gap" named by Richard Lovelace, is showing up as burnout, stress and all the other dangers in leaders lives. "Any "active" Christian who has an adequate spiritual theology … will discover, as Thomas Merton obviously did, that '[h]e who attempts to act and do things for others and for the world without deepening his own self-understanding, freedom, integrity and capacity for love [through contemplation], will not have anything to give to others' (Chan 1998, 21).

The foundation of the present clergy crisis is the fact that Christian praxis has been reduced to *activism. Activism* by itself cannot sustain the demands which the Gospel or ministry make upon Christian leaders. A spiritual theology is needed to combat the soul erosion and neglect that is destroying both the church and the lives of its clergy. It must be a theology that is rooted in Trinitarian relationship and experience, the well-formed soul and self-identity it produces, and the abundant fruit of integrity of purpose and mission for the kingdom of God.

Spiritual Theology definition

Chan shares three definitions of spiritual theology, "As a distinct branch of theological study, spiritual theology has been variously defined. Joseph de Guibert suggests that it 'can be defined as the science which deduces from revealed principles

what constitutes the perfection of the spiritual life and how man can advance towards and obtain it'" (Chan 1998, 18).

What are the revealed principles of well-formed spiritual leaders? How does one become one? There are many pastors today who are stuck in substandard spiritual lives. They know that they need to grow; they have the desire to become well-formed spiritual leaders, but they do not know how to grow or to whom they can turn for help. It has been a long-held assumption that pastors know how to facilitate their own spiritual growth; this is not the reality for many.

Anglo-Catholic K.E. Kirk, in his work, *Some Principles of Moral Theology* defines what Chan calls spiritual theology, "It deals with 'the ideal of Christian character ... the internal dispositions of that character without which its virtues cannot flower ... the means and motives by which its growth can be best fostered ... the hindrances that threaten to spoil the work and the ways in which they can be met and neutralized" (Chan 1998, 18). Kirk's definition raises questions about the formation of spiritual leaders: What is the character of a healthy spiritual leader? His/her characteristics? What are the means and motive that help to foster the growth of leaders? What are the hindrances that threaten the growth of spiritual leaders and jeopardize ministry?

Jordan Aumann, from the Roman Catholic tradition, defines *Spiritual Theology as* "… that part of theology that, proceeding from the truths of divine revelation and the religious experience of individual persona, defines the nature of the supernatural life, formulates directives for the growth and development and explains the process by which souls advance from beginning of the spiritual life to its full perfection" (Chan 1998, 18).

Aumann's definition of spiritual theology raises questions about the need for a spiritual theology of leader formation and wellness for the following reasons:

First, a spiritual theology of leader formation is needed to once again root spiritual leadership in Jesus' understanding of the nature of the supernatural life and the renewal of that life. Questions about the nature of Christian maturity in the spiritual leader need to be considered. What does the life of grace look like for spiritual leaders?

Secondly, What guidelines and directives can help to guide the growth and development of spiritual leaders?

Finally, what is a model that will help to explain the process of maturing as a spiritual leader? What is the intentional formation and growth process for spiritual leaders? The blatant reality is that the goal of well-formed spiritual leaders cannot be achieved if there is no plan for how they are to be formed.

Spiritual theology places its emphasis on the leaders' personal, intimate relationship with God. It is about a lived knowledge that comes through a lived experience. It focuses on how crucial it is for the leader to be in relationship with the Trinity—to be centred in God. Spiritual leadership must be rooted in spiritual theology. It is leadership that is exercised from the centre of intimate relationship and belonging in the Trinity—relationship rooted in the heart and soul of the leader.

Well-Formed Soul

The response to the clergy crisis must not only be a theological one focused on understanding, but a response based on experience—a living relationship with God. It must be founded on a soul response where relationship with God impacts the leader's soul as well as his/her relationship with self and others. True belonging in God impacts both the soul and the identity of the leader. Emotional, psychological, physical, social health and wellness must flow from spiritual health. Self and others are blessed by the overflow from a healthy relationship with God and a healthy relationship with self. Unfortunately, this is not always the reality for pastoral leaders.

In their book, *"Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self and Others"*, Hands and Fehr (1994) share their findings from working over a five year period with clergy who were admitted to their treatment centre. They found that pastors "could not begin to get well without entering into their relationship with God at a new depth of intimacy and surrender." Relationship with God was crucial for the healing of the clergy with whom they worked.

> This primacy of the spiritual in their recovery shows us that what clergy need above all today is a genuine "personal spirituality." That is, they need to find a concrete way of living their relationship to God, so as to maintain balance and integration of head and heart, work and leisure, intimacy and sexuality, prayer and action, professional role and personal life. In effect, they need to achieve a psychologically healthy spirituality." (Hands and Fehr 1994, xvii-xviii)

Although the distress may not be as severe for most, it is at crisis level for about a third of the pastors within the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. The road to healing is the same. A deeper experience of belonging in God, that also transforms relationship with self, is needed.

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Hands and Fehr point to the specific steps that pastors need to take on their journey of spiritual and emotional recovery. It is a holistic process that is intentional, integrated, relational, God-centred, and that addresses the whole person. It is a theologically sound, practical, experiential, and spiritual process. A process that leads pastors into a deeper intimacy with God and the development of a personal spiritual theology. They speak of a radical spiritual conversion. To many Baptists this would sound unbiblical; however, when conversion is understood as the new and deeper awareness and discovery of God and the transformation of self, it is very biblical.

Within evangelical Christianity—and more specifically within Canadian Baptist faith culture—the general assumption has been that once people accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour (conversion), they know their way home to God. This assumption is not correct. "[Dallas] Willard agrees and supports the notion that much of evangelicalism in the modern era has neglected both the nature of spirituality and role of the Holy Spirit in Christian life. … [T]o ignore or remain ignorant of the spiritual nature of humanity and the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God is to risk missing the bulk of the nature of God in total." (Black 2013, 90)

The disciples loved Jesus and knew he was Lord, but they did not truly know him as the way to the Father until Jesus taught them and the Holy Sprit empowered them (Jn 14). There is, indeed, a home in God and an entry into this home. However, learning this is a lifelong process. It requires being formed and shaped to live and belong in God. Coming home, returning home, and staying home require a process of soul recovery and formation. Leaders must recover their souls from the world where they had once made their home, so that they can return home to the Father, their true home, where they belong.

What is needed is a theology of belonging—a spiritual theology to help point the way

for leaders.

Leaders are Searching

> *I sometimes feel like a dam waiting to burst, like I have a ton of*
> *emotional/spiritually/psychological baggage that I need to deal with if I am going to*
> *be more fully myself, both in my personal and my professional life. I feel like I am*
> *living out of fear. Fear of what other people think. Fear of failure. Fear of risking.*
> *Fear of losing who I think I am. Fear that even God doesn't really love me, that I am*
> *always one step away from rejection. I also feel a lot of guilt, guilt for not being good*
> *enough, for not living up to people's expectations. I also feel a lot of anxiety, a real*
> *disquiet in my heart, a discontentment with who I am. I feel like I need to change and*
> *grow but I have no idea how to do that. I feel stuck. I feel like I'm having to pretend I*
> *feel better, stronger, and more assured than I actually am.*
> *My problem is that I have no clue how to address these issues satisfactorily. Or I*
> *am afraid to try, of what such a process might involve and uncover. I am afraid of*
> *how difficult it will be. I am also afraid of the process of dealing with these things*
> *leading to nothing. I am as afraid of no change as I am of actual change.* (A young
> Pastor)

Pastors' fears keep them from God. It is in coming home to God that they discover

that their fears were only a smoke screen to keep them from the Father's love.

Leaders who recognize that they are declining in health and wellness and that their

relationship with God, self and others is deteriorating are wondering how to change and

grow. Burns et al. discovered that the pastors who attended their pastoral leadership

summits, pastoral gatherings to discuss clergy health, were searching to understand their

own spiritual formation. They write,

> Pastors often slip into the trap of building their identities around their roles and
> performance rather than being beloved children of God and coheirs with Christ.
> Pastors need to pursue growth in their understanding of and feelings concerning
> God's acceptance. They also need to focus on their daily personal relationship with
> Jesus Christ. The sad fact is that, for most of us in ministry, our work for Christ
> comes before our relationship with Christ. We know in our minds that healthy
> ministry is an overflow of abiding in Christ. We know that godly leadership is an

extension of one's relationship with God. But when push comes to shove, we usually put mission in front of relationship.

    If the goal of ministry is seeing people transformed into the image of Christ, then the spiritual transformation of pastors is preeminent (see Colossians 1:28-29). As the Pastors Summit participants reflected on the theme of spiritual formation, they focused on two particular areas. First, they asked, 'How can ministry leaders review and evaluate their spiritual formation?' Second, on the basis of this evaluation, they asked, 'How can ministry leaders pursue their own spiritual formation?'
(Burns, Chapman and Guthrie 2013, 32-33)

Leaders are unconsciously searching for a spiritual theology that will take them deeper in their experience of belonging to God, deeper in embracing their own souls and deeper in connecting with the souls of others. Denominations, seminaries and churches have assumed that pastors know how to belong to God, when the reality is they do not know their way home to the loving heart of God. It is a relational struggle more than a lack of information. Pastors have not been taught that their spiritual lives must grow with their leadership. Their capacity for intimacy with God must grow. The spiritual life with which they began their ministry was not enough to carry them through. They do not know how to integrate what they know of God into lived experience. These are faithful leaders who love God but have not learned how to experience what they have believed. Their souls have not been formed in belonging. Home is no longer real to them. They are alienated from God and their true selves. They are disconnected from the souls of others. In order to be leaders who have integrity of soul, pastors must know their own souls at rest in God.

To recover their souls, clergy must find their way home through connection and belonging, and believing and trusting (John 14:1) that God does love them and that he has chosen them. It is not their actions that saves them, but God's action. Our ministry leaders need a spiritual theology. They must have a well-articulated spiritual theology of

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how to become mature, resilient, spiritual "shepherds" who are deeply connected to God, self and others. They need an intentional process of spiritual leader formation and wellness. Maturity and freedom in Jesus does not just happen. It is the result of deliberate faithful action rooted in Jesus.

In chapter 4, the results of the research pointed to significant issues that are facing the clergy of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches.

An Overview of relevant results:

- About a third of pastors are in distress and have poor health and wellness.

- 50% of pastors have moderate resilience and 25% low resilience.

- The general well-being for 36% of pastors is in distress and 22% of pastors have low positive well-being.

- Burnout is high for 29% and borderline for 39%.

- Younger clergy (<45yrs) are more likely to have lower health outcomes in relationship to self, relationship to God and general well-being than older clergy (45yrs+)

- Difficult pastorates are negatively impacting the well-being of pastors. Pastors (45%) who had to leave a pastorate because of difficulties reported health outcomes with significantly lower levels of relationship with self and God, lower self-esteem, more burnout, less total health and general well-being then those pastors (55%) who did not have this experience.

- Not feeling prepared negatively impacting the well-being of Pastors. Those pastors (67%) who felt they were not prepared for the stressors of ministry by

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seminary reported health outcomes with significantly lower levels of relationship with God, general well-being, total health and total health satisfaction then those (21%) who felt seminary did prepare them.

- Female pastors (20%) had lower health outcomes than males in total health, general well-being and social support satisfaction.

Pastors are stumbling under the weight of ministry. They are being negatively impacted. What can be done to improve the resilience and health of pastors? The present research points to the growing threat of soul neglect for clergy and the church. It will continue to be a significant threat as long as there is an "activism mentality" concerning the role of leadership and the nature of the church. The counter balance to this destructive thinking is a relational perspective on God self and others that focuses on what it means to belong in God, to embrace one's soul and to connect with the souls of others. What does this look like in spiritual leadership?

On the topic of spiritual leadership, Alan Nelson writes in *Spirituality and Leadership,* "The needs of the twenty-first century call for us to lead with power and wisdom beyond our own resources. Now, more than ever, we need courageous men and women who understand what it means to lead from their minds and souls" (Nelson 2002, 21). Leaders need to learn to lead from the depth of who they are. Eddie Gibbs writes, "The spiritual superficiality that has characterized so much church leadership in recent decades has resulted in spiritually shallow churches. Congregational members seldom rise above the level of their leaders" (Gibbs 2000, 122). He continues with the observation, "… look at the character, integrity and spirituality of the leader. The basic question is not how they perform but how well they know God and whether the way in

which they live and serve the church reflects that intimacy" (Gibbs 2000,120). It is not the leaders' outward appearance but it is the condition of the souls that determine their effectiveness as spiritual leaders. Spiritual leaders lead from the centre of a God-oriented, well-ordered and connected soul that is significant. This is what some writers refer to as being centred or centredness. Peter Koestenbaum, a philosopher of business, in his book, *The Heart of Business,* "... argues effective leaders are centred in their souls. They have come to peace with the questions of identity, survival, and meaning. It is this centeredness that makes others listen to what they have to say, that gives them credibility" (Wright 2009,13). A spiritual leader has a strong sense of identity rooted in God. Kouzes and Posner

> show that people follow leaders because they see a quality of character, a credibility worth trusting. People respond to this centeredness, this quality of character. As Koestenbaum observes, 'Centeredness is what makes people seem powerful, and its absence is what makes people perceive themselves and be perceived by others as ineffective and even impotent. ... Centeredness is the source of authentic faith, belief and realistic self confidence.' (Wright 2009,13-14)

Banks & Leadbetter in *Reviewing Leadership*, write, "An effective and comprehensive biblical theology of leadership must draw on the person and work of Christ, the nature and activity of the Trinity, and the way biblical figures were led by God to develop into effective coworkers with him" (1999, 93). The church needs leaders who know intimacy with God and have an identity shaped by God.

Spiritual theology can help to form strong mature resilient spiritual leaders: *strong*, because they are empowered by the Holy Spirit and rooted in the internal resources of God; *mature*, because they have integrity and real experience with God; *resilient*, because they can cope in and grow through adversity; *spiritual*, because they live a life of connecting and belonging in God, embracing their own souls and connecting them to the

souls of others; and a *leader*, because they have the ability to facilitate others in this same connecting and belonging to God, self and others.

What is needed?

- A process of formation

- A Safe environment

- Trustworthy Guide(s)

- Willing participants

<p style="text-align:center">Process for Soul Formation</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Jesus' Formation Process</p>

Ken Blanchard writes that "after studying leadership for over thirty years, I came to the conclusion that Jesus is the greatest leadership model of all time." (2004, 102) How did Jesus facilitate the disciples? What can we learn?

Chapter 3 explored Jesus' relationship with the disciples. He facilitated a formation process with his soon-to-be spiritual leaders, the disciples who received his upper room discourse in John's Gospel. It was a process that was relational, spiritual and challenging. Jesus gathered the little community of his leaders, created a space for learning and growing, facilitated a process and then modelled it. The goal of the process was that they would become resilient spiritual leaders deeply connected in God.

Spiritual resilience is to be empowered by God to cope and thrive through adversity. Trinitarian relationship is the source. Divine care and resources flow from God to the leader. Jesus is the model of the mature, well-formed, strong, spiritual leader. He taught

his disciples the principles of spiritual resilience. Healthy spiritual leaders by definition have this spiritual hardiness, for it is a mark of a mature Christian leader and it is the foundation for other forms of resilience. Spiritual resilience is cultivated through adverse and challenging experiences; spiritual warfare is often the testing ground of spiritual resilience.

Jesus provided a private, safe retreat in which the disciples could struggle and grow into resilience. Jesus challenged them. He spoke of the cost and the dangers, challenged their loyalties, disoriented them from the world, acknowledged their deep emotions, confronted their sense of self-sufficiency, and changed their identity. It was not an easy process. In fact, it was a painful one. Jesus also gave his disciples divine resources, taught them how to cope, connected them with new supports and relationships. Jesus was building the disciples in spiritual resilience. It was a quality that would flow from their belonging to God and carry them through great adversity and empower them to stand firm. They would stumble, but they would not fall. The lives of the disciples had been transformed. They became mature, strong, resilient leaders who went on to build the kingdom of God with boldness and courage. The church and the world need such spiritual leaders.

<div align="center">What does a formation process look like?</div>

Cycle of Grace

Haas and Hudson developed a model of a formation process called the *Cycle of Grace* that describes the formation of Jesus. They expanded on the work of clinical psychologist Frank Lake. This was a conceptual model called the dynamic cycle. It represented his

attempt to correlate the dynamics of a well-functioning personality and spiritual health based upon the life of Jesus Christ. Haas and Hudson redeveloped the model by adding their own understanding of the life of Jesus in the Gospels and called it the *Cycle of Grace*. They specifically apply the model to pastors. (Haas and Hudson 2012)

They describe *The Cycle of Grace*, based on the life of Jesus, has four dimensions: Acceptance, Sustenance, Significance and Fruitfulness. It focuses on how Jesus was continually resourced by the Father through the Spirit for his ministry. They explain how many pastors are caught in the cycle of works. These pastors are trying to be fruitful so they can be significant. They are use this false significance to create a sense of personal significance and to earn God's love and acceptance. The *cycle of works* is the opposite of the *Cycle of Grace* and leads to burnout. They emphasize that the *Cycle of Grace* must begin with receiving God's grace.

Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:28-30 MSG)

Spiritual formation is a whole life process of shaping human spirit and character. It is obedience to Christ; a matter of the Spirit; living life from the reality of God; supernatural life from above; and the transformation of the self, including thought life, feelings, relationships, body and soul. Biblical spirituality is living by grace. (Willard 2006, 51-63)

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Based on Hass and Hudson's cycle of grace, I have created a *Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation*. It adds three stages to the Cycle of Grace: Disorientation and awareness at the beginning and Fallowness at the end (see Figure 17). It is a process to help leaders understand and experience belonging. It is based in John 13-16. It is a challenging process of God through the Holy Spirit that forces the leader to choose the world or the kingdom. It is an invitation to belong to God. It is a time of disorientation, struggle, confusion, and breaking. However, it is also a time of discovery, healing, growth, blessing, empowerment and being loved. It is learning the art of belonging.

The stages are:

Disorientation

The process often begins with God allowing leaders to be disoriented in some way from their world. They are no longer feeling secure and comfortable. There is discomfort, unrest and sometimes confusion.

Awareness

The leaders become aware of a need in themselves. Sometimes they know what the need is and can articulate it, other times they are only aware they are in deep need. Awareness of brokenness and need for healing becomes clearer. God uses the sense of need to help the leader see their need for him. This can lead to a deeper revelation of the truth of who God is and who the leader is in relation to God. (This is an awareness of their disintegrated souls and their need to belong to God.).

Acceptance

The leaders are confronted with their deep need for God's grace in some way: forgiveness, salvation, mercy, etc. The leaders can choose to surrender and accept God's grace or find some substitute to fill the void such as addiction. When the leaders accept God's grace, God reveals himself in some way that causes the leaders to see themselves and God more clearly. When leaders accept God's offer of deeper relationship by allowing God to begin to form and shape them., they discover God's love and acceptance. They experience their chosenness.

Sustenance

As God begins to work, the leaders become even more aware of their need to be sustained, nurtured and rooted in God. The leaders grow in their desire to abide in Jesus and to depend on God. It is the time of God's discipline. The leaders become open to God's care through his loving discipline. They begin to relinquish their independent spirit and learn to be more dependent on God. This leads to a greater awareness of inadequacy and weaknesses. The Holy Spirit becomes more real and his guidance is accepted. The leaders begin to shape their lives around being sustained in God. They grow in trust in God. They experience healing and God forming them. They are more aware that real life comes from God. The Lord is their strength. They shape their lives around these truths.

Significance

God's formation becomes transformation and the leaders' self is transformed. They are being equipped and empowered by the Spirit. Their identities in Christ are

strengthened. They see themselves as an important part of God's kingdom and Christ's body. They develop a new identity, a sense of God's call and purpose. They receive God's call and begin to grow into the call. The leaders experience a testing of their call and identity. Spiritual warfare becomes more real. A desire for thanksgiving and praise grows. The leaders are experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit integrating their souls— bringing wholeness.

Fruitfulness

God provides opportunity for the leaders to fulfill their call and to express their gratitude and thanksgiving through some form of service and blessing others. Their service bears fruit through others growing in relationship with God. They experience others praising God because of the leader's service, ministry and mission. The leaders are poured out for the sake of others and for God's glory. The leaders facilitate the growth of others. Others affirm the gifts of the leaders. Lives are transformed. Like a fruitful branch ready to be harvested, God harvests the produce of the leaders' lives of grace.

Fallowness

The leaders experience exhaustion, emptiness, and a sense that they have given all they have to give. They have been harvested and stripped bare. This is the place of fallowness—the place of rest. It is the place of silence and solitude before God. It is a time of recollection, reflection, debriefing, and evaluating—a time of listening to God for his message for the leader. The focus is on the leaders' souls and well-being. It is also a time of waiting. It can be a dark night of the soul kind of experience of what feels like darkness—the leaders may not be able to see ahead. It is a desert experience in which

they feel very dry or dead—as if something has died or been lost in the leader. It can be a time of grieving because a long-sought-after goal has been accomplished or not been accomplished for the kingdom.

Awareness

Eventually some new awareness of God and or self comes to the surface. It is the new seed that must be planted to begin the process of growth and harvest all over again.

<div align="center">Resilience and the Leader Formation</div>

The *Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation* can be experienced on both a micro level (daily or weekly experience, e.g. Sabbath as fallowness) and a macro level (yearly or seasons of life). It is a tool to help leaders pay attention to God and their souls and identify what God is desiring to do in them and through them. Formation shows that life has a rhythm and that it moves through different stages. It provides a way for reflecting on where leaders are in their lives.

The formation process is one of growing in resilience. It involves being challenged by God and experiencing struggle. Allain-Chapman in her book, *Resilient Pastors*, writes about a pastoral theology of resilience. She defines resilience as the**,** "[P]ositive capacity developed by people who are open & motivated to change in the face of adversity" (Allain-Chapman 2012,15).   It is a,

> … process of coping with adversity, change, or opportunity, in such a way as to identify, fortify, and enrich resilient qualities in a person. Resilience recognizes that adversity affects people so that the response to adversity cannot be pretense at invulnerability or invincibility. Resilience necessitates change, change *that strengthens.* (Allain-Chapman 2012,17-18)

The process of becoming resilient forces leaders to be real and live from the depth of

who they are. Allain-Chapman identifies the three significant themes of struggle, self and

relationships as significant for understanding a pastoral theology of resilience,

> No one can develop resiliency without engaging in the *struggle with adversity*. That *strengthening is gained in struggle*, rather than perhaps by passivity or acquiescence *to fate or God, …*. The significance of the *sense of self* in resilience literature—encompassing self awareness, self-esteem, agency, and inner locus of control, and inner life and self discipline—needs to be explored for pastoral theology, as does the *importance of relationships*. (Allain-Chapman 2012, 20; italics mine)

Leaders cannot become resilient spiritual leaders unless they are willing to grow in

relationship to God, discover self in God, and struggle in adversity with the resources of

God. They also need safe spaces to learn, struggle, experience and process.

Figure 17 Rhythm of Grace & Soul Formation

A Safe Environment

A space where,
In prayer we discover what we already have. You start where you are and you deepen what you already have, and you realize that you are already there. We already have everything, but we don't know it and we don't experience it. Everything has been given to us in Christ. All we need is to experience what we already possess.
Thomas Merton (Hart 1975)

Merton describes the disconnect between what God has already been given in Christ through belonging and the reality of pastors' experiences. By experiencing, mental content becomes knowing in the deep, scriptural sense. Many leaders are too busy to take the necessary time to truly experience God and allow him to form them. Leaders need to create space for God in their lives. They need to understand what making space for God feels like.

Environment is important for the Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation. Jesus knew that. He set the scene for his formation process in the upper room. He and his disciples retreated to a safe place away from crowds and distractions. There they were in community together. The environment allowed them to have two levels of experience, individual and communal. Leaders rarely retreat from their busy lives to be with God without interruption for extended periods of time. They also rarely have deep spiritual community with other leaders. Both experiences are necessary to know God deeply. Jesus modelled this in his life.

It is important to intentionally develop environments where clergy are free to be themselves. A place where they can learn and grow in personal, spiritual and professional formation through opportunities: to learn how to identify personal and professional issues and crises, how to talk about their real selves and process painful life experience, to be challenged in spiritual and psychological growth, to learn to integrate human struggles

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and spiritual life, and to find support and guidance towards formation and wellness. (McDevitt 2010,7)

It is important that safe spaces to commune with—and respond to—God and self be created for pastors. This is not only a physical space. It is a spiritual, emotional, psychological and relational space that is also safe in all these ways. It is intentional space that is created and developed. Such space needs to have trustworthy leadership for the journey and willing participants.

Trustworthy Guide(s)

Clergy who are struggling to find their way do not know how to go deeper. They assume that they must go it alone, that they should know how to find their way without any help. Of course, it is the Holy Spirit who is the one who guides to God. However, God does use others to help along the way. Leaders need the experience of being led by others. When pastors are always the leaders they do not experience what it means to receive from others. This stunts their growth. As with the disciples in the upper room, receiving during the *Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation* confronts pastors with their true selves and vulnerability. It opens them up, breaking the shell so that the seed of the soul can grow. It is important to have others who are just a step a head and others who are where they are on the journey. These others know the way and can help guide. This is experiential knowledge, not just from an intellectual understanding. Such guides have had the courage to allow themselves to experience the Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation. Trustworthy guides are also on the journey, learning and growing. Most importantly, they are called by God to guide others.

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Willing Participants

The *Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation* is not for all leaders. It is a significant investment of time, money and energy. Participants would need to be leaders who know and feel the need for change and are willing to make space in their lives to work towards change. This type of process challenges potential participants to count the cost, set priorities, make sacrifices, and trust God. It takes courage to come face-to-face with God, with their true selves and the true selves of others. It is not a process that one convinces people to take; it is participation in a process where God must lead or convict. It is also only a stage in the journey with God, so participants need to be leaders who are on a spiritual pilgrimage that is life-long.

Within this process, there is an expectation of life change. Not all leaders are at a place where they are ready to change even though they may want to change. It would be important to assess if leaders are ready to trust God to make change.

Summary & Recommendation:

The Art of Belonging Soul Formation Community

The following is an example of what the *Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation* process could look like. This may be impossible because of the amount of investment needed; however, it is vital that something different be offered in addition to what is now available to Christian leaders since present programs are not meeting the deeper needs of their souls.

This is a significant time commitment of four hours per week for prayer, assignments and reading, a monthly two-hour online group, a monthly meeting with a spiritual director/ mentor plus the in-residence retreats. Therefore, the leader could not be engaged in studies at the same time.

9-12 months Formation Process for Pastors

- **Focus:**
    - A process of soul formation and wellness for pastors. The purpose is to help facilitate the growth of mature resilient spiritual leaders using what the leader brings, including their brokenness. Focuses on the leader bring their whole self to God and learning to facilitate own relationship with God, Self and others.

- **Who?**
    - Group of six-twelve pastors

- o Two-three facilitators (male and female, at least one would be a Christian counsellor or psychologist)

- o Mentors would be pastors, counsellors, spiritual directors, etc. They would be given training.

- **Process**

  - o Orientation and four intensive sessions (months 1,3,5,7,9)

    - orientation retreat one - two days (with mentors)

    - three-day soul discovery and awareness retreat

    - three-day retreat (Acceptance God's Grace) (1 day silent)

    - four-day retreat (Sustenance & Significance) (2 days silent)

    - five-day retreat (Fruitfulness & Fallowness) (2 days Silent)

- Monthly spiritual direction /mentoring (one on one)

- A two-hour long monthly or bimonthly check-in group online (During the months without retreats)

- Reading and assignments (including spiritual exercises)

- Entrance interview (not all applications accepted)

- Health and wellness assessment (various tools)

  - o Assessment of the leader's spiritual, emotional/psychological, physical, social, vocational wellness using various tools.

    - E.g., EQI, GWB, BO, Res, Spiritual wellness inventory, etc.

- Follow-up after the process with retreats.

- **Potential Content**

  - Experiential learning

  - Learn and experience Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation

  - Growing healthy Relationship with God, self and others

  - Soul Focus: Heart, Mind, Body and Social

  - Develop tools to be spiritually resilient

  - Develop personal spiritual theology

  - Discover own soul

  - Learn healthy emotional spirituality

  - Process life experiences

  - Experience God individually and in community

  - Practice formation tools

Potential Reading:

  - *A Work of Heart* by Reggie McNeal

  - *Anatomy of the Soul,* and *The Soul of Shame* by Curt Thompson

  - *Battlefield of the Mind* by Joyce Meyer

  - *Cycle of Grace* by Hudson and Haas

  - *Daring Greatly* by Brené Brown

  - *Discernment of Spirits* by Fr. Tim Gallagher

  - *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality,* and *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* by Peter Scazzero

  - *Humilitas* by John Dickson

- *Leadership Challenge Christian Reflections* by Kouzes and Posner

- *Love is a Choice (codependency)* by Minirth and Meier

- *Making of a Leader*, and *Connections* by Clinton

- *NLT Life Application Bible*

- *Powers, Weakness* and *the Tabernacling of God* by Marva Dawn

- *Prayer Foster* by Richard Foster

- *Relational Leadership* by Walter Wright

- *Resilience* by Southwick and Charny

- *Resilient Ministry by* Allain-Chapman

- *Spirit of the Disciplines,* and *The Great Omission, Renovation of the Heart* by Dallas Willard

- *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Calhoun

- *Spiritual theology* by Simon Chan

- *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy* by Hands and Fehr

- *The Courage to Teach* by Parker Palmer

- *The Transforming Friendship: A guide to Prayer* by James Houston

- *The Way of the Heart,* and *Life Signs* by Henri Nouwen

- *Theology for the community of God* by Stanley Grenz

To be a successful initiative, this process would have to be supported by both the Acadia Divinity College (ADC) and the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. It could be a joint venture between the two institutions as a leader formation initiative. Participant churches would have to support the release of time so that their pastors could participate.

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Intentional experiential processes that are focused on the formation of the soul, the whole person—heart, mind, body and social—are needed to form, equip and empower mature resilient spiritual leaders. This is just one example.

Soul Neglect and the Church

Leaders are not the only ones affected by soul neglect, the whole church community can be affected.   It is the result of the toxic environment and system that can be created in the church. Churches can be systems that encourage and practice soul neglect. Activism is not only an issue for pastors, it is an issue for the church. Relationship with God, self and others is also being neglected on a corporate level. Ministry for God has unfortunately displaced relationship with God in too many church communities. Soul neglect has become the pattern that is most often modelled by pastors and witnessed, experienced, and at times even encouraged by the church community. Both leaders and churches are responsible for soul neglect, and are victims of soul neglect.

Grenz (1999) in his article, *Belonging to God: The Quest for a Communal Spirituality in the Postmodern World*, explores the modern search for identity, relationship and belonging. The challenge for the church "… is to articulate and live out the belief that life in relationship with God constitutes 'true spirituality'" (46). We have unintentionally defined 'true spirituality' by *what we do* for God and not *who we are* in relationship with God, self, and others. God is our *telos* (45) *and our home.* "We are to be a community of divine love, a people bound together by the love present among us through God's Spirit. And as a result we find in relationship [to self and] with each other true belonging, for together we belong to God in Christ our Lord through the Spirit who is among us." (51)

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The church as community must also struggle with the alarming reality of soul neglect and its soul erosion. As with pastors, a new paradigm of divine action is needed to confront this crisis of community. One based on the upper room pattern that Jesus taught his disciples (Jn 14-15). The *Rhythm of Grace and Soul Formation* can also be a helpful tool on the corporate level for spiritual communities. Many spiritual communities are experiencing disorientation—a loss of identity and purpose in a fast changing world. This can be an opportunity to be reoriented to God, by becoming more aware of God and need for God. It can also help in rediscovering dependence on God for life and sustenance. This leads the community to find its identity and significance in God. From this flows empowerment and fruitfulness in ministry and mission. Fallowness, a time of recognizing emptiness and the need to rest in God, can help the community to once again recognize its need to be filled with God.

The process requires a safe environment, willing participants and trustworthy guides. The church needs to become the *safe environment* of spiritual community where all those who enter can experience emotional, spiritual, physical and relational health and safety. Once again the process can only occur with willing participants. Part of the community's task is to help members to become *willing participants*. The Church also needs *trustworthy guides* who can lead in the process of soul formation. This points to the crucial need for *Pastors who are well-formed resilient spiritual leaders*.

Conclusions

In conclusion, *the art of belonging* is the willingness to learn to *live our chosenness* from the depths of our souls rooted in God. It is courage to *embrace our own souls* and selves through Jesus and the Holly Spirit, and it is the courage to *connect with the souls of others* in ministry and mission leading them into true belonging.

It is an invitation to courageously follow Jesus, on the *journey to becoming mature well-formed resilient spiritual leaders and spiritual communities, all for the glory of God.*

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life.
No one can come to the Father except through me.
If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is.
From now on, you do know him and have seen him!" (John 14:6-7 NLT)

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous!
Do not be terrified or dismayed (intimidated),
for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9 AMP)

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CABC Clergy / Pastor Research Survey 2014

Survey Introduction

Letter from CABC Executive Minister:

Dear CABC Pastor / Chaplain,

 I am writing in support of this important research project rev. Cheryl Ann Beals is undertaking with our CABC pastors as part of the fulfillment of the Doctor of Ministry degree at Acadia University. Cheryl Ann is also Director of Clergy Formation & Wellness for the CABC. Her research will inform her work by giving a better understanding of the relational health and wellness of our pastors. This will help us in understanding the needs of our pastors and addressing those needs. We hope you will choose to participate in this significant research.

Dr. Peter Reid,

Executive Minister CABC

Letter from Researcher:

Dear Pastor/ Chaplain:

Research based on Canadian clergy is rare. Most often we rely on American statistics and research. This is a CABC study that explores clergy wellness and clergy relationships.

Pastors active in the ministry of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches are invited to participate. Participation in this study is voluntary. It is an opportunity to contribute to Atlantic Baptist Clergy research. The more pastors who participate, the more significant the information and the clearer the picture of the health and wellbeing of Atlantic Baptist pastors we will be. All surveys are anonymous. Individual pastors will not be identified. It is completely anonymous. The purpose is to use the information to help support and

minister to CABC clergy in general. The survey is open to anyone actively serving in a pastoral role in the CABC. This includes ordained pastors and non-ordained pastors, Chaplains and Lay Pastors. The survey takes approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. Completing the survey and submitting it is giving your consent to participate in this research study. Because the survey is anonymous once your answers have been submitted they cannot be withdrawn.

The survey is being done through the Canadian company Fluid Survey. Data will be securely stored in password protected files in Canada accessible only by the researcher and associates. The results will be available by early 2015. A summary will be made available to pastors of the CABC. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this vital research study. You are helping to broaden our understanding and ability to assist you and other pastors. If you have any questions you can contact me at cherylann.beals@baptist-atlantic.ca or (902)635-1922 ext. 129 (messages). Or if you require assistance you can also contact   Nova Scotia or   in New Brunswick. If you have concerns regarding possible ethical issues in this research, you may contact the Ethics Board Review Chair at Acadia University, Dr. Stephen Maitzen: Email: smaitzen@acadiau.ca. telephone 902.585.1407. Consenting to participate in this survey does not in any way waive your legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

Yours in Ministry,

Rev. Cheryl Ann Beals

Director of Clergy Formation & Wellness

Doctor of Ministry Student Acadia University

Demographics personal

Gender?

○ Male

○ Female

What is your age?

○ Under 18

○ 18-24

○ 25-34

○ 35-44

○ 45-54

○ 55-64

○ 65 or Above

Marital Status?

○ Single (Never Married)

○ Married

○ Separated

○ Divorced

○ Remarried

○ Widowed

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

○ Grades 9 through 11 (Some high school)

○ Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate)

○ Some college or technical school

○ Community college graduate

○ Some University

○ University graduate

- ○ Graduate School (Advanced Degree)
- ○ Other, please specify... _____

Spouse employed outside of the home?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not applicable

Household income covers monthly bills?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Location of present ministry?

- ○ Rural
- ○ Semi-Rural
- ○ Town
- ○ Urban / City
- ○ Not applicable

Sunday morning church service average regular attendance

If more than one service, what is the combined average regular Sunday morning attendance

- ○ Not applicable
- ○ 24 or less
- ○ 25-49
- ○ 50-74
- ○ 75-99
- ○ 100-124
- ○ 125-149
- ○ 150-174

- ○ 175-199
- ○ 200-224
- ○ 225-249
- ○ 250-274
- ○ 275-299
- ○ 300+

Church Paid Staff?

check all that apply to your ministry setting.

- ☐ No other paid staff
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Receptionist
- ☐ Associate pastor
- ☐ Executive pastor
- ☐ Family Life Pastor
- ☐ Visitation Pastor
- ☐ Youth pastor
- ☐ Janitor / care taker
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____

Demographics - Ministry

Ministry Designation / Title

- ○ Ordained CABC Pastor / Rev.
- ○ Ordained Pastor / Rev.
- ○ CABC Recognized Lay Pastor
- ○ Chaplain, If yes, type _____
- ○ Pastor
- ○ other _____

Type of ministry

please fill in the blank

- ○ Full time ministry
- ○ Part time ministry
- ○ Bi-vocational
- ○ Retired (part time ministry)

Years in Ministry

Number of years ordained? [   ]

Number of years in pastoral ministry? [   ]

Number of previous pastorates? [   ]

Number of years in present ministry? [   ]

number of years in chaplaincy? [   ]

number of years in ministry other? [   ]

Average number of hours worked weekly in ministry?

- ○ less than 20
- ○ 20-29
- ○ 30-39
- ○ 40-49
- ○ 50-59
- ○ 60-69
- ○ 70+

Time off

write number of days

Number of days taken off per week

How many days of vacation did you take in the last 12 months?

How many total vacation days do you have available each year?

How many sick days in the last 3 months?

Have you ever left a pastorate (church/ ministry) primarily because of difficult circumstances?

○ Yes

○ No

○ not applicable

Do you feel that your seminary training prepared you for dealing with the stressors of ministry?

○ Yes

○ No

○ not applicable

Demographics - Health & Support

What is your level of health in the following areas?

	1 Unhealthy	2	3	4	5	6	7 very healthy
Spiritual health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Relationship health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emotional psychological health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Family health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Leadership health	○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○				
Ministry health	○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○				

How satisfied are you with the health of the following areas?

	1 very unsatisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 very Satisfied
Spiritual health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Relationship health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emotional psychological health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Family health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Leadership health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ministry health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Who are the people who make up your support network?

Write the number of people from each category who are part of your support network. Count each person once according to their most significant role. Have you received support from the following categories of people who make up your support network? Count each person once according to their most significant role.

Spouse

Family

Friends

Other pastors

Church staff

Church Leaders (Deacons, Board Chair, etc.)

Congregation members

Denominational leaders

Counsellor or psychologist, etc.

Medical professionals

Spiritual director/mentor(s)

Leadership Mentor(s)/ coach(es)

Other

Have you received support from the following categories in the last 6 months?

	Yes	No
Spouse	○	○
Family	○	○
Friends	○	○
Other Pastors	○	○
Church Leaders (e.g. Deacons, board chairs, etc.)	○	○
Church staff	○	○
Congregation members	○	○
Denominational leaders	○	○
Counsellor or psychologist, etc.	○	○
Medical professionals	○	○
Spiritual director/mentor	○	○
Leadership Mentor(s)/ coach	○	○
Other	○	○

Name other support people you have used in last 6 months

Relationship with God

Please read the following statements about your relationship with God. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree, Choose the number that best describes you.

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat Disagree	4. Neutral	5. somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly Agree
1. I know I am loved by God.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. I feel loved by God.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. God seems far away.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. When I pray I feel God's presence.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. I rely on God to help me throughout the day.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. I read scripture to connect with God.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. I have had visions or dreams from God.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. I know what my spiritual gifts are.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. I am aware when the Holy Spirit is speaking to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. I believe I am a friend of Jesus.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. It is hard for me to believe God has forgiven me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

12. I'm intentional about my relationship with God.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. God is very real to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. I feel called by God to be a minister.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. I know how to be still with God.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Relationship with Self

Please read the following statements about your relationship with yourself. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree, Circle the number that best describes you.

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat Disagree	4. Neutral	5. somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly Agree
1. I like the person I am becoming	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. I am worth taking care of.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. I pay attention to my body and what it is telling me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. I stand up for myself	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. I celebrate my accomplishments	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. I am not allowed to make mistakes	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. I feel rested when I wake in the morning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. I eat healthy most of the time	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. I pay attention to my thoughts and feelings	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. I try to be active and exercise regularly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. I take time for myself	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. I know how to take care of my own soul.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Self-Esteem Scale

Resilience Scale

Clergy Burnout Scale

General Wellbeing Scale

Social Support Questionnaire

Social Support Ministry Questionnaire

The following questions ask about people in your environment who provide you with help or support. Each question has two parts A & B. For Part A, think of all the people, including family, friends, colleagues, church leaders, counsellors, mentors, etc., excluding yourself, that you can count on for help or support in the manner described. Write the number of people. Part B: For the second part, click on the circle that describes how satisfied you are with the overall support you have in that particular area of your life. If you have had no support for a question, write the number "0", but still rate your level of satisfaction.

1. Who understands the burden (responsibility) you are carrying as a minister?

Fill in number of people:

[ ]

1B. How Satisfied?

○ Very Satisfied

○ Fairly Satisfied

○ A Little Satisfied

○ A Little Dissatisfied

○ Fairly Dissatisfied

○ Very Dissatisfied

2. Who do you turn to for spiritual wisdom and direction personally?

Fill in number of people:

[ ]

2B. How Satisfied?

○ Very Satisfied

○ Fairly Satisfied

○ A Little Satisfied

○ A Little Dissatisfied

○ Fairly Dissatisfied

○   Very Dissatisfied

3. Who do you turn to for spiritual wisdom and direction for your ministry?

Fill in number of people:

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│                         │
└─────────────────────────┘
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3B.   How Satisfied?

○   Very Satisfied

○   Fairly Satisfied

○   A Little Satisfied

○   A Little Dissatisfied

○   Fairly Dissatisfied

○   Very Dissatisfied

4. Who helps your grow as a leader?

Fill in number of people:

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│                         │
└─────────────────────────┘
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4B.   How Satisfied?

○   Very Satisfied

○   Fairly Satisfied

○   A Little Satisfied

○   A Little Dissatisfied

○   Fairly Dissatisfied

○   Very Dissatisfied

5. Who helps you grow as person?

Fill in number of people:

5B. How Satisfied?

○ Very Satisfied

○ Fairly Satisfied

○ A Little Satisfied

○ A Little Dissatisfied

○ Fairly Dissatisfied

○ Very Dissatisfied

6. Who can you depend on to speak deeply into your life?

Fill in number of people:

[ ]

6B. How Satisfied?

○ Very Satisfied

○ Fairly Satisfied

○ A Little Satisfied

○ A Little Dissatisfied

○ Fairly Dissatisfied

○ Very Dissatisfied

7. Who can you depend on to pray for you with spiritual understanding?

Fill in number of people:

[ ]

7B. How Satisfied?

○ Very Satisfied

- ○ Fairly Satisfied
- ○ A Little Satisfied
- ○ A Little Dissatisfied
- ○ Fairly Dissatisfied
- ○ Very Dissatisfied

8. Who helps you to find clarity in ministry situations?

Fill in number of people:

[   ]

8B. How Satisfied?

- ○ Very Satisfied
- ○ Fairly Satisfied
- ○ A Little Satisfied
- ○ A Little Dissatisfied
- ○ Fairly Dissatisfied
- ○ Very Dissatisfied

9. Who consoles you when you have had a difficult ministry experience?

Fill in number of people:

[   ]

9B. How Satisfied?

- ○ Very Satisfied
- ○ Fairly Satisfied
- ○ A Little Satisfied
- ○ A Little Dissatisfied
- ○ Fairly Dissatisfied
- ○ Very Dissatisfied

10. Who consoles you when you have had a difficult personal experience?

Fill in number of people:

[   ]

10B. How Satisfied?

○ Very Satisfied

○ Fairly Satisfied

○ A Little Satisfied

○ A Little Dissatisfied

○ Fairly Dissatisfied

○ Very Dissatisfied

11. Who can you be yourself with and have fun?

Fill in number of people:

[   ]

11B. How Satisfied?

○ Very Satisfied

○ Fairly Satisfied

○ A Little Satisfied

○ A Little Dissatisfied

○ Fairly Dissatisfied

○ Very Dissatisfied

12. Who understands you as a person outside of your role as pastor?

Fill in number of people:

[   ]

12B. How Satisfied?

○ Very Satisfied

○ Fairly Satisfied

○ A Little Satisfied

○ A Little Dissatisfied

○ Fairly Dissatisfied

○ Very Dissatisfied

Comments

If you would like to comment, we welcome your feedback on the survey and your experience completing it.


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[                    ]
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Thank you for taking the time to participate. God Bless!