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# Career Change Decisions of Western Evangelical Seminary Alumni: A Study in Sociological, Ecclesiastical and Theological Perspectives

Bruce A. Hicks

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Career Change Decisions of  
Western Evangelical Seminary Alumni:  
A Study in Sociological, Ecclesiastical  
and Theological Perspectives

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A Dissertation/Project

Presented to

The Committee for Advanced Pastoral Studies  
San Francisco Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

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by

Bruce A. Hicks  
August 20, 1979

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## PREFACE

For the past ten years I have been involved in the seminary training of young ministers and have concurrently served with my denomination's Department of Ministry (Friends). As a professor at Western Evangelical Seminary in Portland, Oregon, I have watched promising graduates serve a few years in the pastorate and then change careers. Likewise, with the Department of Ministry I have constantly faced this same phenomenon. At the moment my denomination has more ministers on the "inactive" list than it does on the "active" list. My motivation for the study arose out of these involvements.

My primary concern was to discover the reasons for these demissions; however, a secondary purpose was to allow the ex-pastors to candidly express "their side of the story" to the Seminary and to their denominations. Apparently they wanted to be heard: all but two ex-pastors responded to the survey. This study provides an avenue through which they will be heard. The results are being shared with the administration and faculty of Western Evangelical Seminary as well as with the leaders of the eight denominations officially associated with the school.

Having been reared in a parsonage and having

pastored two churches, I found myself empathizing with both the joys and the disappointments of the respondents. It is hoped that all who read this report will look beyond the statistics to the real people behind them. May their voices be heard.

A word of acknowledgement is extended to Dr. Myron D. Goldsmith, my advisor, whose valuable cooperation and helpful counsel were essential to the completion of this study. The assistance of Dr. Norman N. Bonner is gratefully acknowledged: the sharing of his expertise in the structuring of the questionnaire was invaluable.

Deep appreciation is expressed to all who so kindly responded to the questionnaire. Special thanks is due the twelve interviewees who interrupted their schedules to make a valuable contribution to the research.

Special gratitude is expressed to my wife, Dorothy, who, in addition to offering words of encouragement throughout the study, has patiently invested her vacation time sitting at the typewriter.

B. A. H.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Ecclesiastical bodies are expressing concern over the numbers of persons leaving the pastoral ministry to move into specialized ministries and into secular work. D. Elton Trueblood is quoted as saying, "I receive a constant stream of letters from clergymen who are so frustrated in their work that they desire some kind of change in vocation."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that men and women are demitting the ministry seems to be quite prevalent throughout Christendom. That it is a concern to the Catholic Church is expressed by Joseph J. Blomjous in Priesthood in Crisis, when he writes, "Certainly for the average Catholic and for the average priest, defections of priests from the priesthood and even from the faith itself constitute the most striking aspects of the present sacerdotal crisis."<sup>2</sup> Since ordination is usually assumed to be for life by both laity and clergy alike, any demitting of this vocational calling is felt to

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<sup>1</sup>Pastor X, How to Murder a Minister (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1970), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph J. Blomjous, Priesthood in Crisis (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1969), p. 162.

be more serious than an ordinary change of occupation.

### The Problem

This phenomenon raises several questions. In addition to the most obvious question, Why are they leaving?, other pertinent questions come to mind: Does the frequency of pastoral demissions represent a failure of individuals or a failure on the part of the church? What other types of careers are they entering? Are there emotional and psychological stresses unique to the pastoral profession? Must we always assume that the one leaving the ministry is "stepping down" rather than up? What is the meaning for the church, for the seminary?

Career change is not a recent phenomenon. It at least dates back to the biblical Joseph. Today, most professions implicitly call for a significant level of commitment for the person to enter or remain in them. Since the Christian ministry is a high commitment vocation concerned with issues and values at the core of life, the withdrawal of that commitment and/or its translation into other areas of service has broad implications for the church. The church has historically considered the ministerial profession to be unique because of the nature of a person's "call" and ordination into this particular vocation. Since traditionally the material rewards have been low, one does not choose this profession without strong idealistic reasons, nor is one apt to leave it without equally strong

reasons.

Many complex factors contribute to pastors' decisions to change careers. An investigation of these factors should contribute to a better understanding of the underlying causes of such changes. It is postulated that changes in sociological, ecclesiastical and theological perspectives may lie at the root of decisions to change vocations.

#### The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the present and past sociological, ecclesiastical and theological perspectives of Western Evangelical Seminary (W.E.S.) alumni to determine those factors which influence career changes. In addition, the study will note psychological processes involved in such career changes where these are pertinent to the central purpose. This investigation and its analysis should provide W.E.S. with the necessary data for guiding students in career decisions and for reviewing curriculum structure.

#### Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to Pastors and Ex-pastors who have been graduated from W.E.S. from its first class in 1949 until 1976. This writer assumed that the responses of more recent graduates would not significantly contribute to the value of the study because of the brevity of service.

The writer was unable to secure the addresses for eleven of the alumni. The total number surveyed was 255,

consisting of 153 Pastors and 102 Ex-pastors. When referring specifically to the survey respondents, the terms Pastors and Ex-pastors will be capitalized.

### Definitions of Key Terms

Career change has been taken to mean the process by which anyone who has served in the pastoral ministry has changed to any other field of endeavor.

An ex-pastor is anyone who has changed careers according to the definition immediately preceding. The terms, "Pastor/minister," for the purposes of this paper, will be used interchangeably. If the term minister ever applies to some specialized type of ministry (e.g. "minister of religious education"), it will be so stated. Two groups of Ex-pastors were studied: Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical service (entitled Ex-pastors E) and Ex-pastors in secular employment (entitled Ex-pastors S).

Donald P. Smith gives this definition of the term "role":

A role consists of one or more recurrent or patterned activities of the player, activities that involve corresponding expectations on the part of others who are related to the player. The term is used to make clear that the expected behavior relates to the position of the focal person and not to the person who occupies that position.<sup>1</sup> (*Italics his*)

Role conflict is the result of the lack of agreement or coordination among the various roles which the

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<sup>1</sup>Donald P. Smith, Clergy in the Cross Fire (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), p. 23.



focal person is expected to perform, whether these expectations are those of the player or of others.

Role ambiguity results when the focal person is unsure of what he/she is supposed to do, because the roles are not clearly defined or he/she lacks needed information to perform competently.

The call has been variously interpreted by the different bodies within Protestantism; however, there are certain basic components which are accepted by most Christian theologians. H. Richard Niebuhr in The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry, summarizes the Protestant theology of the call to ministry in this way:

It appears that there is general though only implicit recognition of the fact that a call to the ministry includes at least these four elements: (1) the call to a Christian, which is variously described as the call to discipleship of Jesus Christ, to hearing and doing the Word of God, to repentance and faith, et cetera; (2) the secret call, namely, that inner persuasion or experience whereby a person feels himself directly summoned or invited by God to take up the work of the ministry; (3) the providential call, which is that invitation and command to assume the work of the ministry which comes through the equipment of a person with the talents necessary for the exercise of the office and through the divine guidance of his life by all its circumstances; (4) the ecclesiastical call, that is, the summons and invitation extended to a man by some community or institution of the Church to engage in the work of the ministry.<sup>1</sup>

Niebuhr is probably correct in his assessment when he says further, "when a clear idea of the ministry prevailed there was also a clear idea of what constituted a

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<sup>1</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, eds., The Ministry in Historical Perspectives (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 64.

call to the ministry and for the most part such a clear idea took into account the necessity of all four calls and ordered their relations."<sup>1</sup>

### Method of Procedure

#### Review of Literature

The study began with a review of relevant literature on general career development and change, and on the dynamics of such change within church vocations. The focus of this review was to ascertain possible factors which influence pastors in making career change decisions. The knowledge gained in the review of these factors aided in the structuring of the questionnaire.

#### Developing the Survey Instruments

The recurrent themes in the literature reviewed became the basis for formulating questions for both the survey (see appendix D) and the interview guide (See chapter 5). The most valuable help was found in related studies which had been done in regard to the occupation of religious functionaries.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar W. Mills, "Career Change in the Protestant Ministry," Ministry Studies 3 (May 1969):5-21; Merton P. Strommen et al., A Study of Generations (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972); Gerald J. Jud et al., Ex-Pastors: Why Men Leave the Parish Ministry (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970); Donald P. Smith, op. cit.; Joseph Fichter, Religion as an Occupation (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966).

The survey instrument was designed with two parts. Part I consisted of general questions to be asked of both Pastors and Ex-pastors. Part II was designed solely for those who had changed careers. Its focus was on the reasons and/or the circumstances which precipitated the move and the results of this decision. This writer attempted not to take a singular stance regarding the possibilities of cause and effect in career change, but took, rather, an open position toward both dimensions.

After structuring the questionnaire, the writer submitted the results to eight of his colleagues (professors) for evaluation. They were specifically asked to critique it as to clarity of the directions and questions, use of proper terminology and the overall validity of the instrument. These suggestions and criticisms were reviewed and resulted in the rewording of some questions and the deletion of others. The survey was then pre-tested on a group of fifteen persons (not alumni of W.E.S.) which included pastors and ex-pastors. They were asked to actually fill out the instrument and note the amount of time spent in doing so. They were also asked to criticize as the first eight had done, paying particular attention to the theological terminology used, and to give advice regarding any definitions they believed were needed at any point. The results were positive. The average time spent doing the survey was twenty-five to thirty minutes. All said they did not have any problem with the clarity of the directions,

the questions or the terminology. Several stated that they found the experience to be quite valuable because it forced them to evaluate their ministry. The structuring and pretesting of the survey instrument took about six weeks.

The pilot test seemed to indicate that the survey was a valid instrument. There remained, however, some concern over its length (14 pages). The nagging question in the back of this writer's mind was, "How many busy pastors and ex-pastors will be willing to invest the necessary time to complete the survey?" In order to help insure an adequate response, two further steps were taken: First, methods of mailing "for response" were studied. The suggestions of using attractive envelopes (white 9x11 outgoing and 6x9 manila returning) stamped "FIRST CLASS" and with commemorative stamps attached were heeded. Each envelope contained an individually addressed, personally signed letter, stating the purpose of the study and requesting cooperation. The questionnaire was professionally printed to make it as attractive as possible.

Second, the denominational leaders who represented any body with a potential respondent list of ten or more were personally contacted and given a sample questionnaire and an overview of the entire project. Each was asked if he would be willing to lend his support to the project by writing a letter to the Western Evangelical Seminary alumni in their denomination, asking their cooperation. All of them endorsed the project in word and action. Each of the

denominational leaders was also able to delineate which of the W.E.S. alumni in their denomination were Pastors and which were Ex-pastors. This knowledge obviated the original plan to make a preliminary survey of the alumni to collect this information.

In conversation with W.E.S. alumni, the question was asked, "Would you be more frank in your responses if the survey were taken with anonymity being guaranteed to the respondent?" The majority said it would not make any difference. However, a significant number said they would feel more free to be candid in their responses if they could remain anonymous. Thus it was decided not to ask for names and a secretary was secured to open the returns to assure complete anonymity. Every effort was made to encourage straightforward responses and to make clear that the responses would remain anonymous. The secretary did code the questionnaires so that if follow-up mailings were needed, it could be done (the alumni were apprised of this in the cover letter).

The mailing was sent on August 17, 1978 and approximately 75 percent returned the questionnaire within four weeks. To encourage any who may not have responded, a follow-up letter was sent by the writer's advisor on September 18, 1979.

A total of 255 questionnaires were mailed to Pastors

and Ex-pastors of twenty-one denominations,<sup>1</sup> with usable returns coming from 223, for an 87.5 percent response rate.<sup>2</sup> Of this total, 153 were sent to Pastors, of which 123 were returned, for an 80 percent return. One hundred two were sent to Ex-pastors, of which 100 were returned, for a 98 percent return. The excellent return rate was attributed to the support of the denominational leaders, the mailing techniques used and personal interest in the study by the respondents.

The interview guide was structured after the mail responses had been collated so that the interviews could serve to verify (or correct) the trends noted. The selection of interviewees was based on age to assure including alumni from different classes, and lengths and types of pastoral experience.<sup>3</sup> The interviews were conducted at times and places convenient to the persons who graciously consented to interrupt busy schedules to make this contribution to the study.

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<sup>1</sup>For a complete list of these denominations, see appendix A. For the theological stance of the Seminary, which is representative of these denominations, see appendix B.

<sup>2</sup>The figures above do not include questionnaires which were unusable, either because the person had never entered the pastoral ministry or because his/her responses were fragmentary or seriously incomplete. (There were seven returned from those the writer had classified as Ex-pastors who stated that they had never entered the pastoral ministry; one was too fragmentary to use, and one Ex-pastor returned a note stating, "I do not choose to participate.") Of the 223 respondents, 221 were male and 2 were female, the latter being in the Ex-pastor category.

<sup>3</sup>Twelve Ex-pastors (eleven men and one woman) were interviewed during the summer months of 1979.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

In recent years many articles and books which speak of "crises," "storms" or upheaval in the church have come off the press. Much of this literature is directly related to the tensions and stresses which are being experienced by pastoral ministers. It is the writer's purpose in this chapter to review this literature with the aim of ascertaining possible factors which influence pastors in making career change decisions.

This review of literature will take into account sociological, ecclesiastical and theological points of tension which may lie at the root of pastors' decisions to change careers. Factors lying behind pastors making these decisions can be classified into two main categories: job context related (ecclesiastical policies, salary, interpersonal relations and job security), and job content related (personal competence for the job, personal interests, parish needs and parish response to the pastor). For the purposes of reviewing the factors which lie behind career change decisions, these two categories will be used. A further section dealing with specific problems encountered in leaving the ministry will conclude the review of literature.

Reasons for the Decision to Leave

## Job Context

Role Conflict

Literature dealing with the pastoral profession seems to indicate that the phenomenon of "role conflict" has come into focus as a problem during the last twenty-five to thirty years. This statement does not preclude the fact that pastors were experiencing role tensions before the present time, but the problem has not become a major concern until recent years. Robert Michaelson, writing in The Ministry in Historical Perspectives in 1956, foreshadowed the role conflicts of our present-day pastors. He states that until the twentieth century the "pulpit has stood at the front and center of the Protestant church in America--both in practice and in theory; preaching has been by all odds the most important aspect of the minister's work."<sup>1</sup> After corroborating this fact, he proceeds to describe the twentieth century as one of change in emphasis for the Protestant minister. He opines that preaching will still remain the most effective and most used means of communicating the gospel; however, "an increasing number of Protestant ministers in this century have complemented attention to the sermon with concern for meaningful worship, pastoral

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<sup>1</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, eds., The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 280.



care, religious education, and other avenues of ministry."<sup>1</sup> Michaelson further elaborates on the meaning of these trends for the church in regard to building needs and staff needs, but makes no mention of the latent tensions which were to surface in the coming years.

Within two years of Robert Michaelson's forecast, Samuel W. Blizzard contributed an article to the Christian Century entitled, "The Minister's Dilemma." Although he never uses the specific phrase, "role conflict," he is definitely speaking of the same phenomenon. Blizzard further develops the embryonic insights set forth by Michaelson. He classifies what he perceives to be the six practitioner roles distinguished within the work of the parish minister into the traditional, neo-traditional, and contemporary roles. He places the roles of preacher, priest and teacher under the heading of traditional roles; the pastor (whom he points out has now added counseling to this list of duties) he places in the neo-traditional category; and he sees the roles of administrator and organizer as being entirely new roles for the parish minister in this century, and thus places them under the contemporary heading.<sup>2</sup>

In this article, Blizzard reports on a study done with six hundred-ninety clergymen who are representative of theologically trained American Protestant parish ministers.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel W. Blizzard, "The Minister's Dilemma," The Christian Century 72 (April 25, 1958):508.

This study brings the minister's predicament into focus. The source of the dilemma is to be found in the frustrations which develop when ministers feel motivational and functional priorities clashing in the usage of time. In the study, pastors were requested to evaluate the six practitioner roles from three perspectives: importance, effectiveness and enjoyment.

When asked to prioritize the six roles according to their importance from most important to the least important, the result was: preacher, pastor, priest, teacher, organizer and administrator. The order of the last four roles changed somewhat when the ministers were asked to list the roles according to their personal sense of effectiveness in performing each. Now the list was as follows: preacher, pastor, teacher, priest, administrator, and organizer. Finally, the ministers were asked to prioritize the list according to their enjoyment of performing the roles. Quite logically, the pastor role was enjoyed the most with the preacher role placing a very close second. The roles of organizer and administrator were enjoyed the least.

Thus far the study had not revealed anything startling; however, when the ministers were asked to keep a careful log of how they actually spent their time, the dilemma came sharply into focus. Two-fifths of the average minister's day was taken up with administrative tasks. Just over one-fourth of each day was allotted to the pastoral role, while preaching and priestly activities together

took up about one-fifth of each day. Organizing consumed about one-tenth of the day and the remaining time (about one-twentieth) was devoted to the teaching ministry. Therefore if the six roles are listed according to the actual priority given them in usage of time, they appear thus: administrator, pastor, preacher, priest, organizer, teacher. The results of the study are summarized on the table below.

TABLE I  
RANK ORDER OF PRACTITIONER ROLES BY CLERGYMEN

Role	Importance	Effectiveness	Enjoyment	Time Spent
Preacher	1	1	2	3
Pastor	2	2	1	2
Priest	3	4	4	4
Teacher	4	3	3	6
Organizer	5	6	6	5
Administrator	6	5	5	1

This study clearly indicated that the average Protestant minister's motivational and functional priorities were significantly different. The roles most enjoyed and believed to be most important by ministers tend to be rated rather low on the functional scale.

In conclusion, Blizzard makes the observation that the minister feels most adequate and enjoys most the "traditional" roles, but parishioners tend to judge the pastor by

twentieth century functional expectations. "This," says Blizzard, "is the minister's dilemma. He faces basic ambiguities in performing the practitioner roles."<sup>1</sup>

After Blizzard's report, the dilemma/conflict theme became a much-used framework by which the tensions of the parish minister were discussed. Donald P. Smith, in his book Clergy in the Cross Fire, gives these examples of practitioner roles:

The minister is expected by his congregation to conduct a worship service and to preach a sermon on Sunday morning. Whatever person is called to be the minister will be expected to preach. That is one of his roles. A priest, on the other hand, may be expected to conduct mass, whether or not he preaches a sermon.<sup>2</sup>

Another term closely related to "role" a term which is used when discussing the pastor's functional activities, is "image." This term is legitimate in that it focuses on the "expected behavior" aspect of Smith's definition of "role." Seward Hiltner, in Ferment in the Ministry, uses the term "image" to describe the functional roles of the pastor.<sup>3</sup> Although there is some difference in meaning, the two terms are many times used interchangeably in the literature.

Edgar W. Mills, in a series in Ministry Studies, made a significant contribution to the study of role conflict

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 509.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Seward Hiltner, Ferment in the Ministry (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1969).

in the parish by classifying the types of role conflict which impinge upon the pastor. Conflicting roles, he asserts,

fall into three broad groups, overlapping to some degree, but clearly different in focus. Some describe (1) differing levels of external obligations; others concentrate on (2) the conflict between internalized norms and needs or pressures in the external situation; still others stress (3) internalized conflict.<sup>1</sup>

The externally structured role conflict is epitomized by the tension ministers often feel between work values and family values when trying to give adequate time to each. External role conflict always results when a pastor is forced to deal with the divergent expectations of individuals or groups he considers significant. The more significant the persons involved are to him, the greater the conflict.

Conflict between internal and external norms may be illustrated by the minister who is forced by external pressure to spend his time doing the things he believes to be least important and most ill-prepared to do. According to Donald P. Smith, the internal-external conflicts "will emerge in the pastorate to the extent that the minister's self-image has been shaped in relation to an unrealistic image of the role demands of the clergyman."<sup>2</sup> He then gives an illustration of how these unrealistic images can

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar W. Mills, "Types of Role Conflict Among Clergy," Ministry Studies 2 (October, 1968): 13.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 51.

be created in the mind of a young person contemplating entering the ministry. As the adolescent observes his pastor, he sees him as a preacher and teacher on Sunday and occasionally as the pastoral caller during the week. In short, he sees him as the "traditional" pastor. As he reflects on this image of the pastor, he finds this model to be very compatible with his own interests in life. Thus he may feel drawn (or called) into the ministry. He attends college and seminary, where the images he has formed are further reinforced. Not until he serves his first parish does he realize that his images have been skewed. The images are skewed because he never attended a church board meeting (except when he appeared before the Board of Ministry to be reviewed for ordination); he never typed a bulletin nor cranked a mimeograph machine. He never had the privilege of helping his pastor plan and organize a father-son banquet nor did he have the opportunity to witness the amount of administtrivia a pastor is called upon to perform each day. Unfortunately, Smith's illustration has a familiar ring to it and evidence indicates that many ministers have experienced the resulting internal-external conflicts which these unrealistic images can produce.

Conflict between internal norms and motives occurs when the minister holds mutually incompatible values and expectations within himself. This type of internal conflict is exemplified by the minister who ideally holds the ethic of self-denial and loving service to be the

supreme guide for all his actions and yet at the same time is highly motivated by the American belief that great achievement will be rewarded by job promotions. How can one be a great humble achiever?

### Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity is another tension point which causes frustration for the pastoral minister. Stephen Brown summarizes the feelings of some clergy when he quotes the response of a minister who was asked why he was leaving the pastoral ministry, "I just didn't know what was expected of me."<sup>1</sup>

Role ambiguity results when the pastor finds the expectations of others unclear or confusing. If those around him/her do not send clear signals as to exactly what they expect or if he/she does not properly interpret their messages, his/her role becomes ambiguous at that point. On the other hand, the greater the accuracy of the message and more nearly correct the interpretation is, the greater the clarity of roles.

However, Robert L. Kahn, in Organizational Stress, makes the observation that a clear understanding of roles does not necessarily preclude role ambiguity in that, "in combination they may add up to confusion rather than clarity."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen W. Brown, Where the Action Is (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1971), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Robert L. Kahn et al., Organizational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), p. 89.

He also observes that although role conflict and role ambiguity share the same spawning ground they are independent sources of stress and that either or both of them may be present in any given role.<sup>1</sup> Smith gives several reasons which may lie behind role ambiguity.

Adequate information on role expectations may not exist. It may exist but not be available to the person who needs it. There may be problems in communication where contradictory messages are being transmitted by role senders who themselves are uncertain what they ought to expect of the focal person. Confusion produces more confusion. In some cases senders may disagree among themselves and thus send contradictory signals.

Rapid change in society or in an organization may generate confusion in the role expectations of both senders and receiver. Thus much of the role ambiguity among clergy today may be related to the almost cataclysmic changes that are taking place in society and in the reorientation of the church to its calling in the world.<sup>2</sup>

Later in his chapter, "Minimize and Reduce Ambiguity," Smith makes the observation that increased communication is essential to clarifying one's roles. However, research suggests that it is precisely at the times of greatest need for the clear exchange of ideas that communication decreases.<sup>3</sup> He suggests that this may be due to the fact that the pastor is not only unsure of the message which the other person is sending, but he/she may also feel unsure of how the person is evaluating him/her. Thus the pastor does not feel

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 91



prone to trust, respect or perhaps even like the person.<sup>1</sup>  
Communication and distrust tend to be mutually exclusive.

Role ambiguity is a serious problem because it tends to neutralize one's effectiveness. It naturally follows that when pastors sense that they are no longer effective they will lose motivation to continue in their place of service--some may even leave the field of service.

### Salary

Emphasis on the reward of personal satisfaction rather than monetary gain has long been a tradition of the church, especially when salaries are being discussed. Jud says there is "little doubt that the ministry is the lowest paying profession in the world."<sup>2</sup> Despite this fact, his study revealed that only five out of 231 ex-pastors actually left the pastorate solely because they could not adequately support their families. However, another 12.69 percent said that finances and living conditions were highly important factors in their decision to leave.<sup>3</sup>

### Stress

Stress is many times named as one of the reasons for demitting the ministry. Role conflict and role ambiguity are stress-producing; however, there are other causes

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Jud, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 77-78.

of stress in the ministry which need to be discussed. There are two broad categories under which stress will be discussed: work related stress and personal stress.

#### Work Related Stress

Edgar Mills in his study, Stress in the Ministry, makes it quite evident that it is common for pastors to experience stress in connection with their day to day work. He reports that of 4908 ministers in twenty-one denominations, 75 percent reported one or more periods of "major stress" in their careers. Two-thirds of these periods were classified as "severe stress." The pastors identified the source of stress as being their work in two out of three times. Nearly 30 percent believed this work related stress arose out of personal or ideological conflict with their parishioners. The study revealed that 18 percent experienced stress because of frustration, overwork and a sense of lack of achievement. Conflict within the congregation, financial or community troubles of the church, and staff problems were responsible for causing stress among 19 percent of the clergy surveyed.<sup>1</sup>

As noted earlier, one's image of the ministry must conform to the realities of the practitioner roles, or role conflict ensues. Since the hiatus between ideological images of the ministry and the realistic images is bound to

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar W. Mills and John P. Koval, Stress in the Ministry (New York: Ministry Studies Board and IDOC, 1971), p. 54.

be greatest at the beginning of one's ministry, it is not surprising that the first pastorate is often stress-producing at the functional level. This fact is borne out in Mills' article, "Career Change in the Protestant Ministry." He found that those who demitted the ministry after their first charge had experienced more "unwelcome surprises" than those who had continued on in the ministry after their first charge.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the early years of pastoral ministry are quite stress-producing is corroborated in Mills' study of stress, cited earlier. Of all significant incidents of stress reported by respondents, 42 percent took place during the first five years of ministry and more than 25 percent occurred during the first two years.<sup>2</sup>

How well the young minister handles these stress situations is important, for as Donald P. Smith asserts, ministers tend to repeat in later years the steps used to resolve the earlier situations.<sup>3</sup> Thus the psychological patterns of resolution developed in the first stress experiences may determine the extent of a pastor's ultimate effectiveness.

According to Mills' study on career change, one of the greatest areas of stress was related to ministers' disillusionment over the church's inability to effect change

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<sup>1</sup>Mills, "Career Change," p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Mills and Koval, Stress, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, p. 55.

in the community and the church's overall lack of relevance to everyday life.<sup>1</sup> This same idea is a major theme in Jeffrey K. Hadden's book, The Gathering Storm in the Churches. For Hadden, the civil rights issues epitomize the polarization which exists between the views held by clergy and laymen over the mission of the Church. In his chapter, "Struggle for Involvement" he contends,

...that the ideological commitment of Protestant clergy to bring about civil rights and social justice in a number of areas is rather strong. It is also apparent that a large majority of laity do not share this level of commitment. Laity, as a group, are much less concerned about civil rights than are clergymen. Furthermore, the large majority of laity do not approve of clergy involvement in civil rights activity.<sup>2</sup>

Hadden believes there are four options open for relieving the stress created by ministers caught in this dilemma: First, the pastor could retreat from his commitment and active involvement and make his behavior fit the parishioners' image of the pastor who comforts. Second, the comfort-oriented laity and clergy could capture the major administrative and decision-making positions in the denominations and expel the rebels. Third, the socially concerned clergy could stand united and invite those laymen not prepared to go along with their concepts of service to withdraw from membership. Fourth, if a minister cannot find

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<sup>1</sup>Mills, "Career Change" p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Jeffrey K. Hadden, The Gathering Storm in the Churches (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1969), p. 163.

any way to pursue active social involvement within the present church structure, leave it.<sup>1</sup> Hadden contends that a significant number are opting for the fourth possibility.

One of the most common complaints of clergy is that of stress caused by "overload." The writer is not convinced that the average parson works more hours per week than many business persons or corporate executives; however, the multiplicity of functions may make his/her job more stressful. The Roman Catholic sociologist, Joseph Fichter, touches on this point when he states, "The present dynamic situation in the urban American parish seems to require not so much the emphasis on one role more than another, as a simultaneous coordination of multiple roles."<sup>2</sup> Thus much of the stress which some ministers attribute to work overload is more technically the result of role overload. It is not the intention here to downplay the work load of ministers because, on the whole, they put in considerably more than a forty-hour work week. An Episcopalian study on ministry revealed that the average work week of their parish priests was 66.7 hours.<sup>3</sup> When a multiplicity of roles are performed ten to eleven hours each day for six and even seven days a week a certain amount of stress is likely to occur. Whether

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 244-226.

<sup>2</sup>Fichter, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>Nathan M. Pusey et al., Ministry for Tomorrow: Report of the Special Committee on Theological Education. Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), p. 53.

or not this stress is debilitating to an individual will depend on his/her psychological make-up and how well it is handled. Some persons appear to thrive under stressful conditions, while others become overwhelmed by them.

Another area of stress experienced by pastoral ministers comes from the frustration stemming from conflicting demands of the denominational hierarchy and the demands of the pastor's performance roles. Joseph Fichter sees this tension as a key factor in defections from the church. He states,

...the modern religious organization finds itself caught between two social structures, the bureaucratic and the professional. The lack of adjustment between the two modes of organization runs like a theme through all of the accounts of personal defections from the priestly and religious life. From the point of view of the subordinate, the traditional, bureaucratic system got in the way of professional performance of roles. From the point of view of the superior, the professional functions interfered with the procedures of the traditional system. Sociologically, this appears to be the heart of the problem of defection."<sup>1</sup>

Not only must the pastor fit the "traditional system" in his performance at the local level, but he must be visibly "loyal" to it at the bureaucratic level. He must attend the association meetings, not be critical of the denomination, and build up the denomination in whatever he does. If the pastor is going to climb the denominational ladder of success, he/she cannot ignore these duties. C. W. Stewart reports on a study by Howard Ham in which those who

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<sup>1</sup>Fichter, p. 208.

are given good church appointments and better living conditions "...conform to the expectations of the social system; those who fail are those who are iconoclastic and are unable to 'bend the knee' to institutional demands."<sup>1</sup>

### Personal Stress

In his book Every Pastor Needs a Pastor, Louis McBurney gives an illustration of an Episcopalian priest who became disillusioned with the ministry in mid-life. The priest related that the most agonizing aspect of his dilemma was the fact that he could not share his hurt with anyone. He felt threatened to share it with a parishioner, he feared his bishop would "blackball" him, and he felt too embarrassed to reveal his problem to a peer. In despair, he simply disappeared to a large city and lost himself in the crowd to work out his problem.<sup>2</sup> Jud reports in his study of ex-pastors that the feeling of "lack of support" was common among both ex-pastors and pastors.<sup>3</sup>

Pastor X painfully reveals his feelings with these words:

The pastor's own spiritual needs are hardly noticed by the congregation. He has no pastor for the most

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<sup>1</sup>Charles William Stewart, Person and Profession: Career Development in the Ministry (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1974), p. 83.

<sup>2</sup>Louis McBurney, Every Pastor Needs a Pastor (Waco, Texas: Word Publishers, 1977), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup>Jud, p. 53.

part.... Everyone else in the congregation has a person to counsel with and one to admonish and provide inspiration on Sunday, but the pastor's well runs dry so often. There is the mistaken idea he does not need the strength he gives to others. He is never thought to doubt or have moments of deep depression when his own world, like everyone else's, has to be put back together. He is more like a bloodless being free of sin, a visitant from the land of no temptations."<sup>1</sup>

Mills' and Koval's study on stress in the ministry corroborates Jud's deductions and Pastor X's experience as being a prevalent feeling in the pastoral ministry. When asked what steps they took to ease their stress, two out of three said they took independent action and did not seek the counsel or help of others. The remaining third did acknowledge seeking help from spouses, colleagues, superiors, and other confidants.<sup>2, 3</sup>

#### Career Stress

C. W. Stewart makes an excellent contribution to the understanding of stressful situations which develop out of career-related crises. He uses Erik Erikson's developmental model of life (beginning at the adolescent stage) as a basis for his discussion. First he places

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<sup>1</sup>Pastor X, pp. 41-42.

<sup>2</sup>Mills and Koval, Stress, pp. 28-29.

<sup>3</sup>This general feeling of isolation may have some relation to how ministers view their practitioner roles. Seward Hiltner contends that ministers like to do things which can be done alone, without consulting others (e.g., preaching--there is no need to consult with a committee regarding the text or topic). On the other hand, they do not like to do those things which require relating/dialoging with others before they can be done (e.g., administrative and executive tasks). Hiltner, p. 71.



Erikson's life-span model parallel to the typical career development model of the parish minister to demonstrate how career crises interface with developmental crises. See fig. # 1.<sup>1</sup>

Fig. 1

Individual Development	Late Adolescence Identity	Young Adult Intimacy	Adult Generativity	Late Maturity Integrity	Death
Career Development	Trial/entrance Theological School	Establishment Advance	Maintenance	Decline	Retirement

The minister is vulnerable to stress at any one of the stages along the developmental life span. If he/she does not manage a career development task well, the situation becomes stressful. Stewart lists three ways in which a person can manage stress: problem-solving, accepting or leaving the situation.<sup>2</sup> When the person makes a decision or leaves the situation, the stress will be ameliorated.

Stewart analyzes the career development span in the light of Erikson's life span model. The major points of his analysis are summarized below.

Identity-Entrance. At this stage, the person is

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<sup>1</sup>Stewart, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>Stewart, p. 74.

struggling with his/her self-image, particularly in relation to the external world. The young person often feels pushed to make a commitment to a responsible life style. In trying to do this the person may go to the extremes of trying to please everyone or withdraw into a counterculture group.

These struggles for self-identity are many times heightened in the young pastor's life as he faces the realities of leading a congregation. If his master role image is not realistic and he/she is not flexible, the pastoral career will be in jeopardy.

Intimacy-Advancement and Stabilization. The intimacy crisis for Erikson is the challenge to form enduring interpersonal relationships. The person finds it possible to share his life at the deepest levels, to communicate his/her feelings, ideas and values to those he/she trusts. If the person does not develop "normally" at this stage, he/she will probably isolate him/herself and alienate anyone who tries to establish a meaningful relationship.

During this period of life the minister will be questioning how much he/she is willing to sacrifice to achieve that level. If he/she does not "buy the system" he/she is then faced with the question of whether to stay and try to reorganize the system or to leave it all together.

Generativity-Maintenance. A person in this stage of life should be creative, producing and nurturing ideas. For most people these are productive years; however, some

never mobilize their potential and are "underachievers." Still others will stagnate or regress during this period.

During the maintenance stage, a pastor will be analyzing how closely he/she has come to his/her life-long goals. If the hiatus between goals and performance is too great, he/she will be strongly tempted to withdraw from the pastoral ministry.

Integrity-D Decline. The key word during this period is self-acceptance. For Erikson, to have integrity means to be satisfied with one's achievements, regardless of their degree of paucity. The options are acceptance, despair or disgust.

For the pastor this is the period of comparison. He/she is continually comparing the church, the laity and the job to "the good old days." Those who despair at this time of life are tempted to "stick it out to the bitter end" because it seems too late to change careers.

Death-Retirement. The retirement stage is characterized by an "Is this all there is?" attitude. The retiring pastor may feel that he/she is now useless since he/she is no longer doing the "worthwhile" things he/she once did.<sup>1</sup>

Like Stewart, James D. Glasse sees a career pattern in the ministry: in Putting it Together in the Parish, he

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<sup>1</sup>Stewart, pp. 46-78.

discusses three crisis points at which ministers are most likely to demit. Whether his observations are personal or based on research, he does not say; however, his insights are interesting in the light of Stewart's analysis. According to Glasse, the predictable crisis points in most clergymen's careers are as follows:

1. The first three to five years is fraught with problems related to idealism. The young minister's ideals may be shattered by a healthy dose of reality. If the transition from classroom to community is too difficult he/she may wonder whether or not he/she has entered the right profession. Some leave and some choose to enter another type of ministry, such as that of an associate pastor or join the staff of a larger church. Many reaffirm their original commitment to the ministry and continue.

2. At about the age of forty, the pastor feels that he is approaching the "point of no return." He/she now knows just about how far he/she can go in the ministry--and he/she is probably there now. Thus he must decide if he/she wants to spend another twenty years doing pretty much the same thing. Some answer "yes" and continue with renewed vigor, while others answer "no" and change careers.

3. The last crisis comes between the ages of sixty and sixty-five when the minister looks ahead to the insecurity of the retirement years. This is a very difficult time for those who are not prepared for retirement, either financially or emotionally. Some will take a part-time job

to supplement their retirement fund; others will try to get a full-time job as a last ditch effort to stay out of the poor house. Those who continue full-time in the pastoral ministry will experience many of the same problems they faced in their first pastorate, only in reverse. Instead of working oneself into a job, they must now work themselves out of the job.<sup>1</sup>

### High Visibility

Persons who choose professions which involve civic or religious leadership lose a certain amount of freedom and personal privacy. This writer, having been reared in a parsonage, would agree with Donald Smith when he says, "Of all the professions, that of the minister is most continually under observation by his clients."<sup>2</sup> A minister's son and former Medical Director of the American Psychiatric Association says the minister "lives his life upon a pedestal where he is not only in full view but is expected to behave differently than the run of the mill of his parishioners. He is believed to be a professional good man and his family are expected to exemplify all the virtues the Christian life is supposed to confer."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James D. Glasse, Profession: Minister (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 42-44.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>Daniel Blain, "Fostering the Mental Health of Ministers," Pastoral Psychology 9 (May 1958):12.

Few parishioners would admit that they assume every aspect of the minister's life to serve some exemplary function, but their reactions when a minister falls short indicate that most do hold this assumption. Most ministers seem to accept this fact as part of their job profile. If some aspect of the minister's life is less than exemplary, psychological and occupational stresses are bound to develop. Mills makes the observation that this phenomenon is unique to the parsonage. He says,

Few workers at any socioeconomic level find their work performance judged by the quality of their home life, their forms of play, or their community involvement; but the Protestant minister's total exemplary status makes all these aspects of his life visible and occupationally relevant for his employing constituency.<sup>1</sup>

#### High Availability

In addition to the house being open to clients and his/her life style being under constant evaluation, the pastor's time is also "theirs." He/she is expected to respond to any and every call for service, any time of the day or night. In some parishes this includes his day off and vacations. The fact that some congregations judge the pastor's effectiveness by his/her visibility and availability is very frustrating to pastors. Pastor Xin addressing this problem in relation to study time describes parishioners with these words: "These people are sure that the pastor doesn't have anything to do but prepare a brief outline, which he delivers any way

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<sup>1</sup>Mills, "Career Change," p. 18.

but briefly, and then is free several days of the week."<sup>1</sup>

## Job Content

### Self-image/Identity

D. Elton Trueblood makes the statement that "the central problem which faces the minister is that of his own identity. It is hard for him, in the midst of competing and ever contradictory pressures to know who he is."<sup>2</sup>

Glasse echoes the same sentiment in the opening statements of his book, Profession: Minister.<sup>3</sup> Speaking in the same vein, Reuel How points up the dangers which ensue when either the pastor or the congregation (or both) has a false or misleading image of him/herself or of each other. He avers,

There are two sets of images at work in the life of the Church. First there are the minister's images; of himself as a minister, for example someone who always must have the right answer; of himself as a person, for example one who is always wrong; and of his people, both individually and congregationally, as his judges. All this is set in the context of his image of the Church, its teachings, and its various relationships.

Second, there are the congregation's images; of themselves as a congregation, for example a group of choice people; and of the minister, what he represents and what they should expect of him, such as the man on

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<sup>1</sup>Pastor X, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas J. Mullen, The Renewal of the Ministry, with an introduction by D. Elton Trueblood (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1963), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Glasse, p. 13. Jeffrey K. Hadden closes his book with a discussion of the crisis of identity among Protestant clergy under the chapter title, "Collision with Reality," pp. 211-235.

the pedestal. Beneath these images live both the minister and the congregation as they really are, realities which may never consciously meet because their respective images keep them both acting out roles with each other. Since our images of ourselves influence our goals and behavior, it should come as no surprise that ministers are lost in confusion about themselves, their family, congregational and community relations, and their job! And, of course, there are the images which obstruct and confuse communication between the Church and the world.<sup>1</sup>

A recurrent theme in the discussions on the minister's self-identity is the need for a clarification/ redefining of the minister's image of "ministry." Blizzard contends that every minister has a self-image of his "master role." This master role image is the primary image which a person has of his occupation (as distinguished from the functional roles of the occupation). Blizzard believes that "the definition of the master role is crucial to the effective functioning of the church social system."<sup>2</sup> According to him, this primary image will include ideological/ functional and effectiveness/success dimensions. Since the sources for these various dimensions are not always congruent, the image is not consistent and the minister finds that his/her functional roles are not in harmony with his/her ideological goals. The same tensions can exist between the effectiveness and success dimensions in the master image.

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<sup>1</sup>Hans Hofmann, ed., Making the Ministry Relevant (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), pp. 143-144.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel W. Blizzard, "The Parish Minister's Self-Image of His Master Role," Pastoral Psychology 9 (October 1958):26.



Blizzard sums up the problem with these words,

The problem of the minister in the local church is to develop an image of himself that is congenial with his theological orientation, that adequately explains his function in the church, and that permits him to be related effectively to all personnel in the social system."<sup>1</sup>

The development of a congruent image not only has benefits for the pastor's mental health as Blizzard's discussion would indicate, but it should also have a positive effect on the parish. Daniel D. Williams summarizes the benefits to the congregation in this statement: "When people understand what we conceive our job to be, and when it is evident we work hard to do the job as we have described it, they respect us and do not expect us to do the impossible."<sup>2</sup>

#### Professional/Non-professional

Closely associated with the foregoing discussion on the minister's self-image is the discussion/debate over classifying the ministry as a "profession." Many find hope and promise for the clergy in classifying them as professionals, while others feel that this concept denigrates the office of clergy. A complete discussion of the debate is not pertinent to the purpose of this chapter; however, the salient points of both sides are given below.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel D. Walker, The Human Problems of the Minister (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 68.

James Glasse believes that the identity crisis, faced by many ministers, can best be solved by addressing it in occupational terms. He states that we have too many images which confuse the minister and the only solution is the creation of a new unified image around the concept, "profession."<sup>1</sup>

His concern is not for the pastor's ecclesiastical identity, but rather, his "occupational identity in the world of work."<sup>2</sup> Glasse constructs a definition for "professional" which becomes the framework into which he fits the ministers' various practitioner roles. For Glasse, a professional is identified by the following characteristics:

(1) He is an educated man, master of some body of knowledge. (2) He is an expert man, master of a specific cluster of skills. (3) He is an institutional man, relating himself to society and rendering his service through a historical social institution of which he is partly servant, partly master. (4) He is a responsible man who professes to be able to act competently in situations which require his services. (5) He is a dedicated man. His dedication to the values of the profession is the ultimate basis of evaluation for his service.<sup>3</sup>

Seward Hiltner also believes there is value in describing the ministry in terms of a profession. He attempts to put the usual criticisms of the term to rest with these few words: It is not privilege, not impersonality and not money."<sup>4</sup> For him, the real meaning of the term

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<sup>1</sup>Glasse, p. 18ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 38

<sup>4</sup>Hiltner, p. 178.

lies in "the exercise of responsibility" on the part of the minister.<sup>1</sup> Like Glasse, he gives a list of those features he believes necessary in defining "profession." There are certainly similarities to Glasse's list; however, there are significant additions.<sup>2</sup>

For Hiltner, the professional minister is marked by these features: 1. He works on the basis of fundamental principles, but makes them relevant to the needs of concrete situations. 2. He uses technical means that usually require a long time for mastery; but he uses them, rather than having them dictate to him. 3. He is explicit to himself and others about a principle of limitation of function and responsibility. When someone in his own or another profession is prepared better than he to perform a service, he refers as soon as he can.... 4. He operates in some fairly clear way in the direction of human welfare. 5. He operates as a representative of a group that has some kind of ethics to govern its services to people who need them.<sup>3</sup>

It is noteworthy that the final point in both lists makes reference to the minister's need to be related to other clergymen in a "professional" sense. Some are

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>For yet another perspective, see C. S. Calian's list of criteria for defining "profession" in Today's Pastor in Tomorrow's World (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1977), pp. 101-116.

<sup>3</sup>Hiltner, pp. 178-179.

carrying this logic one step further and calling for a fully recognized professional organization for ministers which would be on par with the professional associations of doctors or lawyers.<sup>1</sup>

Not everyone is willing to place the ministerial calling under the heading, professional. Urban T. Holmes, in The Future Shape of the Ministry, states the case against the usage of the term "professional" in reference to the clergy. He believes that the "professional model of ministry" is outdated and belongs to the pre-1850 era. He gives the following reasons for his opinion:

First, the professional model confirms the whole tendency of the modern period. It equates ministerial function with one profession and one role. This is a disaster!...If we identify ministry with a professional body of technical skills, the extent of these skills as currently described makes it impossible for any one man to do them all well; and yet this is exactly what we seem to expect.

Second, there are certain ministerial functions that are not subject to inclusion under a professional model. Good preaching today, as much as it ever was, is 'personal witness' far more than 'skillful exegesis' or 'knowledgeable theological exposition.' There is a tendency in the professional model to emphasize skills that depend on a subject/object dichotomy; and the importance of the person or the professional is frequently lost and is at best secondary.

Third, the call for a professional organization or union so that clergy can demand adequate compensation is at cross purposes with the freedom to be found in Jesus and his Church. How can man be free, unless he meets free men and 'catches' this freedom from them?

Fourth, professionalism tends to focus on the 'here and now' to the exclusion of transcendence.... The

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<sup>1</sup>Glasse wants to form the "American Academy of Parish Clergy." (Op. cit., p. 144-146). C. S. Calian makes a similar plea in his book, Today's Pastor in Tomorrow's World, pp. 101-116.

professional model could possibly thwart a great opportunity for a renewed sense of transcendence, if we assured ourselves that we are trained professionals, in control of a body called ministry, and that is all.<sup>1</sup>

Holmes offered his criticisms basically from an ideological/philosophical standpoint. In contrast, Thomas M. Gannon S.J., who is also chary about the usage of the term "professional" in reference to priests and clergy, attacks the use of the term from the practical difficulties which arise when the minister's roles are equated with the criteria used to define "professional." In regard to Glasse's and Hiltner's concept that the minister is educated in technical skills, T. M. Gannon would agree, but continues to point out that "the clergy's tasks and tools belong to the realm of the sacred."<sup>2</sup> This he believes sets clergy apart from professions like doctors and lawyers. Those who say that ministers are "professional" because they belong to peer organizations are brought to task by Thomas Gannon who says,

The suitability of this measure of professionalization seems quite appropriate as long as one can assume that some kind of professional organization can exist within an occupation apart from the specific organization in which one works. In theory and practice, however, church and ministry are only analytically separable."<sup>3</sup>

Gannon also makes some criticisms of the use of

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<sup>1</sup>Urban T. Holmes, III, The Future Shape of Ministry (New York: Seabury Press, 1971), pp. 196-200.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas M. Gannon, "Priest/Minister: Profession or Non-Profession?" *Review of Religious Research* 12 (Winter 1971):71.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

"professional" from the ideological standpoint. Glasse says that his concern is with the minister's occupational identity, but Gannon believes that the position of minister/priest has to do more with the quality of the person, than it does with his occupation. "'Priest' or 'minister,'" he says, "is above all something one is, not something one does."<sup>1</sup> He makes the observation that those who hold the title, professional, have usually achieved it through education/hard work and by demonstrating levels of accomplishment which can be measured against widely held norms of performance. "In contrast," he says, "the clergy have for centuries been ascribed certain qualities which were attributed to them as a consequence of their assumption of a clerical religious role; this ascription helped to reinforce such ascetic values as humility and non-competition. Moreover, performance norms are difficult to standardize in the area of spiritual services where the ultimate sanction is supernatural."<sup>2</sup>

Both the proponents and the opponents of using the term "professional" are aware of the theological and ecclesiastical overtones of their respective positions. However, it is significant that the central issue seems to be what they believe the term "professional" does to the image of the ministry. Those in favor of the term believe that it enhances and clarifies the image, while those opposed

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

to its usage believe the image is cheapened or denigrated thereby.

### Family Problems

Pastors are not immune to tensions in the home. Stewart covers the key problems which plague the manse in this statement:

...the priest who has trouble relating to women in the parish, the Protestant minister who gets overinvolved with his female couselees, the minister's wife who feels outgrown by her husband, the children who denounce the church once they leave the parsonage for college--all point to the fact that the minister is very vulnerable and that one of the points of stress is marriage and family life."<sup>1</sup>

Any of the above problems can debilitate the minister's effectiveness; however, one of the most critical is that of infidelity. The pastor is quite vulnerable, because the potential seems to be ever present.<sup>2</sup> Every male pastor does some counseling of women (and vice versa); there are the day-to-day associations with women in the church and many male pastors have female secretaries or staff members. Nathaniel Lehrman M.D., makes this observation concerning the dynamics of sexual attraction:

Whenever two people work very closely together toward a common goal with at least fair success, as a minister does with his parishioner, or a doctor with his patient, feelings of camaraderie and warmth almost inevitably arise between them. This is as true when the two people

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<sup>1</sup>Stewart, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Nathaniel S. Lehrman, M.D. "The Normality of Sexual Feelings in Pastoral Counseling" Pastoral Psychology 11 (June 1960):49.

are in a factory or a laboratory as when they are in a minister's study or an analyst's office. When the two people are of opposite sex and not too disparate in background, these warm feelings will almost always assume a sexual caste."<sup>1</sup>

Whenever there are serious marital difficulties in the parsonage, one would expect the pastoral career to be in jeopardy. Mills' study on career change bears this out. Several respondents indicated a certain amount of strain in the home, but six said their marriages were on the verge of either separation or divorce; all six demitted the ministry.<sup>2</sup> The obverse is also true; as Stewart points out, "the minister who does not make it professionally will no doubt have problems with spouse and family."<sup>3</sup>

When problems do develop in a marriage, the pastor is put at a distinct disadvantage in securing any outside help. Because so many pastors try to fulfill the lay expectations of "ministerial perfection" it is difficult to allow any open recognition of the problem. He/she believes that to share the problem with anyone would reduce the effectiveness of his/her ministry, if not end their entire ministry. Some ministers' marriages are allowed to get to the point of no hope, just because of this need to protect their image.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Mills, "Career Change," p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Stewart, p. 110.



Personal Beliefs

In his analysis of theological developments within Christendom, Hadden makes the observation that not only is there a broad theological spectrum represented by all the Protestant denominations, but many denominations have a broad spectrum of theological beliefs within them. He believes much of the current turmoil in the Church is focused on the relevance of the "traditional doctrines of the faith" for today's world.<sup>1</sup> This theological questioning has had an impact on the pastor. He contends that "those who have been most uncomfortable with the status quo posture of the church have found it easier to move into non-parish structures than to try and change the local parish."<sup>2</sup> Although Jud's study revealed that only one pastor among the respondents listed "loss of faith" as his dominant reason to leave, many of the ex-pastors were indeed concerned over the theological relevance of "traditional beliefs." The study revealed that there was a definite theological trend among both pastors and ex-pastors toward the "pragmatic, liberal, humanistic, and tolerant views."<sup>3</sup>

Much of the above discussion centers around sociological and psychological factors which underlie ministers' decisions to change careers. However, the typical pastor, when asked why he/she left the ministry, would probably not

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<sup>1</sup>Hadden, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup>Jud, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

use many of the terms used above; but rather, the responses would be stated in more empirical terms. For example, the ex-pastor whose ideals focus on social concern is more apt to speak of the irrelevance of the church than he/she is about his/her master role image being incongruous with reality. When Mills asked sixty United Presbyterians why they left the pastorate, ten themes emerged. These were long-range plan, attractive job offer, inability to relocate, church conflicts, restlessness, a sense of hopelessness, acute marital crisis, acute family needs, health breakdown, and the need for a moratorium. Laile E. Bartlett adds three other reasons to this list: estrangement from the laity, to be free to speak out and the pressures of authority.<sup>1</sup>

In the United Church of Christ study, Jud suggested these reasons in addition to those already given above by Mills and Bartlett: inadequate salary or living arrangements, serious conflict with colleagues over job responsibilities or other matters, felt personal inadequacy as church leader, uncertain of own vocation to ministry, higher salary or fringe benefits offered, church coerced move by making things "too hot," more desirable region or community, trouble among parishioners interfered with ministry there, personal faith changed, and didn't enjoy the work of the pastorate.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Laile E. Bartlett, The Vanishing Parson (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Jud, p. 144-45.

Results of the Decision to Leave

The decision to change professions represents a major decision for any person, but this decision is respected, in most cases, by one's peers and acquaintances. Seldom does a person making such a decision receive criticism of the type which results in mental and emotional stress. However, because of the uniqueness traditionally ascribed to the pastoral vocation by the Church and most laymen, a pastor finds it difficult to change careers without receiving an undue amount of negative criticism. Hiltner comments in this respect,

Even though Protestants have held from the reformation, that every Christian has a "calling from God," and that ministers are no better in God's eyes than any others, a curious Protestant crowd has looked upon leaving the ordained ministry as something like adultery or divorce."<sup>1</sup>

Unless the ex-pastor moves up the denominational ladder to an executive position he becomes known (or at least thought of) as "former pastor so-and-so." The fact that there may be some amelioration of this situation on the horizon is found in Fichter's comments regarding the defection of religious functionaries from the Roman Catholic Church. He states:

At one time it was the custom to surround their departure with an aura of secrecy and disapproval, as though they had failed dismally and were somehow doing a dishonorable deed. They were conveyed from the house while the community was at meals or at prayers, and were advised never to return, even for a visit to their

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<sup>1</sup>Hiltner, p. 18.

former companions. All of this has changed in the American seminaries and houses of study. Friendly contacts are maintained, personally and by correspondence, if the individual so wishes it."<sup>1</sup>

There is indeed some evidence that laity and pastors are becoming more congenial toward those who demit the pastorate; however, the one who has left the pastorate without receiving any negative criticism is probably the exception rather than the rule. Bartlett contends, "Leaving the church is a terrible ordeal, an uprooting of everything. It's like leaving your wife, and for most, a very last resort."<sup>2</sup>

Not only does the ex-pastor face the criticisms which are bound to come, but he faces a whole new set of problems as he enters the market place in search of a new occupation. Some make the transition rather easily, but many must try to make the shift from one career to another with lack of training or preparation for the performance of new roles. The age and length of time in the pastorate become important factors at this juncture for the career changer. If one makes the decision to leave mid-life or later, the problems are compounded by the lack of time to prepare adequately for a new profession. The immediate need to earn a livelihood is pressing and the pastor, trained in the theological disciplines, may not find a ready market for his talents in the secular world. Addressing

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<sup>1</sup>Fichter, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup>Bartlett, p. 41.

this problem, Pastor X says, "More would leave if they were prepared to do anything else and still satisfy some aspect of what they consider their call."<sup>1</sup>

In a report on readjustment to career change by Roman Catholic priests, Gerard F. Waldorf gives four dimensions of personal and social readjustment which face the departing priest. First, the priest, in most cases, will have strongly internalized the idealism of service to others and will face a major adjustment as he is forced to reinterpret his own set of values. After this re-evaluation, the priest is likely to do one of two things: either become totally involved in a service-oriented profession or lose all interest in the service role and choose a totally unrelated occupation. Second, the exiting priest must face the practical orientation to the workday world. Third, he must overcome the sociological and psychological problems created by the stigma of being an ex-priest. Fourth, in some cases, the ex-priest may face mental health problems which ensue from the whole traumatic process of career change.<sup>2</sup>

#### Summary

This review of literature revealed that many studies have been done and much has been written during the

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<sup>1</sup>Pastor X, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Gerard F. Waldorf, "Readjustment to Career Change: The Catholic Scene," Ministry Studies 3 (May 1969):28-30.

last two decades on the pastoral vocation, the ministers' master role, the internal and external stresses, and the functional effectiveness of ministers. All of these terms suggest that there is a growing realization that the ministry is not the same today as it was in an earlier, probably less complex era.

The data in this chapter is used as a background to discuss the factors which lie behind the demission of Western Evangelical Seminary Alumni from the pastoral ministry. The final summary in chapter 6 will reveal that most of the tensions and difficulties discussed here play a significant part in causing demissions from the pastorate.

### CHAPTER III

#### SOCIOLOGICAL, ECCLESIASTICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHANGE DECISIONS

Using the findings from the review of literature as a guide, a questionnaire was designed to elicit responses from Western Evangelical Seminary graduates regarding sociological, ecclesiastical and theological factors which may lie behind the decision to leave the pastoral ministry for some other vocation. Some of the questions revealed no significant differences among the three groups studied: Pastors, Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical related employment and Ex-pastors in secular employment. Thus no mention will be made of those findings.

This chapter will specifically address the sociological, ecclesiastical, theological and personal factors which appear to be related to career change, as found in the responses to the questionnaire and the interviews. Under the headings just listed, five themes will be developed. The discussion of sociological factors will have two foci: (1) the path to the career decision and (2) the dynamics of the decision to enter the pastorate. The next section, ecclesiastical factors, will be developed around tensions in the pastoral setting. The theological section will pursue the

relation of dogmatics to practics. The last section dealing with personal factors will focus on the private life of the pastor.

### Sociological Factors

#### The Path to Career Decision

##### Environmental Background

The last four decades in the United States have witnessed a general city-ward migration of the rural populace. A few hints of this shifting population can be seen in table 2 below. The respondents were asked where they lived between the ages of one and six, seven and twelve, and thirteen and twenty. In all three groups the percentages of those who lived in rural areas decreases as the age brackets increase. Logically, the inverse is true for the percentages in towns and cities. During the adolescent years, just over 50 percent of all respondents lived in rural areas, while 32.9 percent lived in towns and 26.1 percent lived in metropolitan areas. Gerald Jud's study on United Church of Christ pastors and ex-pastors reported 42 percent living in rural areas during their adolescent years; however, he found a different distribution than this study indicates with regard to those living in towns and cities. He reported 20.8 percent as living in towns and 37.3 percent living in cities.<sup>1</sup> His figures vary about 12 percentage points from this study's findings, in which the town dwellers are more

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<sup>1</sup>Jud, pp. 40 and 169.



TABLE 2  
WHERE THEY WERE REARED

	RURAL		TOWN		CITY		TOTALS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
AGE 1 - 6								
Pastors	60	48.8	38	30.9	25	20.3		
Ex-pastors E	18	52.9	11	32.4	5	14.7		
Ex-pastors S	38	58.5	14	21.5	13	20.0		
Combined totals	116	52.3	63	28.4	43	19.4	222	100.1
AGE 7 - 12								
Pastors	57	46.3	41	33.3	15	20.3		
Ex-pastors E	18	52.9	10	29.4	6	17.6		
Ex-pastors S	31	47.7	20	30.8	14	21.5		
Combined totals	106	47.7	71	32.0	45	20.3	222	100
AGE 13 - 20								
Pastors	50	40.7	43	35.0	30	24.3		
Ex-pastors E	12	35.3	12	35.3	10	29.4		
Ex-pastors S	29	44.6	18	27.7	18	27.7		
Combined totals	91	41.0	73	32.9	58	26.1	222	100

numerous and the city dwellers are fewer.

Aside from the rather noticeable difference between Pastors' and Ex-pastors' living environments in the one-to-six age bracket, there do not appear to be any significant differences in the backgrounds of the three groups--in fact the marked difference just noted virtually disappears in the thirteen-to-twenty age bracket. If this difference had been maintained throughout, it may have furnished some sociological evidence for reasons behind career change among pastors, but since it does not persist, no strong conclusions can be drawn.

Table 3 classifies the responses to the same question as above in categories which show the patterns of the individuals' backgrounds. This table makes even more evident the city-ward mobility of the groups.

Very few (seven) respondents moved from city to rural environs.

Along with the categorization of responses regarding background, table 3 compares these responses with the 218 subjects who responded to the question, In which pastoral setting do you feel most effective? This analysis would seem to indicate that some of the respondents were influenced by their childhood living environment as to where they felt most effective in the pastorate. Among those who lived their entire lives until the age of twenty in rural localities, 40 percent said they preferred either rural or town pastorates. If all those who lived in rural and town

TABLE 3

## RELATIONSHIP OF CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT AND DESIRED PLACE OF SERVICE

Responses grouped according to patterns of responses in the three age spans:				These same individuals denoted these places as preferred places of service:							
1-6	7-12	13-20	Total	Rural No.    %		Town No.    %		City No.    %		No Difference No.    %	
Rural	Rural	Rural	77	16	20.8	14	18.2	6	7.8	41	53.2
Town	Town	Town	37	1	2.7	12	32.4	13	35.1	11	29.7
Rural	Rural	Town	14	1	7.1	6	42.9	2	14.3	5	35.7
Rural	Town	Town	19	3	15.8	3	15.8	3	15.8	10	52.6
Rural	Rural	City	4	1	25.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	1	25.0
City	Rural	Rural	5	...	...	1	20.0	1	20.0	3	60.0
City	Town	Rural	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	100.0
Rural	City	City	6	...	...	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0
Town	Town	City	11	...	...	2	18.2	6	54.5	3	27.3
Town	Rural	City	7	...	...	...	...	3	33.3	6	66.6
City	City	Town	7	...	...	2	28.6	1	14.3	4	57.1
City	City	City	29	2	6.9	3	10.3	14	48.3	10	34.5

settings exclusively are combined, the total is 147.

Forty-six of this number preferred town or rural pastorates, which gives 38.1 percent of the ministers who have rural or town backgrounds and state a preference of rural or town environment as pastors. Much the same phenomenon develops on the opposite end of the Table: just over two-fifths (42.2 percent) of those who spent their adolescent years in the city prefer city pastorates.

When the individual responses regarding preference of place of service were cross-tabulated with responses as to the size of the community in which they actually served, the results further confirmed the probability that some pastors experience stress as a result of the locale in which they are asked to serve. Table 4 shows how those who stated a preference for place of service compared with the size of community where they served their first pastorate (column 1), and then with where they spent the major portion of their ministry (column 2). One hundred fifteen (51.6 percent) of the respondents did say they had a preference. Of those preferring to pastor in a rural setting, 50 percent of the pastors and 40 percent of the Ex-pastors were placed in larger communities. For those with rural backgrounds, this placement could be quite difficult, particularly if the congregation were not aware of the tensions created by this situation.<sup>1</sup> In somewhat of a paradox, most of those who

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<sup>1</sup>The writer has noted this difficulty on occasion while serving on his denomination's Department of Ministry for the past ten years.

TABLE 4  
PLACEMENT PREFERENCE

		FIRST PASTORATE (1)		ALL PASTORATES	
		Same as Preference	Different than Preference	Mostly same as Preference	Mostly Different than Preference
Number					
RURAL PREFERENCE					
Pastors	10	5	5	3	4
Ex-pastors E	3	3	0	3	0
Ex-pastors S	10	6	4	0	3
TOWN PREFERENCE					
Pastors	31	14	17	11	8
Ex-pastors E	6	2	4	1	2
Ex-pastors S	7	4	3	2	0
CITY PREFERENCE					
Pastors	27	10	17	13	7
Ex-pastors E	7	3	4	4	2
Ex-pastors S	14	7	7	2	3
Total	115	54 (47%)	61 (53%)	39 (57.49%)	29 (42.6%)

preferred town or city churches were given rural charges. However, this situation does not appear to be quite as serious as those wanting rural parishes being places in the city. According to Nauss and Coiner, pastors have many times been thankful for being placed in a rural charge at the beginning of their ministry, for it allowed them more time for study and family.<sup>1</sup>

Column 2 (Table 4) regarding all pastorates is more critical. Those who have spent the larger portion of their pastoral years in locales different from those which they prefer, could experience considerable frustration. One-fourth of those expressing a specific preference of locale spend the majority of their years of service in other types of communities.

Throughout this discussion the writer has assumed (based on the evidence of tables 3 and 4) that where a person is reared has significant influence on where that person prefers to serve. However, the fact that nearly one-half (48.4 percent) said that it made no difference where they served cannot be overlooked. Although it was noted while collating that a high percentage who said "no difference" had lived in both rural and city environments, one may also ask the question, "How much was their stated preference colored by either positive or negative experiences in certain

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<sup>1</sup>Allen H. Nauss and Harry G. Coiner, "The First Parish Placement: Stayers and Movers," Review of Religious Research 12 (Winter, 1971):00.

locales?" In other words, a Pastor may have remembered his best experience as being in a small town and thus checked that category as his preference when in actuality the town, per se, may not have been the source of the positive experience as much as other factors.

### Position in the Family

Those surveyed were asked to give their position in the family in which they were reared. The results of this question are found in table 5. There are no particular categories which have an unusually high percentage. The "only child" category is noticeably less than the other four, showing an overall total of 5.4 percent. The two strongest categories are "First Born" (28.3 percent) and "Last Born" (24.2 percent). Fichter labels the idea that "vocations flourish in large families" as a myth.<sup>1</sup> Table 5 would support his research in that the combined totals reveal that the largest percentage of those surveyed were first-born and no category revealed a significantly higher number. Large families may indeed produce more persons for the ministry, but, quite logically, the statistical probability that more than one child will follow a particular vocation in a single family grows as the number of children increases.

### Education of Parents

The three groups being studied did not have any

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<sup>1</sup>Fichter, p. 35.

TABLE 5

## POSITION IN THE FAMILY OF PASTORS AND EX-PASTORS

	Only Child		First Born		Second Born		In Between		Last Born	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Pastors	4	3.25	40	32.5	20	16.3	31	25.2	28	22.8
Ex-pastors E	4	11.8	5	14.7	6	17.6	7	10.6	12	35.3
Ex-pastors S	4	6.1	18	27.3	15	22.8	15	22.8	14	21.0
Combined totals and % for entire survey	12	5.4	63	28.3	41	18.4	53	23.8	54	24.2



significant differences in the level of education attained by their parents. However, one distinct trend was noted in all three groups: mothers were frequently more highly educated than fathers. Numerous respondents indicated that their fathers had less than a high school education while their mothers were high school graduates. (Table C1, appendix C.)

#### Occupational Status of Fathers of Pastors and Ex-pastors

One of the most common criteria used to distinguish class position in America is the gainful occupation of the head of the household. People tend to evaluate others in terms of what they "do." One's self-image cannot help but be colored by the father's occupation. The father's occupation, per se, will leave an imprint on the children, as well as having a direct bearing on the financial and social status of the family.

The subjects of the survey come from homes in which the full spectrum of occupational types is represented. (See table 6.) Pastors and Ex-pastors E have almost identical percentages of fathers with white collar vocations; 36.5 percent and 36.4 percent respectively. On the other hand, the Ex-pastors S have only 27.2 from white collar homes and a significant 68.2 percent coming from blue collar occupational backgrounds.

The two occupations most frequently mentioned were clergy and farmer. Twenty-four and two-tenths percent of



TABLE 6  
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF FATHERS

	Pastors Continuing		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Clergy	23	18.7	5	15.2	8	12.1
Other Professions	8	6.5	...	...	3	4.5
Manager/Owner	11	8.9	4	12.1	2	3.0
Salesman	3	2.4	3	9.1	5	7.6
Total White Collar	45	36.5	12	36.4	18	27.2
Crafts	8	6.5	2	6.1	11	16.7
Service	9	7.3	4	12.1	8	12.1
Semi-skilled	12	9.8	1	3.0	4	6.1
Factory	11	8.9	4	12.1	6	9.1
Farmer	33	26.8	5	15.2	16	24.2
Total Blue Collar	73	59.3	16	48.5	45	68.2
Other	5	4.2	5	15.2	3	4.6
TOTAL	100.0		100.1		100.0	

all respondents came from farm backgrounds. Another 16.1 percent came from pastors' homes. The declining percentages (18.7, 15.2 and 12.1) as one reads across the clergy category is noticeable; however, the difference of only 6.6 percentage points is probably not enough to conclude that those with pastoral home backgrounds have less chance of becoming Ex-pastors.

#### Parents' Income

Closely related and often directly influenced by the father's occupation is the family's financial status. The respondents were asked "In your estimation, what was the economic status of your childhood family?" The question was couched in terms of "in your estimation" rather than asking for a specific figure because in this research it seemed more significant to discover feelings rather than the literal income figures. It is one's attitude toward status which molds self-image more than the actual dollar amount. This aspect will be discussed further in chapter IV.

Assuming that their "estimations" have some correlation with reality, only two (1.6 percent) of the pastors believed they were reared in homes with above average incomes. (See table 7.) Over half of the Pastors (56.1 percent) and Ex-pastors E (67.6 percent) believed they came from below average or poor backgrounds. On the other hand, 50 percent of the Ex-pastors S believed they came

TABLE 7  
ESTIMATION OF CHILDHOOD ECONOMIC STATUS

	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Wealthy	...	...	...	...	...	...
Above Average	2	1.6	...	...	...	...
Average	52	42.3	11	32.4	33	50.0
Below Average	56	45.5	17	50.0	25	37.9
Poor	13	10.6	6	17.6	8	12.1

from middle income homes. This was an unexpected statistic because, as previously noted, 68.2 percent of Ex-pastors S came from homes where the head of the household was a blue collar worker.

### Educational Background

Very few of those surveyed attended a non-public high school (see table 8). However, at the college level, 68.2 percent of the total group did attend a church related institution. A small percentage (8.1) had previously attended Bible college, with the remainder (23.8 percent) attending secular schools.

TABLE 8  
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF PASTORS AND EX-PASTORS

	HIGH SCHOOL				COLLEGE					
	Public		Non-Public		Bible		Church Related		Secular	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Pastors	118	95.5	5	4.1	13	10.6	84	68.3	26	21.1
Ex-pastors E	31	91.2	3	8.8	3	8.8	23	67.6	8	23.5
Ex-pastors S	61	92.4	5	7.6	2	3.0	45	68.2	19	28.8
Totals and mean percentages	210	94.2	13	5.8	18	8.1	152	68.2	53	23.8

For the first twenty years of Western Evangelical Seminary's existence, the majority (approximately 90 percent) of the students came from church related colleges; however, during the last ten years, a trend has developed where a higher percentage has come from state universities. According to the Director of Admissions, the rate of matriculants from secular colleges would now approach 30 percent each year. The survey statistics show only the beginning of this trend.

The undergraduate majors chosen by the survey participants are not what the writer expected, particularly the choice of the Ex-pastors as revealed in table 9. The policy of the Seminary since the late 1950's has been to urge prospective students to follow the pre-seminary study guidelines as suggested by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). These guidelines strongly urge college students to develop a broad liberal arts background. Their recommendations do not preclude a religion major in college. However, they do make it difficult to major in religion if the student is serious about covering the fields suggested. In spite of Western Evangelical Seminary's policy of urging compliance with the ATS suggestions, 43.5 percent chose religion majors in college. It is further noteworthy that a higher percentage of Ex-pastors took religion majors than Pastors.<sup>1</sup> This would seem to indicate that they were very

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<sup>1</sup>Jud's findings were quite different at this point. He reports "More than a third of the ex-pastors majored in

TABLE 9  
COLLEGE MAJORS OF PASTORS AND EX-PASTORS

	Religion		Social Science		Education		Speech		Social Work		Engineer		Humanities		Natural Science		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pastors	49	39.8	19	15.5	9	7.3	9	7.3	4	3.3	2	1.6	5	4.0	4	3.3	22	17.9
Ex-pastors E	14	41.2	8	23.5	4	11.8	...	...	3	8.8	1	2.9	...	...	...	...	4	11.8
Ex-pastors S	34	51.5	6	9.1	3	4.5	...	...	3	4.5	1	1.5	6	9.1	1	1.5	12	18.2
Totals/ Means	97	43.5	33	16.3	16	7.9	9	7.3	10	5.3	4	1.9	11	6.8	5	2.9	38	17.3



serious about their calling and felt it best to begin preparation in college. The fact that of the forty-seven Ex-pastors S who attended Bible colleges or church related colleges, thirty-four of them majored in religion, demonstrates something about their level of commitment. This fact had real implications for the Ex-pastors S when they decided to demit the pastoral ministry in favor of secular occupations. One must wonder at the trauma of facing the secular job market with such a narrow educational background. Persons who choose a profession and go through the prescribed training will leave it very reluctantly to enter another profession, especially if more education and expense is involved. This problem becomes more acute as the person advances in age and cannot afford the time to retool. Comparatively few persons in other professions leave their chosen vocation after having spent similar amounts of time and money to enter it, as do the seminary-trained Ex-pastors.<sup>1</sup>

There appears to be no appreciable difference between Pastors and Ex-pastors in their choice of majors in Seminary (see table C2, appendix C). Approximately 30 percent

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the sciences, either natural or social, whereas little more than one-fifth of the pastors did. By contrast, religion and helping occupations (social work, education) tend to have interested pastors more than ex-pastors as college majors." Jud, p. 40.

<sup>1</sup>Fichter, p. 202.

of each group majored in Biblical Studies, placing it as first choice, with Theology and Pastoral Ministries being selected second and third respectively. Any significant pattern which might relate to reasons for leaving the ministry is not discernible. However, it was noted while collating the returns that the single most common statement given in response to What would you like to say to your Seminary? was concerned with the practical. One student captures the sentiment of most of the returns with this statement:

Deal with the realistic factors of ministries and not the "Ivory Tower" ideas of philosophy. Pastoral congregational planning should play a large part in training. How do you set realistic goals and develop plans to carry them out? How do you organize the work with a voluntary staff?

Of the 223 respondents, 36.8 percent made similar comments. The question arose as to whether there was a relationship between these pleas for more practical training and the students' majors in Seminary. This writer presumed that those majoring in fields other than Pastoral Ministries could well feel a lack in the practical areas. However, table 10 does not support this assumption. Some of the figures involved are so small that the resulting percentages may not give accurate readings which could be used to extrapolate the feelings of all the majors in a specific field. One cannot ignore the fact, however, that the area which should be the strongest in practical training receives an undue proportion of the "practical" comments, viz., Pastoral Ministries.

TABLE 10

## SEMINARY MAJORS AND REQUESTS FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING

MAJORS		REQUESTED MORE PRACTICAL TRAINING	
	Number	Number	Percent
PASTORAL MINISTRIES			
Pastors	24	13	54.2
Ex-pastors E	6	3	50.0
Ex-pastors S	14	5	35.7
BIBLICAL STUDIES			
Pastors	41	16	39.0
Ex-pastors E	9	8	8.9
Ex-pastors S	20	3	15.0
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION			
Pastors	16	8	50.0
Ex-pastors E	8	1	12.5
Ex-pastors S	16	4	25.0
CHURCH HISTORY			
Pastors	13	4	30.8
Ex-pastors E	2	1	50.0
Ex-pastors S	3	0	0.0
THEOLOGY			
Pastors	27	12	44.4
Ex-pastors E	6	2	33.3
Ex-pastors S	13	1	7.7
OTHER			
Pastors	2	0	0.0
Ex-pastors E	3	1	33.3
Ex-pastors S	...	...	...

## Summary:

53 (or 64.6%) of the pastors gave "practical" comments.

29 (or 35.4%) of the ex-pastors gave "practical" comments.

82 (or 36.8%) of the entire group of respondents gave "practical" comments.

Those still in the pastoral ministry gave a consistently higher percentage of comments requesting a more practical emphasis than did either of the Ex-pastor groups. Nearly 65 percent (64.6%) of the practical emphasis comments came from those continuing in the pastoral ministry.

### The Dynamics of the Decision to Enter the Pastoral Ministry

#### The Age of Decision

Of all respondents, the average age for making the decision to enter the pastoral ministry was 19.2. Ex-pastors S tended to make the decision when slightly older and Pastors when slightly younger than the average. (See table 11).

TABLE 11

#### AGES OF MAKING THE DECISION AND ENTERING THE MINISTRY

	Pastors	Ex-pastors E	Ex-pastors S
Age at time of Decision to Enter	18.8	19.3	20.1
Age at time of Beginning Ministry	26.5	24.7	26.3

Two respondents made this decision when they were as young as six years of age and one made it as late as the age of thirty-seven. Although Pastors tended to decide earlier than Ex-pastors, they did not actually enter the ministry until later. The span of time between the decision

to enter and entering was, on an average, two years and four months longer for Pastors than for Ex-pastors E, and approximately one year longer than for Ex-pastors S.

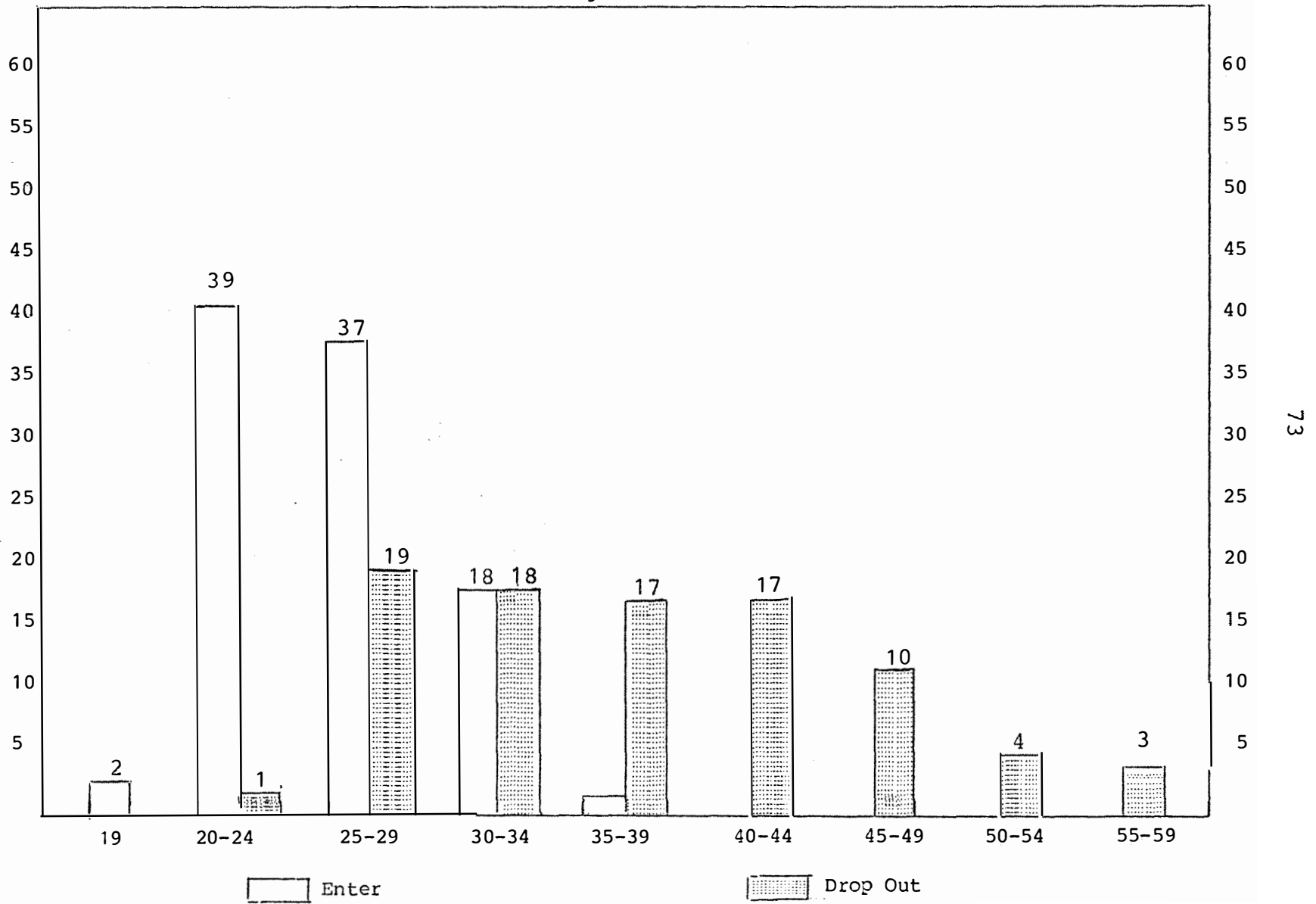
#### Ages when Ex-pastors Entered and Left the Pastorate

Most Ex-pastors finished their Seminary education and entered the pastorate before they reached the age of thirty. (See figure 2). Although it is not readily demonstrated by the bar graph, the majority entered the ministry between the ages of 23 and 26. Beginning in the late twenties, the exit door from the ministry opens and significant numbers begin to leave at each age group from 30 to 50. The striking thing about the graph is the steady rate at which they leave. On the whole, Ex-pastors did much more than just get their feet wet and then leave the ministry. The graph (and the individual tabulations which went into making the graph) would indicate that most tried the pastoral ministry for ten years or more before demitting. Over half of those who left the pastorate did so after the age of thirty-five. This number is significant in the light of the fact that although one may be able to get other employment by age thirty-five, it is a little late to retrain for another profession.

#### External Influences

All survey participants were asked to indicate the degree to which certain persons or institutions influenced their decision to enter the ministry. Their responses are

Figure #2



tabulated on table 12. Parental influence was noticeably lower for Ex-pastors E than for the other two groups. Mothers had more influence on Ex-pastors than fathers had in the decision to enter the ministry. In all three groups, pastors had the greatest influence, and the local church was second in influence. The fact that outside personal influence is important is further shown by the fact that sixteen Ex-pastors rate "the urging of others" as a major factor in their decisions to enter the ministry. (Table 13). The same type of phenomenon occurs in other professions, but when one is misguided into a secular profession, the results are not as far-reaching psychologically as when one is misguided into the ministry. Many young, inept professionals face the difficulty of re-training and entering another vocational field, but the young, inept minister faces the additional trauma of personally explaining why he/she is "forsaking his/her calling." As observed in chapter II, the Ex-pastor will invariably wear the stigma of being a "ministerial dropout."

The respondents were asked if they had received any opposition from the ones listed in table 12. Most (67 percent) of the opposition came from parents. (In the space entitled "other" many relatives were mentioned, including spouses.) Some opposition came from every person or group listed, but none were checked as often as parents. There was no significant difference between the Pastors" and

TABLE 12

## SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCES ON THE DECISION TO ENTER THE MINISTRY

	Number of High* ratings given by					
	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mother	51	41.8	9	26.5	30	45.4
Father	51	41.8	7	20.6	22	33.3
Local Church	53	53.8	15	45.4	38	57.6
College Professor	22	20.2	11	34.4	24	36.4
Christian Layperson	44	37.9	12	36.4	28	42.4
Pastor	67	56.3	18	53.0	47	72.3

\* Those respondents who checked the two highest spaces on a four-point scale ranging from low to high.



TABLE 13  
REASONS FOR ENTERING THE MINISTRY

	Factors Receiving High* Ratings by					
	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Attracted to Pastoral work	30	29.4	18	53.0	27	41.9
Salvation of Others	93	79.5	29	85.3	45	68.2
Strong sense of Call	109	93.1	32	94.1	61	92.4
Love of God	110	94.0	24	75.0	54	83.1
Sense of Service to Humankind	60	51.3	18	53.0	37	57.8
Urging of Others	13	12.1	4	12.9	16	25.9

\* Those respondents who checked the two highest spaces on a four-point scale ranging from low to high.

Ex-pastors' responses on the matter of opposition to their decisions.

### Ideological Influences

The Pastors and Ex-pastors were given one sociological and five ideological reasons for entering the pastoral ministry and asked to indicate the degree to which each had influenced their vocational choice. (Table 13 gives the results). All three groups ranked "Strong sense of 'call'" highest. Ex-pastors were slightly higher than the other two groups in their rating of "Sense of service to mankind." This latter fact may have given a certain amount of impetus to those who left the pastorate to enter social services vocations.

It seems paradoxical that relatively few Pastors were "attracted to pastoral work" while Ex-pastors show significantly higher percentages here. One could speculate that these Ex-pastors fit the category of those attracted to the idealistic master role image only to have it shattered by realism in their first parish. They see the "glamorous" aspects before entering, but experience the less glamorous side only later.

### Ecclesiastical Factors

#### Tensions in the Pastoral Setting

A parish minister must satisfy the expectations of denominational superiors, the congregation and themselves. If the pastor's master role image is different

from either the congregation's or the denominational superintendent's, he/she is faced with either compromising ideals or being in conflict with employers. The greater the gap between a pastor's ideals and the expectations of those he/she serves, the greater the tension.

The beginning pastor is prone to assume that he/she, the congregation and the denominational superiors are all moving toward the same goals. The assumption may be stated something like this, "The denominational organization and this congregation are both interested in striving toward individual commitment to Christ and to work out the implications of that commitment in the world." The pastor may find that in theory the congregation and denomination agree with this basic philosophy, but in practice they expect the pastor to perform many functions unrelated to the theory. The congregation may tell its pastor that it wants better preaching, but then deny him/her adequate preparation time. Denominational superiors may encourage pastors to "fulfill their calling" and then keep them so busy filling out statistical reports on their work that they have little time for dealing with the individuals represented by the statistics. On the one hand, the denominational structure tends to evaluate a pastor's work by a traditional set of established norms while on the other hand, a pastor's congregation tends to judge his/her professional service by a set of functional expectations. The

minister may add to the complexity of the situation because many of his/her goals may not be measurable. Working for social change, fulfilling civic responsibilities, assisting the elderly and comforting the bereaved just do not show up in the statistics sheets.

Much of the discussion which immediately follows centers around the role conflicts which ensue when theory and practice fail to comport in the ecclesiastical milieu.

### Role Conflict

In order to test Blizzard's contention that ministers spend most of their time doing the things they least enjoy,<sup>1</sup> those surveyed were queried regarding the importance of, their enjoyment of, and the time spent on five major functional roles. The tabulated results do show definite areas of role conflict. (Table 14). All three groups agreed that preaching and teaching were of highest importance and that administration was of least importance. When asked to rate these factors according to their enjoyment in performing these tasks, the results basically coincided with the ratings on the Importance scale. Rather unexpectedly, though, Pastors differed from Ex-pastors in their enjoyment of teaching, rating it fourth as compared to first and second for Ex-pastors E and Ex-pastors S respectively. Here again all three groups placed administration on the bottom of the enjoyment scale.

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<sup>1</sup>Blizzard, p. 510.

TABLE 14

## PASTORS' AND EX-PASTORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNCTIONAL ROLES\*

ROLE	IMPORTANCE			ENJOYMENT			TIME SPENT		
	Pastors	Ex-pastors E	Ex-pastors S	Pastors	Ex-pastors E	Ex-pastors S	Pastors	Ex-pastors E	Ex-pastors S
Preaching	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
Teaching	2	2	2	4	2	1	4	3	3
Calling	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	2	2
Counseling	5	4	3	2	3	2	5	5	5
Administration	4	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	4

\*Rankings are based on mean scores.

Ex-pastors S, in contrast to the other two groups, placed preaching third on the enjoyment scale, and teaching became first in importance.

When asked to give the amount of time actually spent on these activities, all three groups said they spent the most time on preaching (and preparation). This finding is in contrast to Blizzard's study where preaching was ranked number one in importance, but slipped to third place in the Time Spent category. On the whole, these Pastors and Ex-pastors E apparently were not faced with significant role conflict in the areas of preaching and calling. However, Ex-pastors S certainly felt conflict in these areas, for they enjoyed teaching the most, but spent most of their time preaching and calling. It is significant that the Ex-pastors S rated teaching and counseling as very enjoyable; these are activities which can be done outside ecclesiastical employment.

Blizzard's study revealed marked differences regarding the rating of administration low on the importance and enjoyment scales but high on the time spent scale. This same phenomenon does occur here, but not among Ex-pastors. The Pastors found that they spent a good share of their time in administrative duties while not feeling it was important or enjoyable. Ex-pastors did not rate it high in importance or enjoyment, but neither did they spend an undue amount of time in administration.

If the responses of those individuals who ranked preaching or teaching first in importance are cross-tabulated with what the same persons said consumed the most time in pastoral duties, a more marked disparity is evident. (See table 15). As can be seen from the combined totals, nearly one-half of those who believed preaching or teaching was of first importance were not able to devote adequate time to that activity.

Although all groups experienced significant levels of role conflict, it appears to be the most pronounced among Pastors and the least pronounced among Ex-pastors who entered secular service. This fact would seem to indicate that role conflict was not a major reason for demitting the ministry; rather it appears to be one of many factors which may have eroded occupational commitment.

### Job Satisfaction

The term "job satisfaction" implies harmony between the worker's internal standards and the occupational environment. For there to be harmony there must be functional reciprocity between the servant and the served. If either fails to meet the other's needs or if either fails to show some form of appreciation for "a job well done," dissatisfaction results. A pastor and a congregation tend to develop a sense of mutual fulfillment or mutual dissatisfaction together. Dissatisfaction frequently begins with just the pastor or the congregation, but then soon

TABLE 15

## COMPARISON OF MOST IMPORTANT ROLES AND AREAS OF MOST TIME SPENT

These ranked preaching or teaching first		but then this number of the same individuals spent the major portion of their time in these categories							
		Teaching	Preaching	Adminis- tration	Calling	Couns- eling	Other	Total No.	%
PREACHING									
Pastors	89	5	. . .	18	11	1	3	38	42.7
Ex-pastors E	19	1	. . .	3	2	2	1	9	47.4
Ex-pastors S	25	. . .	. . .	3	4	2	1	10	40.0
TEACHING									
Pastors	12	. . .	5	1	2	1	1	10	83.3
Ex-pastors E	4	. . .	3	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	3	75.0
Ex-pastors S	16	. . .	5	2	. . .	1	. . .	8	50.0
Totals	165							78	47.3



infects the other side. Dissatisfaction on either side does not need to spell defeat as long as the parties maintain open and frank communication.

The congregation-pastor relationship which never experiences dissatisfaction on either side is rare. Thus "job satisfaction" in reference to the pastor is a relative term. It is assumed that every pastor will be dissatisfied with certain aspects of his parish, but to what degree and for how long are the questions. The psychological-emotional make-up of the pastor also becomes an important factor. Some are prone to flee at the first scent of trouble, while others seem to have the ability to succeed under adversities.

There are three specific aspects of job satisfaction which the survey measured: (1) overall satisfaction with one's achievements, (2) external satisfaction, focusing on the congregation's actual or implied demonstration (e.g., salary) of its appreciation for the pastor's work, (3) internal satisfaction focusing on how well the congregation fulfilled the self-image of the pastor. The results are tabulated on table 16.

Ex-pastors E evidenced a greater degree of satisfaction with more of the factors than the other two groups. Since they have continued on in some form of ecclesiastical employment, this is not entirely unexpected. Pastors expressed a greater degree of dissatisfaction than

TABLE 16

## DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH FACTORS IN LAST PASTORATE\*

Satisfaction with:	No.	%	Satisfaction with:	No.	%
Your contribution to the life of that church			Degree to which the work utilized your strengths rather than your weaknesses		
Pastors	82	68.3	Pastors	45	37.5
Ex-pastors E	29	90.6	Ex-pastors E	19	59.4
Ex-pastors S	41	62.1	Ex-pastors S	30	45.4
Time allowed for private study			Salary and living arrangements		
Pastors	64	53.3	Pastors	46	38.3
Ex-pastors E	16	50.0	Ex-pastors E	15	48.9
Ex-pastors S	32	48.5	Ex-pastors S	15	22.8
Congregation's willingness to work			The receptiveness of the congregation to innovative ideas		
Pastors	36	30.0	Pastors	42	35
Ex-pastors E	16	50.0	Ex-pastors E	12	37.4
Ex-pastors S	25	37.9	Ex-pastors S	13	19.7
Quality and amount of church leadership			Freedom to speak your convictions		
Pastors	50	41.6	Pastors	86	71.7
Ex-pastors E	14	43.8	Ex-pastors E	26	81.2
Ex-pastors S	28	42.4	Ex-pastors S	34	51.5
Potential vs. actual church budget			Congregation demonstration of appreciation for your work		
Pastors	58	48.3	Pastors	67	65.8
Ex-pastors E	21	68.8	Ex-pastors E	20	62.5
Ex-pastors S	26	39.4	Ex-pastors S	28	42.4
The use of church monies					
Pastors	71	59.2			
Ex-pastors E	22	68.7			
Ex-pastors S	29	44.0			

\*Figures given are for those who gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a six-point scale ranging from Very Dissatisfied (1) to Very Satisfied (6).

Ex-pastors with the items regarding the utilization of their strengths and the congregations' willingness to work. The evidence of satisfaction among Ex-pastors E is not nearly as surprising as the degree of dissatisfaction found among Pastors. A congregation's willingness (or lack thereof) to work is important to the pastor's day-to-day morale. One Ex-pastor succinctly expressed his feelings at this point when he wrote concerning his last congregation, "You nearly suffocated me with your lack of interest." The dissatisfaction of Pastors and Ex-pastors with the congregation's willingness to work is further corroborated by their responses when they were asked to indicate any factors which they believed hindered them from being fully effective in the pastorate. By far the most frequently checked response was, "Difficult to motivate laypersons to do the work of the church." Here as well, the Pastors' responses indicated much more discontent than Ex-pastors. Nearly two-thirds of the Pastors found their lack of ability to motivate others to be a hindrance to their effectiveness, while only one-fourth of the Ex-pastors E and about two-fifths of the Ex-pastors S felt the same insufficiency (see table 31, p. 114).

Closely associated with a congregation's willingness to be motivated is their receptivity to innovative ideas. This category was given the lowest overall rating by the three groups. Hadden, in The Gathering Storm,

probably expresses the feelings of many pastors at this point when he states:

"The laymen...seeks comfort and escape from the world in the sanctuary of God. He does not understand why ministers are not satisfied to restrict their concern to their own fellowship of believers, and to the extent that clergymen move outside their own flock, they pursue a collision course with laity."<sup>1</sup>

Hadden may be speaking more in terms of an innovative theological idea, but regardless of whether the innovation lies in the area of the ideological or the practical, pastors and ex-pastors find this lack of receptiveness on the part of the congregation to be one of the most frustrating points of their ministry.

Those surveyed did not appear to be completely satisfied with their salary and living arrangements. Both of these are indirect indicators of the value the congregation places on one's work. If the salary is low and the parsonage is in disrepair, the minister begins to feel that the parish doesn't really care about him/her, especially if the congregation has the means to do better. Not only may poor living conditions and low salary have a psychological effect on one's self-esteem, but the added pressure of having to stretch every dollar to its maximum effectiveness can also be a drain on one's emotional energy. In discussing salary, the interviewees did not convey a spirit of greed, but rather concern over the fact

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<sup>1</sup>Hadden, p. 99.

that some of their congregations simply did not pay a living wage. All seemed to be content to live a sacrificial life, but balked at the point where they felt the servant image was taken advantage of by the congregation.

When the salary and stress ratings as given by the respondents on the "Occupation Grid" were compared, there was a small, but significant indication that there is a correlation between low salaries and the amount of stress. (See table 17). The cross-tabulation of these two items indicated that approximately two percent of the positions held by Pastors and Ex-pastors E, and just over 17 percent of positions held by Ex-pastors S were low salary-high stress in nature. On the other hand, when all the high salary-high stress positions were tallied, the percentages were significantly lower. Although the percentages are not great in either category, there is some indication that low salaries contributed to the amount of stress experienced by the survey participants. There are many causes of stress in the pastorate, but few have as obvious a solution as low salary.

When Ex-pastors were asked to give reasons for leaving the pastoral ministry (and rank them if more than one), the item, "low salary," received three responses (8.9 percent) from Ex-pastors E and twelve (18.5 percent) responses from Ex-pastors S. Five of these responses were ranked as the primary reason for leaving and nine others placed it as second or third in importance to their

TABLE 17

## RELATION OF SALARY AND STRESS

Combination of Stress and Salary	Percentage of Responses indicating such
Low <sup>*</sup> Salary--High <sup>+</sup> Stress	
Pastors	9.3
Ex-pastors E	10.8
Ex-pastors S	17.1
High Salary--High Stress	
Pastors	4.9
Ex-pastors E	4.0
Ex-pastors S	.01

\*"Low" refers to responses indicating a rating of 1 or 2 on a six-point scale.  
<sup>+</sup>"High" refers to responses indicating a rating of 5 or 6 on a six-point scale.

decision to demit. One Ex-pastor S did not elaborate, but said that the fact that he was offered a higher salary and/or benefits played an important part in his decision to leave the ministry.

Table 18 reveals that salaries increased for over half of all who left the ministry and entered secular employment, while only one-fifth of them experienced a decrease. Several interviewees expressed a sense of being set free from the constant strain of financial hardships. The percentages above give factual support to their feelings.

TABLE 18

## SALARY INCREASE/DECREASE OF EX-PASTORS OVER LAST PASTORATE

Salary:	Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%
Improved greatly	8	23.5	21	31.8
Improved some	6	17.6	20	30.3
Stayed approximately the same	10	29.4	15	22.7
Declined some	10	29.4	4	6.1
Declined greatly	0	0	6	9.1

The fact that low salary is the primary or contributing factor in career change decisions for 15 percent of the Ex-pastors and the fact that only 38.3 percent of continuing Pastors are very satisfied with their salaries should be cause for concern. The percentages may not be alarmingly high, but for those drawing the low salaries, unexpected financial set-backs can be quite disconcerting.

The fact that a wholesome reciprocity does often exist between pastor and parish, in spite of the difficulties just discussed, is evidenced by the responses to the first and last items on table 16. All survey participants were quite satisfied with their personal contribution to the life of their last church and apparently they received positive feed back from the parish for their

endeavors. Words and deeds of appreciation help both parties to forgive and forget each others' short-comings.

### Theological Factors

#### Relation of Dogmatics to Practices

##### The Call

A "strong sense of call" was the primary reason the respondents gave for entering the ministry, as revealed on table 13, (p. 76). Two questions were asked in order to try to ascertain the survey participants' understanding of the term "call" and its relationship to their vocation. First, they were asked, In making your decision to enter the ministry, would you say

\_\_\_you answered a "call" more compelling than any rational personal assessment?

\_\_\_you were guided by your likes and dislikes?

Second, the corollary question was asked, Would you define the term "call" as

\_\_\_an unusual, supernatural kind of experience that separates a person to God's work?

\_\_\_a very natural experience, similar to what prompts a person to go into any vocation?

In both instances, they were also given space to add different responses. Several wrote "a combination of A and B" in the "Other" category, thus this response is tabulated as well. (See tables 19 and 20.)

Most respondents believed they had been compelled to enter the ministerial profession by a "call." The percentage of Ex-pastors S who "answered a call" was ten



TABLE 19  
CALL AND ABILITIES AS FACTORS IN THE DECISION  
TO ENTER THE MINISTRY

Decision criteria	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A "Call"	102	82.9	30	88.2	48	72.7
Abilities	4	3.1	2	5.9	9	13.6
A combination of both criteria	7	5.7	...	...	4	6.1
Other	10	8.1	2	5.9	5	7.6

TABLE 20  
"CALL" DEFINED

Definition choice	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Supernatural	88	71.5	26	76.5	38	57.6
Natural	12	9.8	5	14.7	13	19.7
Combination of both definitions	8	6.5	1	2.9	7	10.6
Other	15	12.2	2	5.9	8	12.1

percentage points lower than for Pastors, with more of them being guided into the ministry by their abilities, likes and dislikes. The over-all differences do not appear to be great enough to warrant any categorical deductions regarding the relationship of the call and those who demitted the ministry.

Assuming that there would be some correlation between the answers given regarding the question just discussed and the definitions chosen, it was not unpredictable that a majority of all three groups chose to define "call" in terms of the supernatural (Table 20). However, it is certainly not a perfect positive correlation. The percentages of those choosing the supernatural definition dropped ten to fifteen points. One-fifth of the Ex-pastors S chose to define it in some other way. The fact that sixteen respondents put down "a combination of both" raises the question of how many more would have chosen that rubric as an option if it had been offered. (The same may have been true of the previous question as well.)

The theological concept of the call has traditionally been a significant doctrine in evangelical churches. Sidney E. Mead in The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, while describing the historical development of the "Evangelical Conception of the Ministry" gives these five criteria evangelicals have traditionally included in their examination of a candidate for the

ministry: the authenticity of his religious experience, the acceptability of his moral character, the genuineness of his call, the correctness of his doctrine, and the adequacy of his preparation.<sup>1</sup> Thus the high regard for the call demonstrated in the responses was to be expected.

In the light of the evangelical concept of the "call," this writer assumed that most Ex-pastors would consider themselves as being temporarily or permanently out of the ministry. However, the majority of those responding regarded themselves as "still in the ministry, but not in the pastoral ministry" when asked, Do you regard yourself now as:

- ☐ Still in the pastoral ministry?
- ☐ Still in the ministry, but not in the pastoral ministry?
- ☐ Temporarily out of the pastoral ministry?
- ☐ Permanently out of the pastoral ministry?
- ☐ Planning to leave the ministry for secular employment?

It would appear from table 21 that the strong concept of call held by a majority of the respondents as indicated earlier has some influence on the responses here. It is not quite as surprising that Ex-pastors who have continued in some form of ecclesiastical employment would choose this answer; however, those in secular employment who chose this item would seem to be broadening their concept of "ministry" beyond the normal evangelical

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<sup>1</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, eds., The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 231.

definition. When the types of professions being entered by Ex-pastors S were tabulated, a partial reason for their responses was found. Thirty-eight (57.6 percent) of the Ex-pastors S had entered the fields of education or social service. These are certainly areas in which one could feel he/she was fulfilling his/her ministerial calling.

TABLE 21  
EX-PASTORS' SELF-DESCRIPTION OF RELATIONSHIP  
TO THE MINISTRY

Present relationship to the ministry	Ex-pastors E No.      %	Ex-pastors S No.      %
Still in the ministry but not in the pastoral ministry	27      90.0	42      63.6
Temporarily out of the ministry	1      3.3	7      10.6
Permanently out of the ministry	0      0	15      22.7
Other	2      6.7	2      3.0
Totals	30      100.0	66      99.9

#### Changing Denominations

The participants were surveyed as to whether or not they had changed denominations since the age of twenty. Crossing over denominational lines was not uncommon as can be seen in table 22 below. There did not appear to be any significant trends in the moves. With

the exception of three moves, all changes were basically lateral as far as doctrinal stance was concerned. The Ex-pastors S made the most moves (40.9 percent). This figure seems high in the light of the fact that the changes were apparently not doctrinally motivated. The fact that changing denominations is more frequently evidenced with Ex-pastors S is probably one indication of the amount of frustration experienced on their part. Quite logically, pastors who face frustrations in their vocation may believe that their lot would be improved by changing denominational environments. Three (2.4 percent) of the pastors made two or more changes of denominations, but five (7.6 percent) of the Ex-pastors S made as many changes. One of these made five changes, which speaks volumes about the level of frustration he was feeling.

TABLE 22

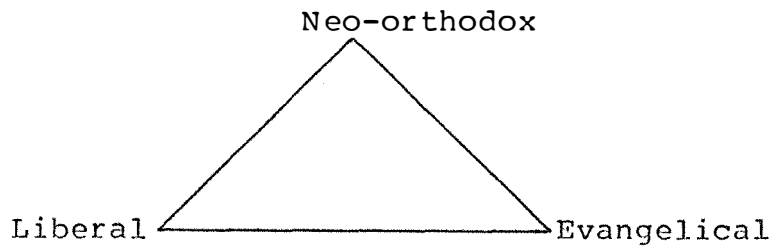
## NUMBER OF DENOMINATIONAL CHANGES

	No.	%
Pastors	37	30.1
Ex-pastors E	9	26.5
Ex-pastors S	27	40.9

Theological Changes

A triangle (see below) labelled liberal, neo-orthodox and evangelical at the points was used to determine

theological change among the respondents. They were asked to place an "X" on the spot which most accurately represented their theological position when they were graduated from Seminary, and an "O" on the spot which best represented their present set of beliefs.<sup>1</sup>



More theological change was evidenced here than in the denominational changes. However, the movement was not great, as can be seen in table 23. The largest movement in theological position is found among the Ex-pastors S. Nearly one-fifth of this group made a significant change in theological stance. Since one's theology invariably colors one's world view, a change in theological perspective may well result in a change of how one views his/her ministry in the world. Although it is difficult to measure precisely the effect of one's beliefs on one's actions, every-day experience reveals the high correlation between the two. The truth of this observation is buttressed by the responses of six Ex-pastors S who indicated that the fact that their faith had changed was a significant factor

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<sup>1</sup>The idea for this question was borrowed from Donald Smith, who used it in the writers collegium group at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

TABLE 23

## CHANGE IN THEOLOGICAL POSITION

	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Evangelical at graduation and at present	107	91.5	23	95.8	49	77.8
Move from evangelical to (or toward) neo-orthodox	5	4.3	...	....	5	7.9
Move from evangelical to (or toward) liberal	2	1.7	1	4.2	7	11.1
Other	1	0.9	...	...	2	3.2
Totals		98.5		100.0		100.0

behind their decision to leave the pastorate. For two of these six this was the primary reason for leaving.

In order to further ascertain shifts in theological position and the effects of these shifts, the respondents were offered ten contrasting statements which described five theological polarities. They were instructed to rank them in the order of importance, if they indicated more than one change in theological position. Over one-half of all Ex-pastor respondents (Ex-pastors E - 58.8 percent; Ex-pastors S - 56.0 percent) did not indicate any changes in any of the six areas suggested. Several of these wrote "no changes" beside the list of choices. To further complicate the tabulation of the responses, several of the remaining respondents who made multiple choices did not prioritize them. Thus, in reading table 24 below, it is necessary to keep in mind that each response does not necessarily indicate the primary reason for leaving the ministry. The percentages then simply indicate that this part of the entire group considered this particular response as a factor in leaving. Aside from these difficulties, the responses did reveal that over two-fifths of all Ex-pastors had indeed changed at some point(s) in their theological outlook since leaving Seminary.

The two items receiving the most tallies were to be expected. The move from theoretical to practical emphases is probably a normal part of the maturing process



TABLE 24

## CHANGES IN THEOLOGICAL POSITION AMONG EX-PASTORS

	Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%
From theoretical to practical emphasis	9	26.5	15	22.7
From practical to theoretical emphasis	2	5.9	2	3.0
From liberal to conservative theological doctrine	0	0	0	0
From conservative to liberal theological doctrine	1	2.9	7	10.6
From humanistic to evangelistic emphasis	0	0	0	0
From evangelistic to humanistic emphasis	4	11.8	8	12.1
From rather tolerant to rather strict views	0	0	0	0
From rather strict to rather tolerant views	8	23.5	17	25.8
From weak faith to a strong committed faith	6	17.6	8	12.1
From a strong committed faith to a weak faith	1	2.9	3	4.5
Totals		100.1		99.8

in any professional endeavor. Also the move from rather strict to rather tolerant views would similarly result from the growth and maturing experiences of pastoral life.

The indicated shifts from evangelistic to humanistic emphases and from conservative to liberal theological doctrine harmonize well with the trends previously noted from the "theological triangle" responses.

When one views the overall trends indicated by the tabulations on the first four couplets, it is obvious that the shifts are definitely in the direction of the pragmatic, liberal and more tolerant positions. Only four Ex-pastors indicated a move from the practical to the theoretical.

It was interesting to note that of the few who did make multiple choices and rank them, the shifts from theoretical to practical and strict to tolerant views were rated higher in importance than shifts in theological doctrine. The only respondent who rated his shift in theology from conservative to liberal as being the primary influence on his decision to leave added this comment: "I consider myself a conservative-liberal or better yet a contemporary conservative."

These changes in theological perspective cannot be equated with "loss of faith" for only 4 percent of all Ex-pastors indicated a shift from strong faith to weak faith, whereas 14 percent indicated just the reverse was true for them. This was borne out in the interviews where

the researcher perceived that several of the Ex-pastors had experienced a deepening of faith in the process of leaving the pastorate.

### Personal Factors

#### Emotional and Psychological Support

#### Sources of Approval

Table 25 shows the rankings given by the respondents as to whose praise and/or approval they most highly valued compared to how they actually received support from the same reference groups. The spouse rates first in both categories for all three groups. The fact that there is a vital interaction between the Pastor's home life and his/her occupational role becomes crucial when career decisions are involved. If Pastors fail to receive support from their most valued and reliable source, continuance in the occupation is jeopardized. Quite logically, the second most valued source of support is the laity because they are the focus of the Pastor's occupational efforts. If the minister does not receive positive feedback from the very ones being ministered to, the vocation loses its meaning.

Earlier in this manuscript reference was made to the fact that when the minister faces marital difficulties in his own home, he/she may find it very difficult to share this fact with laypersons because he/she is expected to be exemplary in all areas of life. This tension is

TABLE 25  
RANKING\* OF IMPORTANCE AND RECEPTION  
OF SUPPORT GROUPS' APPROVAL

	Pastors' ranking of		Ex-pastors' E ranking of		Ex-pastors' S ranking of	
	most valued approval	actual reception of support	most valued approval	actual reception of support	most valued approval	actual reception of support
Spouse	1	1	1	1	1	1
Laypersons	2	2	2	2	2	2
Superiors	3	4	6	4	3	4
Church Staff	4	3	3	3	4	3
Pastors in denomination	5	5	4	5	5	5
Pastors in community	6	6	5	6	6	6

\*Based on the mean score of each category where respondents were asked to rank them one through six with "one" being high.

further heightened by the fact that laity are the second most highly valued members of the pastor's support system. If the laity becomes aware of the minister's marital problems, much of the second support system may fail--as well as the first. Thus, the pastor tries to work out the family problems without benefit of counsel, lest someone in the parish learn of it.

Pastors and Ex-pastors S ranked denominational superiors third as a source of desired approval, while Ex-pastors E ranked them last. Denominational leaders are very important when the pastor's total work is being evaluated and thus may have been ranked third for that reason by the two groups. In fact, the ranking of Pastors and Ex-pastors S coincides at all points and this writer speculates that with the exception of the first rank (spouse), the guiding motive for the prioritizing process may have been related to job security. If one were to rank the same groups (aside from spouses) of people according to how important they are to the pastor's job security, they would be given in precisely the same order. The only exception may be in the placement of laypersons and denominational superiors--and they would vary in direct relationship to the denominational form of church government. In this study most respondents were involved in congregational or connectional types of church government, thus laypersons would be very vital to job security.

The basic harmony of the two rankings within each group is noteworthy. With the exception of the rankings for denominational superiors as given by Ex-pastors E, there is never a variation of more than one rating point between the comparative columns. There appears to be little evidence for frustration over the respondents' ideal and real support systems.

### Sources of Help

The problem of stress in the pastoral ministry was discussed under sociological factors for leaving the pastorate. In order to gain insight into ministers' sources of help in times of stress, the respondents were asked to rank suggested sources in the order in which they sought help from them and then they were asked to prioritize these sources according to how supportive each had actually been. (Table 26).

Just as in the preceding discussion regarding approval, spouses were ranked number one in both the "ideal" and the "actual" columns with regard to being sources of help during times of stress by the majority of participants in all three groups. This repetition of unanimously ranking the spouse as primary in a support role further magnifies the extreme importance of the spouses' relationship to the Pastors' vocational effectiveness.

TABLE 26

RANKING\* OF EXPECTED AND ACTUAL SOURCES  
OF HELP IN TIMES OF STRESS

	Pastors' Rank of		Ex-pastors E Rank of		Ex-pastors' S Rank of	
	Expected Source of help	Actual Source of help	Expected Source of help	Actual Source of help	Expected Source of help	Actual Source of help
Spouse	1	1	1	1	1	1
Superiors	2	4	2	3	4	5
Colleagues	3	2	3	2	3	3
Self	4	3	4	4	2	2
Laypersons	5	5	5	5	5	4

\*Based on the mean score of each category where respondents were asked to rank them one through five with "one" being high.

The fact that the spouse is the prime source of support for the pastor is not a unique phenomenon to the ministerial profession. Spouses would probably be ranked as the number one source of support by most professionals; however, because of the fact that many ministers do not seek marital counselling when they need it--in order that their image will not be compromised--they are placed in a position which is unique to their profession. Much help could be offered at this very point by the group ranked

second in preference by Pastors and Ex-pastors E, viz., the denominational superiors. There really is no person or group which can better act as the Pastor's pastor than this group. Therefore it would seem that denominational superiors should place high among their priorities the establishment of a pastoral relationship with the ministerial families under their purview. Every pastor truly does need a pastor.

Laypersons, who were ranked second in the previous table, are here ranked fifth. This apparent paradox may be related to the fact that many ministers feel they are isolated in their vocations. Pastors spend a good share of their lives helping people, and yet do not feel that these same people will help them.

Two further comments regarding table 26 are in order. Ex-pastors S ranked denominational superiors quite low on the spectrum of what they expected, and found them to be even less supportive than their expectations. Some of the interviewees spoke quite candidly on this issue. They contended that many times they felt forsaken when difficult home or church situations arose. As long as everything was going well, they had "support," but not when times were difficult. One interviewee summarized his feelings regarding his relationship with denominational superiors with one word: "neglected." Another stated his frustration with these words, "I do not feel cared for as a



person, but on the basis of what I do. I feel that I must succeed in the areas they [denominational superiors] deem important."

Ex-pastors S also ranked "self," as a source of help, quite high (2) on both the "expected" and "actual" categories. The implications are great for the pastoral family. In essence, it means that the Pastor and spouse are carrying the major part of their personal burdens--and the burdens of the church. It is difficult for family members to withstand those kinds of pressures over an extended period of time and maintain good mental health.

#### Self-Image

An important aspect of one's vocational self-image is how one sees him/herself in relation to other professionals. In the table below (table 27) are the rankings given by the respondents as to how they believed people in their present communities would rank eight specific professions as to prestige. All three groups agree on their rankings except Ex-pastors E who ranked business executives higher than bankers in social status. The findings here harmonize well with the results of other studies. According to Fichter, pastors tend to believe they are rated lower in social status by the community members than they actually are.<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that invariably the community

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<sup>1</sup>Fichter, p. 124.

thinks more highly of the pastoral profession than pastors do. All pastors are caught in what philosophers call the egocentric predicament: no matter how hard one tries, he/she cannot get outside or beyond his/her own experience. As long as a person is in the pastoral role, it is difficult to see oneself vocationally as he/she really is or to appreciate fully how he/she is seen by others.

TABLE 27  
RANKING PROFESSIONS ACCORDING  
TO SOCIAL PRESTIGE

	Pastors	Ex-pastors E	Ex-pastors S
Physician	1	1	1
Lawyer	2	2	2
Banker	3	4	3
Business executive	4	3	4
College Professor	5	5	5
Clergy	6	6	6
Teacher	7	7	7
Social worker	8	8	8

The fact that pastors tend to rate themselves low in prestige has implications for their overall effectiveness in the service of the community. The pastor's relationship with other professionals in the congregation and community may tend to be more "father-son" than adult-

adult. There is sound wisdom behind the scripture's injunction that a person is "not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think" (Romans 12:3). However, this injunction certainly does not connote that one should demean his/her self-image to the point that it affects vocational effectiveness.

#### Ministerial Effectiveness

Three questions were asked relating to effectiveness in the ministry. First the participants were asked, Are (were) you comfortable with your level of achievement in the ministry? (See table 28). Ex-pastors E expressed a high degree of satisfaction while over one-half of the Ex-pastors S revealed that they were not satisfied with their level of achievement. This difference is important because one's sense of achievement (or lack of it) affects his/her day-to-day outlook. Few would dispute that a sense of accomplishment always makes one's work more enjoyable.

Second, an analogous question was asked regarding the attainment of the goals in the ministry. When asked if they did accomplish their goals, the results revealed that both Pastors and Ex-pastors S felt better about reaching their goals than they did about their levels of achievement (See table 29). The writer assumed that there would be nearly perfect positive correlation between

TABLE 28

## SATISFACTION WITH LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE MINISTRY

	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Satisfied	70	56.9	28	82.4	30	45.5
Dissatisfied	53	43.1	6	17.6	36	54.5

TABLE 29

## ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOALS IN THE MINISTRY

	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Satisfied	77	62.6	27	79.4	36	54.5
Dissatisfied	46	37.4	7	20.6	30	45.5

the responses to these two questions. However, a number in each group apparently felt good about achieving some goals, but were still not satisfied with their overall achievements.

The fact that there is such a disparity between Ex-pastors E and Ex-pastors S on the above two questions may explain the fact that in response to another question,

regarding reasons for leaving the pastorate, ten Ex-pastors S checked the statement, 'You simply did not enjoy the pastorate,' while none of the Ex-pastors E expressed that feeling. There is little, if any, enjoyment in minimal achievement.

The third question related to effectiveness inquired, 'Are you impatient when your purposes are frustrated?' The responses are given in table 30.

TABLE 30  
FREQUENCY OF IMPATIENCE OVER FRUSTRATED PURPOSES

	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Always	7	5.7	0	0	4	6.1
Frequently	65	52.8	18	52.9	39	59.1
Seldom	51	41.5	16	47.1	22	33.3
Never	0	0	0	0	1	1.5
Totals	123	100.0	34	100.0	66	100.0

Ex-pastors S show a higher degree of impatience than their counterparts; however, there is not the same high degree of disparity as evidenced in the previous two tables. The responses given here are what one would expect of any group of professionals. Most individuals experience some frustration in their reactions, while individuals are rare who

can say that they are "always" or "never" frustrated. Such is the case here.

### Vocational Inadequacies

Respondents were asked to check from a list of suggested "difficulties" those things which they believed may have hindered them from being fully effective in the pastoral ministry. The results are in table 31. Since they could check as many as they wished, the percentages refer to the number in a particular group which checked that item. Some of these items have been discussed earlier in the manuscript; however, the entire table is given here for purposes of overall comparison.

The most frequently checked item relates to the ability to motivate people. Ex-pastors S gave this item nearly twice as many votes as any other item. An even higher percentage, 64.2 percent, or seventy-nine of the pastors felt this inability adversely affected their ministry. The fact that Pastors rated this item higher than Ex-pastors would seem to indicate that, although important to one's effectiveness, it is not a primary reason for demitting the ministry.

A little less than one-third of Ex-pastors E found the ability to raise money to be a difficult task. This item and the ability to motivate people were the only vocational factors which received a very significant percentage of responses from Ex-pastors E. In fact, this

TABLE 31

## VOCATIONAL DIFFICULTIES AS HINDRANCES TO EFFECTIVENESS

	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Difficult to preach	7	5.7*	2	5.9*	9	13.6
Difficult to say the right thing while calling	14	11.4	3	8.8	13	19.7
Ability to raise money	23	18.7	10	29.4	14	21.2
Ability to plan and carry out long-range programs	47	38.2	6	17.6	16	24.2
Difficult to motivate laypersons to do the work of the church	79	64.2	9	26.5	30	45.5
Difficult to call on strangers	27	22.0	7	20.6	12	18.2
Ability to work with people	6	4.9	...	...	7	10.6

\*Percentage of the total group (Pastors 123, Ex-pastors E 34, Ex-pastors S 66) who checked that item.

group generally appears to have sensed fewer hindrances to their effectiveness than Pastors and Ex-pastors S. A partial explanation for their choosing to continue in some form of ecclesiastical employment after leaving the pastorate is found in this fact. The difference at this point between Ex-pastors E and Ex-pastors S is corroborated by the fact that while none of the former checked

the item "Felt personally inadequate" as a reason for leaving the ministry, eight of the latter indicated it as such.

### Family Problems

Marital problems apparently lie at the core of some ministers' decisions to leave the pastorate. Table 32 below gives the marital status of all three groups being studied.

TABLE 32  
MARITAL STATUS OF PASTORS AND EX-PASTORS

	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	2	1.6	1	2.9	2	3.0
Married	115	93.5	33	97.1	51	77.3
Divorced	...	...	...	...	3	4.6
Widowed and Remarried	4	3.3	...	...	1	1.5
Divorced and Remarried	2	1.6	...	...	9	13.6
Totals	123	100.0	34	100.0	66	100.0



It is readily apparent that most persons surveyed are married and living with their first spouse. However, nearly one-fifth (18.2 percent) of the Ex-pastors in secular occupations have been divorced, whereas only 1.6 percent of the Pastors and none of the Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical employment have been divorced. Although these divorce statistics are not high, they do represent a significant factor in the decision to leave the pastorate. Marital dissolution is certainly not characteristic of most decisions to demit the pastorate, but at the same time, it is either a complicating factor or a precipitating factor for a significant minority.

Ex-pastors were asked, At the time you were making the decision to leave the pastorate, was the relationship between you and your spouse:

- ☐ Warm and supportive?
- ☐ Usually supportive, but unpredictable?
- ☐ Mediocre?
- ☐ Tending toward separation?
- ☐ Separated or divorced?

The results of the above question demonstrated the importance of family problems in career change decisions. On table 33 below, the reason that some gave marital problems as the primary reason for leaving the pastorate becomes evident. Most of the Ex-pastors who entered ecclesiastical employment said they found their spouse to be warm and supportive; however, nearly one-fourth of those who entered secular vocations found the relationship with their mates

TABLE 33

## HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIPS OF EX-PASTORS

Description of Relationship	Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%
Warm and Supportive	31	93.9	49	76.7
Usually supportive-unpredictable	1	3.0	6	9.4
Mediocre	0	0	2	3.1
Tending toward separation	1	3.0	4	6.3
Separated or divorced	0	0	3	4.7
Totals	33	99.9	64	100.1

to be otherwise. Nine (14.1 percent) said that their relationship was somewhere on the continuum of mediocre to divorce. The difference noted above between the two groups of Ex-pastors is probably important. Because of many denominations' general negative feeling regarding those who are divorced being in positions of leadership, it is quite logical that those with serious marital difficulties would choose to leave church-related work entirely.

The survey participants were also asked, How did your spouse feel about your decision to leave the pastorate? The results demonstrate that spouses were frequently ready to leave. (Table 34). One-half of the Ex-pastor E spouses either preferred to leave or were eager to leave, and an

TABLE 34

## SPOUSES' FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DECISION TO LEAVE

Description of Feeling	Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%
Reluctant to leave	1	3.1	5	7.9
Willing--but preferred to stay	6	18.8	7	11.1
Neutral	9	28.1	14	22.2
Preferred to leave--but willing to stay	13	40.6	19	30.2
Eager to leave	3	9.4	18	28.6
Totals	32	100.0	63	100.0

even greater percentage (58.8 percent) of the wives of Ex-pastors S were desiring to leave. Later our study will demonstrate what an important place the spouse plays in the support system of the pastor. If this highly important member of the pastor's support system fails to lend that support, a career change decision becomes a probability--if not an inevitability.

The Ex-pastors were asked to rate their feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding their spouses' contribution to their effectiveness and the amount of time they had for family and private life. (Table 35). Ex-pastors S were not as appreciative of their spouses' contribution to their effectiveness as were Pastors and

TABLE 35

## SATISFACTION/DISSATISFACTION WITH HOME LIFE

Spouses' contribution to your effectiveness	Ranking of Satisfaction*						Mean
	1 No. %	2 No. %	3 No. %	4 No. %	5 No. %	6 No. %	
Pastors	... ..	... ..	7 5.8	15 12.5	38 31.7	60 50.0	5.3
Ex-pastors E	... ..	... ..	... ..	4 12.9	7 22.6	20 64.5	5.5
Ex-pastors S	3 4.6	2 3.1	7 10.8	10 15.4	15 23.1	27 41.5	4.6
Time for family and private life							
Pastors	2 1.7	15 12.5	20 16.7	30 25.0	40 33.3	12 10.0	4.0
Ex-pastors E	1 3.2	5 16.1	8 25.8	6 19.4	11 35.5	... ..	3.6
Ex-pastors S	4 6.2	7 10.8	12 18.5	28 43.1	11 16.9	2 3.1	3.5

\* "One" being very dissatisfied; 6 being very satisfied.

### Ex-pastors E.

The tabulation of the question regarding the amount of time spent with family exhibits a small disparity between Ex-pastors and Pastors. The mean scores reveal that, on the whole, Pastors were barely satisfied, while the Ex-pastors were somewhat dissatisfied.

Family relations have an influence on a person's job effectiveness, since relations at home invariably affect one's ability to function well on the job. If job performance is adversely affected, one becomes dissatisfied with the job as well. Then the job dissatisfaction becomes the source of one more irritant at home. As mentioned in the review of literature, Pastors find it very difficult to seek help when family problems arise, because they cannot allow their images to be tarnished in the eyes of the congregation. In many cases the revealing of one's family problems is equivalent to giving a death knell to one's career.

Denominational leaders in particular should be a pastor's pastor. When pastors are facing marital difficulties, the only ones to whom they can turn--in most cases--are the denominational superiors. Too frequently pastors have received judgment instead of support and counsel. In both the interviews and questionnaires, several comments were made regarding the lack of "pastoral" type support from denominational superiors. One pastor

spoke directly to the point when he wrote, "More support, personal support is needed. I am expected to visit, counsel, exhort, encourage my flock. I also need visitation, counseling, exhortation and encouragement." In the same vein, another wrote, "I would appreciate more of a 'pastoral' superior than an 'executive' superior." Conversely, one of the Ex-pastors who had faced a serious marital crisis commented on the fine support he received from his superiors.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROCESS AND CONSEQUENCES OF LEAVING THE PASTORATE

#### Reasons for Leaving

The previous chapter has analyzed both the direct and indirect reasons the respondents may have had for leaving the ministry. Most Ex-pastors give the direct or empirical reasons for leaving when asked specifically why they left the ministry. The questionnaire asked the respondents to check their reason(s) for leaving the pastorate and to prioritize them if more than one reason played a part in their decision. Most of the twenty-five reasons were aimed at the direct reasons rather than the indirect. Table 36 gives the twelve most frequently checked responses for each group of subjects surveyed. Most of the twenty-five suggested responses were checked at least once by Ex-pastors E and all of them were checked at least twice by Ex-pastors S. The six leading reasons in each group did receive a fair number of tallies each; however, beyond the six, the responses dwindled to only a few in each category. Although the division is not precise, the first six choices in each group tend

TABLE 36

## DOMINANT REASONS FOR LEAVING THE PASTORATE

Ex-pastors E	Ex-pastors S
1. Opportunity for larger and more meaningful area of service	1. Opportunity for larger and more meaningful area of service
2. Change was a planned step in your life-long goals.	2. Marital or family problems
3. Low Income	3. Change was a planned step in your life-long goals.
4. Personal crisis forced decision to leave	4. Unable to relocate
5. Offered higher salary and/or benefits	5. Low income
6. Local congregation forced you to move	6. Local congregation forced you to move
7. Felt church was confining itself to narrow social spectrum	7. Trouble among parishioners hindered your effectiveness
8. Marital or family problems	8. Your own personal faith changed
9. Difficulty in getting laymen to see the value of the church program	9. You simply did not enjoy the pastorate
10. Frustration over multiplicity of tasks	10. Felt personally inadequate
11. Church did not take your leadership seriously	11. Uncertain of your calling
12. Disillusioned with church's relevance to world's problems	12. Frustration over multiplicity of tasks



to be centered around empirical reasons and the latter six tend to be clustered around the ideological and psychological reasons. "Opportunity for larger and more meaningful areas of service" was checked as the primary reason for leaving the pastorate by five Ex-pastors E and five Ex-pastors S. Ten Ex-pastors E and twelve Ex-pastors S gave it as a secondary cause for leaving. These responses comport well with the previously mentioned fact that 90 percent of Ex-pastors E and 63.6 percent of Ex-pastors S expressed the belief that they were "still in the ministry, but not in the pastoral ministry." Their new areas of service have become extensions of their ministerial calling.

Both groups also gave a high ranking to the suggested response that the "change was a planned step in your life-long goals." Four of the five Ex-pastors E who gave this as a primary response are in some way related to seminary education, according to cross-tabulations with the occupation grid. Some seminaries attempt to secure professors with pastoral experience, believing that they make better teachers; thus this type of life-planning is quite logical. The Ex-pastors S who gave the response entered various fields of service and one can only speculate as to the motives behind their planning to enter and leave the pastoral ministry.

Marital and family problems were an influencing factor for a significant number (ten) in their decisions

to leave the ministry. As noted earlier, the ministerial profession is vulnerable at this point and thus its high ranking here is predictable.

Inadequate salaries ranked third with Ex-pastors E and fifth with Ex-pastors S as a reason for demitting the pastorate. The salary comparison table (37) below shows the beginning and ending pastoral salaries as well as the present salary for Ex-pastors. The beginning and present salary is shown for Pastors. Ex-pastors tended to begin lower than their counterparts and their ending salaries showed insignificant improvement. If there were a large number of ratings of "six" (representing \$15,000.00 or above) given by the respondents and these actually represented salaries much higher than \$15,000.00, then the result as shown in dollar amounts would be skewed downward. However, such was not the case in regard to columns 1 and 2, for only one respondent indicated a "six"-rated salary. All other "six" ratings appeared in column 3. Thus--in fact--the present salary figures are skewed downward and the disparity between those figures (column 3) and columns 1 and 2 is even greater than shown.

The present average salary of the Pastors is scarcely a living wage in the United States. When the Pastors' present salaries are compared with the Ex-pastors' last pastoral salary, the reason some pastors are leaving the ministry becomes obvious. In fact, one is

TABLE 37

## COMPARISON OF SALARIES\*

	Beginning Pastoral Salary	Ending Pastoral Salary	Present Salary
Pastors	\$3,990.00	. . .	\$ 9,750.00
Ex-pastors E	3,240.00	\$4,920.00	10,320.00
Ex-pastors S	3,180.00	4,140.00	11,010.00

\*Dollar amounts figured using the mean score from all responses in each category

surprised that the exodus is not greater. Since it would be virtually impossible to live on such meager incomes, most of the Ex-pastors must have had outside employment or their spouses worked to supplement the family income.

The rise in income for the Ex-pastors is quite marked. For both groups of Ex-pastors, the present salary amount is more than double their former pastoral income. For some, to leave the pastorate is not a temptation; it is an economic necessity.

Thus far this study has revealed that, on the whole, Ex-pastors E had positive experiences with their congregations. However, not all did, as is evidenced by the fact that some stated they were forced to move by their local congregations (item 6, column 1 in table 36). There are

two other items listed under Ex-pastors E which reveal a significant level of discontent with laypersons and/or the congregation. Items 9 and 11 reveal a certain amount of discontent with the lack of initiative and willingness to follow on the part of laypersons. Both of these deficiencies are related to the general ineffectiveness expressed previously in this study by all three groups regarding their inability to motivate laypersons to do the work of the church.

Closely aligned with these feelings of Ex-pastors E regarding the deficiencies of the congregation, are items 7 and 12 which express dissatisfaction with the whole focus and mission of the church as it is presently being expressed by its program. Two of the interviewees had become quite frustrated at this point and had joined para-church organizations which they believed were better meeting the needs of the world. Those caught in this position feel as though they are the equivalent of new wine which has been put into old wineskins. The two eventually become incompatible.

Although neither group of Ex-pastors considered role conflict to be of primary concern, both listings do include one aspect of role conflict in "frustration over multiplicity of tasks." The fact that this item appears on both lists and yet not as a more dominant reason for demitting is what would be expected. Role conflict is not the type of dynamic which precipitates a crisis; rather

it is the constant little annoyance which the pastor becomes accustomed to and accepts as part of the vocation. The multiplicity of tasks and its accompanying role conflict diffuses the pastor's energies and hinders him/her from achieving the main objectives. Job dissatisfaction ensues and the pastor is then vulnerable when church or family crises do come. Role conflict, per se, does not appear to precipitate crises which move pastors out of the profession--it merely prepares the seedbed for thoughts of career change.

If it is done well, the pastoral ministry is a very demanding job. It calls for a generalist who has the ability to perform a broad spectrum of tasks with competence. Thus it is not surprising that many feel personally inadequate as indicated by item 10 under Ex-pastors S (Table 36). In the light of the multiplicity of functions the minister is asked to perform, one wonders who could ever feel totally adequate for this vocation. Perhaps it is out of this tension that one of the respondents writes to his last congregation, "Discover your pastor's strengths and gifts and let him work primarily in these areas."

Thirteen Ex-pastors S indicated that being unable to relocate was a contributing factor to their decision to leave the ministry. Three of these marked this item as their primary reason for demitting. Curiously, not one of the Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical employment indicated

this choice--even as a secondary cause. This writer has no insight into why this should be true of nearly 20 percent of the Ex-pastors S. This situation raises some critical questions: Are denominational superiors to blame? Are the denominational pastor-placement systems faulty? Is this a convenient way to ease some pastors out of the pastoral ministry? These are hard questions, for which this particular study has no answers. .

Over two-fifths of each group of Ex-pastors (Ex-pastors E 44.1 percent, Ex-pastors S 43.9 percent) reported that their decision to leave was precipitated by a specific incident or event. Suggested responses having to do with personal crisis, hostile congregation or being forced to move by the congregation could be related to the events which precipitated the decisions to move. These items received numerous rates as secondary causes, but only four respondents considered any of them to be the primary cause for leaving the ministry. This fact suggests that crisis events, in themselves, do not supply sufficient cause for pastors to demit, but rather are the catalysts which precipitate career change decisions. It is only when the pastor reaches a high level of frustration and/or dissatisfaction with his/her job that his/her vocation becomes vulnerable to cancellation by a negative incident. Obversely, negative events rarely precipitate career change decisions among pastors who are experiencing a high level of job satisfaction.

The Responses of Others to the  
Decision to Leave

There were mixed responses from family members and ecclesiastical associates regarding Pastors' decisions to leave (see table 38). Only a total of three Ex-pastors indicated that their spouses had negative responses, while thirteen denoted that other family members responded negatively to their decision to leave. Having been reared as a minister's son, this writer would speculate that a significant portion of the negative response on the part of the children may be as much a reaction to having to pull up roots and move as a reaction to the career change decision, per se. The spouses' responses as indicated here by both groups is much what one would expect in the light of their positive support which was discussed earlier in the manuscript.

The fact that a higher percentage of denominational superiors reacted negatively to those who demitted the ministry to join the ranks of the secular employed is to be expected. In fact, this pattern can readily be seen throughout the table. Each of the support groups has a stronger negative reaction toward the decisions of Ex-pastors S than those of Ex-pastors E. Since these are ecclesiastically-related reference groups, a fairly high number of negative reactions would be expected. Denominational superiors, in particular, may feel that one of the troops is deserting the ranks of the called.

TABLE 38

## SUPPORT GROUP RESPONSES TO THE DECISION TO LEAVE

Person or Group and Response Type	Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%
Spouse				
Negative	1	3.0	2	4.3
Neutral	2	6.1	9	19.6
Positive	30	90.9	35	76.1
Totals	33	100.0	46	100.0
Other Family Members				
Negative	2	6.1	11	19.6
Neutral	10	30.3	31	55.4
Positive	21	63.6	14	25.0
Totals	33	100.0	56	100.0
Denominational Superiors				
Negative	7	20.6	22	36.7
Neutral	15	44.1	25	41.7
Positive	12	35.3	13	21.7
Totals	34	100.0	60	100.0
Denominational Pastors				
Negative	5	14.7	20	35.1
Neutral	18	52.9	27	47.4
Positive	11	32.4	10	17.5
Totals	34	100.0	57	100.0
Other pastors				
Negative	0	0	10	25.0
Neutral	21	65.6	26	65.0
Positive	11	34.4	4	10.0
Totals	32	100.0	40	100.0
Congregation				
Negative	8	28.6	27	46.6
Neutral	11	39.3	16	27.6
Positive	9	32.1	15	25.9
Totals	28	100.0	58	100.1



The respondents indicated that the congregations being served at the time of the decision to demit had the most negative reactions of all the reference groups. Ex-pastors S indicated that nearly one-half (46.6 percent) of their congregations responded negatively when their decision to leave was made public. Certainly some of the negative reaction on the part of these congregations would be attributed to the fact that they did not want to lose a good pastor.

### The Transition

#### Financial Resources

The survey participants were asked if they had financial resources available to help them make the occupational transition. Fifty-six percent of both groups indicated that they did not. The paucity of their last pastoral salaries as indicated earlier made these percentages predictable. It seems that the congregations or the denominations should shoulder some of the responsibility at this point. Although housing allowances are now becoming much more common and some ministers would have an equity built up to cushion the economic pain of renting or buying a house, the interviews revealed that some must suddenly face this costly venture without financial resources. One interviewee said he had absolutely nothing in the way of savings or equities to help in the transition because of the very low salary he had received during his

his twelve years in the pastorate.

#### Method of Securing New Employment

The respondents were asked about the manner in which they secured new employment. As table 39 shows, there was a divergence of methods used by the two groups

TABLE 39  
METHOD BY WHICH EX-PASTORS SECURED NEW EMPLOYMENT

	Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%
Unsolicited offer	18	52.9	8	12.3
Returned to former area of expertise	2	5.9	8	12.3
Help of friends or relatives	2	5.9	6	9.2
Actively sought employment through regular channels	7	20.6	26	40.0
Other methods	5	14.7	17	26.2
Totals	34	100.0	65	100.0

of Ex-pastors. Over one-half of those who entered ecclesiastical related employment received unsolicited offers. The interviews revealed that, on the whole, these transitions were relatively smooth and painless. In contrast, two-fifths of the Ex-pastors who entered secular fields of labor actively sought employment through normal job-hunting channels. Interviews revealed anxiety

on the part of some in this category who had small or no savings to help in the transition.

### Occupations Entered by Ex-pastors

The areas of employment into which the two groups of Ex-pastors entered are shown in table 40. Just over two-fifths of the Ex-pastors S entered the social service

TABLE 40  
OCCUPATIONS ENTERED BY EX-PASTORS

Type or Field of Service	Ex-pastors E No.      %	Ex-pastors S No.      %	Total in each field
Professions	. . . . .	2      4.3	2
Social Services	2      6.1	7      15.2	9
Education	12      36.4	12      26.1	24
Labor	. . . . .	7      15.2	7
Business	. . . . .	15      32.6	15
Other Ecclesiastical positions	19      57.6	. . . . .	19
Other secular positions	. . . . .	3      6.5	3
Totals	33      100.1	46      99.9	

or education fields. These are probably the two most logical ones for them to enter. Both fields would allow continued service within the scope of the ministerial calling. Over a third of Ex-pastors E had entered the field of education. Some are seminary/college administrators and others are seminary professors.

The highest percentage of Ex-pastors S entered the field of business. The few who indicated their specific area of business mentioned real estate and insurance sales.

### The Future

The Ex-pastors were asked if they were considering returning to the pastoral ministry and, if not, would they ever consider returning. Three-fourths of those in ecclesiastical employment and two-thirds of those in secular jobs said they were not considering the possibility of returning to the pastorate. Of the Ex-pastors E who responded negatively, all but one (96.2 percent) said they would consider returning. However, only 75 percent of the Ex-pastors S said they would ever consider returning.

## CHAPTER V

### INTERVIEW RESULTS

The potential respondents within a five hundred mile radius of the Seminary were asked if they would be willing to meet with the researcher for a personal interview. Those willing to do such were asked to return a small enclosure with the questionnaire, complete with their name and phone number. The secretary who opened all returned questionnaires removed these slips so the respondents would remain anonymous. Nearly everyone who received the slips returned them; thus there was no problem of a shortage of people from whom to select interviewees.

The interviews were structured to the degree that was necessary for focusing discussion on certain desired areas, but were purposely not too narrow in focus so that the responses would be more elaborate than "yes" or "no." A conversational method of interviewing was employed. The interviewer took notes during the sessions and then reviewed these notes immediately afterward to make sure that everything of importance had been recorded.

The selection of the interviewees, based upon age

and denomination, resulted in a good representative cross-section of the Alumni. The interviewees had come from different classes and had experienced a variety of lengths and types of service.

The results of some of the interview findings have been referred to earlier in the analysis of the survey data, but a more complete discussion of the findings is given here.

The following guide was used in conducting the interviews.

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE

- I. The path to the present situation:
  - A. Would you trace your career path for me?
  - B. (If not covered: )
    1. How long have you been out of the pastorate?
    2. What, if anything, would you have changed about your career path?
- II. The specific experiences which led up to the decision to leave the pastorate:
  - A. How did you feel about the pastoral ministry?
    1. How well did Seminary prepare you for your first pastorate?
    2. What did you like in the pastoral ministry?
    3. What didn't you like in the ministry?
    4. Did you feel that you had to compromise your ideals and expectations to please the congregation?
    5. Did you believe that your ministry was fruitful? In what ways?

- B. How did you feel about your relationships with:
  - 1. Denominational superiors?
  - 2. Congregation?
  - 3. Family?
- C. What precipitated your decision to move? (If not covered--who initiated it? -- congregation, denominational superintendents, family?)
- D. When did leaving the pastorate first cross your mind? (If he/she waited a long time, ask what kept him/her in the ministry for that time.)
- E. Were you trained for another vocation at the time you began thinking of leaving the pastorate?
  - If no--would you have left sooner if you had second vocation?
  - If yes--what would you have done if you hadn't been trained for a vocation other than pastoring?
- F. What would have had to be different for you to have stayed?
- G. Do you feel that you were more "pushed out" or "pulled into" a new job?

III. The changes which may have occurred in his/her life since leaving the pastoral ministry:

- A. Have your living conditions improved or declined?
- B. Family situation--improved?
- C. Do you feel that you are still in the "ministry"? (If so, explain why)
- D. Why have you chosen your present occupation?

IV. His/her plans for the future:

- A. Are you satisfied with your present station in life?
- B. Would you every return to the pastorate?

V. Open--opportunity for any comments or questions he/she may have.

The results of the twelve interviews are discussed below, following the major headings of the Interview Guide.

### The Path to the Present Situation

The first questions regarding the interviewees' career path did not reveal any particular trends, but did serve its intended function, viz., a low-key opening and the furnishing of background for asking additional questions as the interview progressed.

One-half of the interviewees stated that they would have changed their career path, if that were possible. In chapter 3 (pp. 66-67), comment was made regarding the fact that over one-half (51.5 percent) of Ex-pastors S had majored in religion in their undergraduate studies. Two of the Ex-pastors S interviewed said that they would not have chosen a religion major in college because of the path their careers had taken. Both were not prepared for any other vocation than pastoral ministry when they faced the decision to demit the ministry.

Other changes which Ex-pastors suggested they would have made in their career paths were not entering the pastoral ministry, not serving as long in the military, only taking pastorates which would soon be involved in a building program, and taking only full-time pastorates which paid a living wage.



Experiences which Led to the Decision to Leave

The interviewees were asked to comment on the adequacy of their seminary training for their first pastorate. While five stated that their preparation was very adequate, five others expressed feelings of inadequate preparation in the practical areas. Most of these comments focused on interpersonal relations and various administrative skills. Their statements serve to reinforce the many written comments on the survey instrument in regard to practical training noted earlier. (p. 69)

Chapter 2 made reference to the fact that many young pastors experience frustration over the difference which exists between their ideal image of the pastoral ministry and the real life of the pastor. Two of the interviewees specifically commented on having had frustrations at this point. This fact would tend to corroborate the writer's earlier speculation (p. 77) that some of the Ex-pastors were attracted to the idealistic master role image of a pastor only to have it shattered by realism in their first parish.

The interviewees expressed their enjoyment in calling, counseling, teaching, and working with people while serving in the pastoral setting. The latter was mentioned by five of those interviewed. The questionnaire revealed that all three groups surveyed considered their "ability to work with people" as the least of all hindrances to their

effectiveness. Further verification of this fact is given here by nearly half of the interviewees stating that they enjoyed working with people.

The questionnaire collations demonstrated that all the Ex-pastors had a strong dislike for administrative duties in the pastoral role. The same sentiment was expressed by five of the interviewees. One person stated that after attending the Seminary's continuing education courses on church administration, he did not believe he had the necessary administrative abilities to be a good pastor and returned home to resign. This decision came after thirteen years of experience in that one location. Other roles mentioned as being least liked were preaching (four) and calling (two).

Seven of those interviewed stated that they had compromised their ideals and expectations to please their congregations. In chapter 3 it was noted that those surveyed were not satisfied with the "congregation's willingness to do the work of the church" or "the receptiveness of the congregation to innovative ideas." Ex-pastors S were particularly dissatisfied with these factors. Some of those interviewed were quite vocal on this point. Two in particular bore down on the fact that their congregations balked at anything innovative or goal-oriented. The fact that 58 percent of those interviewed revealed strong feelings on this question is significant. A pastor cannot

continually compromise his/her ideals and expectations without a shadow being cast over his/her vocational future.

The survey instrument revealed that 90.6 percent of Ex-pastors E and 62.1 percent of Ex-pastors S believed that they had made significant contributions to the life of their last church. When personally asked if they believed their ministry had been fruitful, all but one of the interviewees responded positively. Most of these affirmative answers were explained in terms of numerical and spiritual growth of their congregations. Although many of the interviewees felt they had compromised their ideals and expectations, they still believed their ministries were fruitful.

The written survey instrument revealed that the level of support received by Ex-pastors from denominational superiors was lower than what they expected. While three of the interviewees expressed that their relationships with their superiors was quite good, nine stated the relationship was poor. Several problem areas were revealed by the interviewees. Two expressed the feeling that they were never given any support personally or vocationally by their superiors. Another expressed much the same sentiment by verbalizing a desire for more contact by denominational leaders while he was in the pastorate. He further stated that every contact with superiors had been made on his own initiative--never theirs. One who had recently left the pastorate shared the fact that he had received absolutely

no help from his denominational heads in making the transition out of the pastorate after fifteen years of service. They simply forgot him after he made the decision to leave. Another pointedly stated that the most disappointing aspect of his several years in the ministry was "the lack of leadership by denominational superiors." The questionnaire had revealed an element of dissatisfaction by all groups with denominational superiors, but the interviews served to reveal the depth and nature of this discontent.

As mentioned above, three of those interviewed spoke very favorably of the leadership in their denominations. One said he felt well supported and described his present superior as "a pastor's pastor." Another also had nothing but the highest praise for his superiors as evidenced by their personal interest in his life and work.

The questionnaire results indicated that pastors do not expect and do not receive help from laypersons. However, some of those interviewed believed their relationships with their congregations were fair to good. Two stated that they had found laypersons to be supportive and one even described them as sacrificial on his behalf. In contrast, two others stated that they felt isolated by their congregations. For another, divisions within the congregation hindered the establishment of good rapport with the individual members. The interviews bore out well the trend noted earlier that Ex-pastors E had more positive experiences

in their parish work than Ex-pastors S. Most of the positive statements noted above came from Ex-pastors E and all the negative expressions came from Ex-pastors S.

In all but two cases, the interviewees were very satisfied with their family relations and with their spouses' support in particular. Several did comment on the strain experienced by their children in pastoral life. Two men made specific reference to the trauma for their children in "pulling up roots" when it came time to change locations in the pastorate.

A wide variety of responses was given to the question, What precipitated your decision to move? Among the responses were unsolicited offer (one), strengths were not being utilized (three), enrolled in graduate school (one), financial strain (two), personal health crisis (two), congregation's attitude made it difficult to stay (three). These answers comport well with the findings of the survey instrument, with the exception of the fact that no one mentioned that they had moved because of an opportunity for more meaningful service. This reason was the dominant reason given by the survey respondents. A partial explanation for its not being given here may be due to the slight difference in the questions between survey and interview. The question in the survey was general, whereas the interview question asked specifically what precipitated the decision to leave. Later in the interview when asked if

they were satisfied with their present station in life, many expressed feelings of fulfillment and a greater sense of accomplishment in their present vocation. These responses harmonize well with the questionnaire results.

Those interviewed did not spend an undue amount of time wrestling over the decision to demit the pastoral ministry. Three left within a few weeks of the time that the idea had first crossed their minds. The others said they left within a few months. Despite this shortness of time, the interviewees did not feel that they had made hasty, irrational decisions. In several cases the decision was prompted by a culmination of events and factors. For eight of those who left the ministry, the decision was complicated by the fact that they were not trained for another profession. Three mentioned that they would have left their parishes sooner if they had had sufficient finances to make the transition.

#### Personal Changes Since Leaving the Pastoral Ministry

While three stated that their living conditions had remained about the same, nine said they had improved. For most of the latter group, the change was measured in thousands of dollars in salary increase. One stated that the remuneration for his first forty-hour work week after pastoring was double his pastoral salary. Although most had said their family relations were fine while pastoring,

one-half expressed that the home atmosphere was much more relaxed now.

The majority (ten) expressed complete satisfaction with their present occupation. In keeping with the survey results, most (eleven) of those interviewed said they still felt that they were in the ministry. Some were still heavily involved in the work of the church, as laypersons, while others felt their secular work was definitely a ministry (eg., social work and teaching).

The fact that most were content with their present situation was further heightened by the responses to the question, Would you ever return to the pastorate? Three responded with a definite "no." Nine expressed a willingness to return, but four of these said it would be quite unlikely that they ever would. It is probably safe to assume that only a very small percentage of Ex-pastors will return since most are satisfied with their present occupations and are not seriously considering re-entering the pastoral ministry.

### Summary

The interviews served to corroborate the findings of the survey instrument. Those interviewed expressed concern over the adequacy of the practical aspect of their Seminary training, strong dislike for administrative duties, disappointment over compromising their ideals to placate congregations, feelings of lack of support from denominational

superiors and laypersons. The reasons given by the interviewees for leaving were varied, but still much the same as those given by the larger group. Those Ex-pastors interviewed, on the whole, experienced an improvement in salary and living conditions upon leaving the pastoral ministry and entering other fields of service. This finding further buttresses the findings of the questionnaire. Most Ex-pastors are quite content in their present vocations and few can be expected to return to the full-time pastorate.



## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to ascertain those factors which have influenced career change decisions among Western Evangelical Seminary Alumni through an analysis of their past and present sociological, ecclesiastical and theological perspectives. The results of this study provide the Seminary with new data for developing a career guidance program for students,<sup>1</sup> and for reviewing curriculum structure. The findings also furnish insights which have implications for the pastor and all aspects of his/her vocational system.

#### Summary

##### The Research Process

The research was conducted through a survey instrument and interviews with selected respondents. The

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<sup>1</sup>The data from this study is scheduled to be presented at the fall, 1979 faculty workshop for the purpose of informing faculty of the findings and to begin structuring a career guidance program. The focus of this presentation will be table 36. Scheduled for winter term is a followup inservice seminar which will include a discussion of this entire chapter, using the material covered in the fall workshop as a base.

survey questions were based on readings related to stress in the ministry and on studies done by Catholics and Protestants on religious vocations. The interviews were conducted in times and places convenient to the interviewees, after the questionnaire responses had been collated, and thus they served the dual purpose of giving new insights and corroborating trends noted in the collations.

#### Reasons for the Decision to Leave

##### Sociological Factors

The survey participants come mostly from lower income families and appear to be an integral part of the mobile American Society. However, these factors did not appear to have any relationship to career change decisions. The study revealed that some pastors do experience stress as a result of the locale in which they are asked to serve. Pastors who were reared in and preferred to serve in rural and town settings but served a major portion of their pastorates in city environs would feel stress over location.

Many respondents (one-half to two-thirds) in all three groups were influenced by pastors and parishioners in their decisions to enter the pastoral ministry. Thus there appears to be a fostering of the pastoral vocation within the local church setting. The responsibility of pastors is further heightened at this point by the fact that over 70 percent of Ex-pastors in secular service

rated pastors as highly influential in their personal decision to enter the ministry. The group offering the highest degree of opposition to the respondents' entering the pastoral ministry were relatives. This fact was true of all three groups, with no significant differences among them. Very logically, those closest to an individual will exercise the most concern in regard to that person's vocational choices.

More than one-half of the Ex-pastors in secular service majored in religion in their undergraduate work. The fact that one has majored in religion in both undergraduate and graduate studies has implications for career change from ecclesiastical to secular employment. For many of the Ex-pastors this fact became even more critical because of their ages when leaving: over one-half were thirty-five or more. To face re-training for another vocation at mid-life is difficult for anyone, but many Ex-pastors must attempt it with few, if any, financial resources.

The average length of service in ministry by Ex-pastors exceeded ten years, reflecting a considerable degree of commitment. The length of their service and the fact that many of them began their preparation early by majoring in religion in college reveals a deep devotion to ministry.

Nearly all pastors and Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical employment are living with a first spouse, while

Ex-pastors in secular employment revealed an 18 percent divorce rate. Unless a pastor within the evangelical setting has a successful family life, he/she will find it difficult to succeed in the pastorate. Our findings agree with the United Church of Christ study which states, "The family bears special importance in clergy careers. Family welfare, wife's role satisfaction, and marital harmony are crucial determinants of career decisions. Few ministers seem to realize this fact."<sup>1</sup>

#### Ecclesiastical Factors

Role conflict is a problem area in two of the groups surveyed. Pastors spend more time in administration than they feel its importance merits. Respondents who moved to secular employment preferred teaching while in the pastoral ministry, but found themselves more occupied with sermon preparation and calling. Since role conflict was less evident among the Ex-pastors, it does not appear to be a major factor lying behind career change decisions. Rather, role conflict seems to be one of many factors which help to erode occupational commitment.

A high level of frustration over inability to motivate laypersons was reported by two groups, Pastors and Ex-pastors in secular service, while this appeared to be an unimportant factor with Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical employment. All three groups expressed further dissatisfaction

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<sup>1</sup>Jud, p. 60.

with parishioners' receptivity to innovative ideas and their lack of willingness to do the work of the church. All of these factors corroborate Hadden's contention that the typical layperson, "seeks comfort and escape from the world in the sanctuary of God."<sup>1</sup>

Pastors and Ex-pastors in secular service expressed personal difficulty in planning and carrying out long range programs. The first part of this statement infers that many pastors need to develop more skills in organizing and planning; however, the carrying out of the plans is at least partially related to the parishioner indifference just discussed in the preceding paragraph.

Low income was a major concern to many respondents from all groups. Two-fifths of all Ex-pastors stated that low salary was a contributing factor to their decision to leave the ministry. Low salaries not only create stress in private life, but ultimately have a psychological effect on self-esteem. The salary and living arrangements provided by the congregation are indirect indicators of the value which the parishioners place on the pastor's work.

### Theological Factors

A large majority of the respondents defined "call" as a supernatural experience which separates a person to God's work. Most respondents remaining in ecclesiastical

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<sup>1</sup>Hadden, p. 99

service indicated they felt they had received such a call, while nearly half of those in secular service do not acknowledge the same. In contrast to the other two groups, many of the Ex-pastors in secular service indicated that they had been guided into the pastoral ministry by their abilities, likes and dislikes. The fact that the call is considered to have life-long implications for the Ex-pastors is borne out by the fact that most (90 percent) of the Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical service and nearly two-thirds (63.6 percent) of the Ex-pastors in secular employment expressed the feeling that they were "still in the ministry." Over one-half (57.6 percent) of the Ex-pastors in secular service entered the fields of education and social services, which are areas where one could feel that he/she is fulfilling the ministerial calling.

In regard to theological persuasion, respondents remaining in ecclesiastical service revealed less movement in the direction of humanistic and liberal emphases, than those subjects changing to secular vocations. One-fifth (19 percent) of Ex-pastors in secular service made significant changes in theological position. Most of these changes were toward the liberal position rather than the neo-orthodox. One-fourth (15 percent) of all Ex-pastors indicated a move from rather strict to rather tolerant views. These changes in theological perspective are not to be construed as "loss of faith."

Denominational membership change is a factor common to all groups; however, it is more pronounced among those moving into secular service. These moves did not appear to be doctrinally motivated, since most were changes to denominations with similar doctrinal positions. Two-fifths (40.9 percent) of the Ex-pastors who entered secular employment made denominational changes. This phenomenon is not to be interpreted as a reason for demitting the pastoral ministry as much as an indicator of the level of frustration being experienced by many pastors.

As seminary graduates move from the theoretical framework of the classroom, they become increasingly concerned with practical aspects of the ministry. The interviews, in particular, revealed the hiatus between the classroom and the first pastoral experience. The more the person had devoted him/herself to the academic model, the more traumatic was the transition.

#### Personal Factors

All groups reported that their most valued sources of approval were spouses and laypersons. If the pastor does not receive positive input from the one closest to him/her and from the very ones ministered to, the vocation loses its meaning.

In times of stress many respondents reported their spouses to be most helpful and laypersons to be least

helpful; hence the locus of stress appears to be mainly limited to the parsonage. As a result, the pastor often has a feeling of isolation in his/her vocation, which fact has particular implications when marital or family difficulties arise.

Family relations have an influence on a pastor's job effectiveness, since strained relations at home invariably affect one's ability to function well in job performance. Although most respondents are married and living with their first spouse, marital problems lie at the core of some pastors' decisions to leave the vocation. Because of many denominations' general negative feeling regarding those who are divorced being in positions of leadership, it is quite logical that those who are divorced would choose to leave the pastorate.

Help from denominational superiors was experienced to a lesser degree by Ex-pastors who entered secular employment than either of the other groups; hence this factor may contribute to decisions to change careers. Interviewees expressed general discontent over the lack of support and help from denominational superiors.

The pastoral profession was ranked low by all three groups in relation to other professionals in terms of community prestige. This fact has implications for pastoral effectiveness in terms of self-image as compared to other professions in the community.



Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical service appeared to be more satisfied with their level of achievement and their accomplishment of goals than either of the other two groups. This fact may explain why this particular group has continued on in the employ of the church.

#### The Results of the Decision to Leave

Decisions to leave the pastoral ministry appear to result from a multiplicity of factors rather than a single reason. However, some Ex-pastors did report decisions based on a specific event, such event being a catalyst rather than the sole cause precipitating the decision. When a pastor experiences a high level of frustration over an extended period of time, the vocation becomes vulnerable to cancellation by a single negative event.

One-fifth (20.0 percent) of the Ex-pastors in secular service reported inability to relocate in another pastorate as a reason for leaving the pastoral ministry, while none of the Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical service expressed this same concern. The difficulty in relocating raises questions concerning the methodology and effectiveness of denominational placement systems.

Little negative reaction to career change decisions was reported by Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical service, while Ex-pastors in secular service received considerable negative response from all ecclesiastically related

reference groups. The strongest negative reactions were received from denominational superiors and the congregations being served at the time of the decision.

Over one-half of the Ex-pastors experienced financial difficulty in making the transition from the pastorate to other employment. Low salaries and parsonage living, which deny the pastor the opportunity to build up equity, lie at the root of this problem.

Two-fifths of the Ex-pastors in secular service sought employment through regular job-hunting channels. Interviews revealed that for those with small or no savings, this was an anxious time.

Careers in business, education and social services, in that order, were reported by Ex-pastors in secular service. The careers in education and social services related well with the roles most enjoyed in the pastorate by this group, viz., teaching and counseling.

Returning to the pastoral ministry is not an option considered by most Ex-pastors, one-fourth of Ex-pastors in secular service stating that they will never return under any circumstances.

### Conclusions

1. The respondents consider the ministry to be a high commitment vocation and did not enter or leave it without strong reasons for doing so. The decision to demit seldom involves the complete withdrawal of that commitment, but

involves the redefinition of it to include the new occupation as "ministry." Thus for most of the respondents, leaving the pastorate is not leaving the ministry.

2. There does not appear to be one dominant reason for persons leaving the pastoral ministry; each individual's reasons are usually multiple and complex. For most, the decision to leave is the result of the combined impact of the tensions and stresses experienced in the pastoral vocation. These factors may in themselves be sufficient to cause the career change decision or in some cases may make the focal person vulnerable to a crisis situation which becomes the decision catalyst. The majority of the respondents acknowledge dissatisfaction with various aspects of the pastoral ministry. However, it would appear that this dissatisfaction does not become a factor in causing career change until it results in frustration and loss of hope. When the pastor's vocation no longer appears to be accomplishing its primary goals, hopelessness sets in and thoughts of job change are sure to follow.

3. Pastors and Ex-pastors sense a lack of support from all ecclesiastical reference groups. Because of this fact, the pastor and his/her spouse frequently feel isolated in times of stress and shoulder their burdens alone. The feelings of isolation and lack of support are critical factors in dissipating a pastor's mental and emotional energies. Methods must be found and implemented to

strengthen the support systems for the parish minister.

4. Although Ex-pastors in ecclesiastical service indicated similar frustrations with Ex-pastors in secular service over low salaries and multiplicity of tasks, their overall satisfaction with pastoral experience explains the fact that they have chosen to continue in some form of ecclesiastical employment. This latter group could represent a pool of leadership and consultant talent.

5. Pastors and parishioners were found to have more influence on decisions to enter the pastorate than any other reference group, and this fact suggests the significance of the pastor and congregation in their relationships with young people who are potential pastors. Their responsibility would seem to be twofold: first, they should offer support and encouragement to those who express an interest in the pastoral vocation. Second, the congregation and pastor must exercise wisdom in choosing whom to encourage and support.

6. The most significant area of weakness in the preparation for pastoral ministry is in the area of practical training. The Seminary needs to evaluate its entire field education and internship programs in order to assess and correct areas of weakness. Denominational superiors, host pastors and congregations must be committed to the principle of training rather than using interns.

7. The state of a pastor's family life is critical

to his/her career. The satisfaction of family members with parsonage life, the degree of harmony in the home and marriage, and the family's general ability to live under its exemplary status image all play a crucial part in the pastor's vocational effectiveness and career path decisions.

8. The findings of this study would not support the frequently expressed contention that persons are leaving the ministry because of diminishing faith, lack of commitment, or personal breakdown of spiritual habits and values.

#### Recommendations

The above summaries and conclusions have broad implications for the entire ecclesiastical occupational system. At certain points it is failing to meet the needs of its professionals adequately. Weaknesses have been noted in the recruitment, training, locating and support systems of the pastor. Changes need to be made to correct these weaknesses or the church will continue to lose highly trained and dedicated persons from its professional ranks. Some of the recommendations are directed at specific problems noted in the findings, while others are aimed at the general welfare of the pastor and his/her vocational system, with the belief that whatever enhances the ministerial profession will ultimately result in fewer demissions from the pastorate. The recommendations

are offered to denominational leaders, congregations, pastors, and to the Seminary.

#### Recommendations to Denominational Leaders

1. Pastors need more support from denominational superiors in the areas of personal encouragement and providing a listening ear. One Ex-pastor represented many others when he wrote, "A district superintendent should be the pastor's pastor--to counsel and help--and this never happened to me." Either the superintendent or an assistant must act in this capacity. Those in pastoral ministry need someone to whom they can turn in confidence to share personal or parish concerns.

2. Encourage local congregations to pay a living wage. If the congregation cannot pay an adequate salary, the denomination has a responsibility to the pastor to supplement his/her salary. Also denominations should establish a contingency fund for supplying short term aid to help pastors and their families manage unexpected crises.

3. Each denomination should make available to each pastor some form of vocational counseling and career guidance. This service should be available from recruitment through retirement and should aid in career planning, career decisions, continuing education and retirement problems.

4. Denominational leaders should review their criteria and methods of pastoral placement. The ultimate

question must always be: Is this the right person in the right place? The needs, objectives, strengths and weaknesses of a church should be matched with the background and experience of any prospective candidate. Denominational superiors should strive to make each person's first pastoral experience as positive as possible. One Ex-pastor in secular service wrote, "Try to be more aware of the situation that a young pastor enters. Don't assume that he will or can come to you." New pastors should not be placed in churches which have little or no potential. The placement of the young minister is crucial, because it is during the early years of ministry that mental attitudes and methods of ministry are formed.

#### Recommendations to Congregations

1. It is sometimes difficult for the pastor and congregation to discern the good pastoral potential from the poor, but more counsel must be offered to prospective ministerial candidates at the local level. Occasionally, this writer has observed that incoming students receive excellent recommendations from pastors and laypersons and yet when they arrive at Seminary, they demonstrate few of the necessary traits of leadership and communication essential to effective ministry. How much better it would be if a discerning pastor or layperson would give some vocational guidance to these individuals at the local level and save them the trauma of failing in seminary or in the ministry.

2. Be realistic in expectations of pastors. For example, do not expect the pastor to maintain high visibility (e.g. much calling) and preach excellent sermons which require long hours of preparation in the study.

3. Good communication is essential to the effectiveness of any organization and the local church is not an exception. Thus, be specific in communicating expectations to the pastor. If the church has a team or multiple staff ministry, clearly delineate each person's duties by way of well-defined job descriptions. These should be made available to prospective staff members before they are hired.

4. Every congregation should pay the minister at least the average wage represented by the parishioners. If this level is not attainable due to the small size of the congregation, seek assistance from the denomination on the basis that the local church will gradually increase its contributions over the next year (or two years at the most) until the full salary is funded by the congregation. Low salaries should be viewed as the problem of congregations and denominations--not of pastors.

5. Whenever possible, laity should share in the administrative duties of the church, thus freeing the pastor to do the tasks for which he/she has been primarily trained. During the course of this study, the writer was made aware of one congregation's attempt to free their pastor for more



study time. Members of the congregation volunteered to do many of the pastor's time-consuming administrative duties for a period of four hours each morning, Monday through Friday. This plan not only freed the pastor for study, but had the wholesome effect of involving laypersons in the day-to-day workings of the church.

6. Discover the pastor's strengths early in his/her ministry, then utilize them. When a pastor is not allowed to utilize his/her strengths, both the congregation and the pastor stand to lose. The congregation does not receive the full potential of the pastor's abilities and the pastor becomes frustrated because he/she is not doing the tasks at which he/she is most competent.

7. Insist that the pastor develop and implement a personal continuing education plan. Encourage him/her to carry out this plan by allocating time off for the specific purpose of attending seminars, courses, or conferences which will enhance his/her ministry. Add further incentive by designating funds in the budget for the continuing education of the pastor (and staff).

#### Recommendations to the Seminary

Western Evangelical Seminary classifies itself as a professional school at the graduate level. The term "professional graduate school" implies a certain amount of tension: if the "professional" aspect is overemphasized, the result is a trade school, while if the "graduate"

aspect predominates, scholarship overshadows professional preparedness. The Seminary needs to maintain its sense of accountability to the persons preparing for the practice of ministry. The subtitle in the Seminary catalog reads, "An Interdenominational Graduate School of Theology and Christian Ministries." The major focus should be on education for Christian Ministries--not on theological education. Academically, the Seminary should remain an institution where those wishing to prepare for advanced theological degrees will receive sound scholarship; however, the majority of students should be allowed to feel that they are professionals in preparation for ministry. As professionals in training, they should gain the necessary tools to help them cope with the eventualities of their vocation which cannot be taught in the classroom. The emphasis should not be on content as much as the learning methodologies of thinking which will prove beneficial in the arena of service. The sentiments of several were expressed by an Ex-pastor in this statement, "I feel seminary prepared me well for the intellectual tasks of the pastoral ministry. Preparation for dealing with people and their problems was less than adequate." The total seminary experience should be related to functions in ministry. The classical disciplines as well as the practical disciplines should contribute to the functional preparation of a person for ministry.

The preceding comments are not a plea for a trade school, for there must be a balance between the theoretical and the practical. Pastoral care requires and rests upon theological comprehension. It is out of a profound understanding of the Church and its mission that the pastor must act. The classical disciplines should constantly inform the practical disciplines--and be informed by them.

Following are some recommendations which the writer feels will help the Seminary make the theological training of its students more continuous with their future ministries.

1. Based on the areas of weakness as expressed by the survey participants, the Seminary should further strengthen or expand its present course offerings by including specifics on: a) the motivation of people, b) raising church monies, and c) planning and carrying out long-range programs.

2. The case study method has proven to be a useful teaching tool for bringing theory and practice together in the classroom. Its use should be increased by faculty members.

3. This writer recommends that a specific course be added to the curriculum. This course should be entitled, "Life and Work of the Minister" and should be offered to Juniors. The contents would focus on such factors as, the call, the pastor's discipline of study, family life,

emotional stability, interpersonal relations, and vocational stresses.

4. The field education and internship programs could be improved by the establishment of a list of professionally qualified pastors who are willing to invest the necessary time and energy to supervise a minister in training. The establishment of this list should be a joint function of the Seminary and cooperating denominations. The selected pastors should then be trained for this important task. The Seminary should begin by sponsoring a two- or three-day workshop in the fall for the selected supervisors. In addition to offering instruction in field supervision, this workshop should allow for evaluative input from the participants. In order to give the faculty insight into the need for--and programs of--field education and internship, they should be invited to attend. The initial fall workshop should be followed by one or two half-day sessions during the year to evaluate the program and give opportunity to share ideas and methods which are succeeding.

5. A perennial problem in the placement of students for field education and internship experiences has been that they are allowed (and often encouraged) by their denominations to serve in very difficult settings. Small churches need workers and yet many times do not have adequate leadership or facilities to train the intern properly. Thus,

the denominations, the host pastors and churches must be made to realize that the purpose of these internship programs is to train future ministers at the professional level, not to supply the churches with inexpensive help. For the student, the internship should be an integrative experience, bringing all the elements of the educational process into focus in relation to the functional roles of the pastor. In the rich context of the present moment, content and method should be individualized, synthesized, and personally implemented.

6. The writer believes that the values which are inherent in the field experience during the regular seminary year could be even further enhanced by the institution of an internship year. In addition to allowing a more intensive involvement, it also would allow for greater selection of host churches in that the intern would not need to be within daily commuting distance of the Seminary. Although the intern would be expected to continue a disciplined study life, he/she would not face the conflict between heavy class assignments and church responsibilities which plagues students in the present program.

7. The practical training for many students could be further augmented by doing their internships under the guidance of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. This movement began with its primary focus on hospital chaplaincy; however, the program now offers opportunities for pastoral practice under excellent supervision in a

variety of settings which include churches, prisons, family counseling services and universities. As a member of the Association, the Seminary should increase its participation by encouraging more students to take advantage of this program.

8. The above recommendations apply to the Seminary's responsibility in the formal training of ministers; however, its obligation to students does not end with the awarding of the Master of Divinity Degree. It is not realistic to assume that the graduates will have received all they will need to minister for a lifetime. Persons cannot be prepared for types of ministry that as yet are only faintly seen (e.g. the pastor as change agent). The very nature of the pastoral profession calls for the continual up-dating of one's education. Some graduates exhibit an unusual amount of self-motivation, discipline and creativity which will assure them of developing a lifestyle of independent study. At the same time, a few leave Seminary seemingly determined never to write or read more than is absolutely necessary for minimal survival in the pastorate. A majority of the alumni appear to function between these two extremes and will engage in programs of study and self-renewal if they are given some outside stimulation or assistance. As a professional, each alumnus has an obligation to maintain a professional competency commensurate with his/her vocation. Thus the Seminary has an obligation to make available programs which will aid its alumni in maintaining vocational

proficiency. In addition to the present format and programs of continuing education, the writer would offer the following general recommendations:

a) The continuing education program should provide opportunities for personal reassessment and renewal. One aspect of this particular emphasis should be the providing of a setting in which pastors can exchange constructive criticisms with consultants and peers for the betterment of their personal ministries.

b) Periodically a course should be offered which deals specifically with career crises. The course should be taught by an experienced pastor and should deal with problems faced by ministers in the first pastorate, in mid-life and in retirement.

c) The Seminary should continually update its continuing education offerings in the light of the present day minister's individual, career and service needs. In order to ascertain what these needs are, ministers, denominational superiors and laypersons should be invited to help in the long-range planning of course offerings.

d) The Seminary should seriously consider structuring certain courses in which pastors and laity could learn together and have opportunity for gaining insight into one another's ecclesiastical perspectives. The Protestant tradition has always acknowledged Luther's doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers, but in

practice has allowed a gulf to develop between clergy and laity. A course (or courses) of this type could help to close that gulf.

e) The number of theological education courses offered by extension is meager. This aspect of the Seminary's continuing education offerings should be expanded. This type of education allows the participants to contextualize their learning through the discovery and application of situational methodologies which arise out of the present needs of the student.

A well devised and implemented plan of continuing education could have a sustaining impact on the career stability of the Seminary alumni. Thus the writer urges that every effort be made to implement the above recommendations or others of a similar thrust.

#### Recommendations to Pastors

1. The process of self-evaluation is a necessary part of every profession and the pastoral ministry is no exception. Pastors should seek the congregation's help in assessing personal strengths and weaknesses. One valuable form of criticism can be received from a sermon feedback group which not only makes suggestions regarding the presentation of the messages, but also evaluates their relevance to daily life.



2. Periodically assess personal and vocational needs and goals, and plan an individualized continuing education program accordingly. A day of personal retreat would be beneficial in this regard. Without periods of personal assessment and self-renewal, a pastor becomes stale to both him/herself and to the congregation.

3. Be committed to the goal of serving long-term pastorates. Pastors should not allow their vocational life to become a series of three-year repetitions of the same sermons and methods used on different congregations.

4. The ministerial association has potential for being more than a fellowship group. The format of the meetings should be structured in such a way as to allow the association to function also as a peer assessment and support group.

5. If not already acquainted with the skills of change agency, each pastor should make a concerted effort to do so.<sup>1</sup> The development of these skills should not only help the pastor in motivating persons to do the work of the church, but also should enlarge his/her understanding of societal and institutional change.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

1. This study has focused on the felt needs and frustrations of pastors. A further study should be done

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<sup>1</sup>Begin by reading The Change Agent by Lyle E. Schaller (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972).

on the expectations and needs of congregations. Such findings would not only give further insight into curriculum revision possibilities but prove helpful in designing continuing education programs for laity.

2. Because the years of training and the early years of pastoral ministry are so crucial to professional image formation and ultimately influence the career path, this writer recommends that a study be done on how a pastor develops and matures from his/her entrance to the Seminary through the first five years of ministry. Special attention should be given to the sociological, psychological and institutional influences on the maturation process. The results of this study would have significant implications for the recruitment, training and counseling of young pastors.

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APPENDIX A

DENOMINATIONS REPRESENTED

BY

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

## DENOMINATIONS REPRESENTED BY RESPONDENTS

American Baptist  
Assembly of God  
\*Brethren in Christ  
General Association of Regular Baptist  
Christian and Missionary Alliance  
Church of God (Anderson)  
\*Evangelical Church of North America  
\*Evangelical Church of Canada  
Evangelical Covenant  
Evangelical Free Church  
\*Evangelical Methodist  
\*Free Methodist  
\*Friends Church  
\*Missionary Church  
Mennonite  
Nazarene  
Open Bible Standard Church  
Presbyterian U.S.A.  
Salvation Army  
United Methodist  
\*Wesleyan Church

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\*These denominations officially recognize Western Evangelical Seminary as an approved graduate school of theology for training their ministerial students. Each elects members to the Seminary Board of Trustees.

APPENDIX B

WESTERN EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

STATEMENT OF FAITH

## WESTERN EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

### STATEMENT OF FAITH\*

1. We believe that there is but one living and true God, an eternally existent spiritual Being of absolute knowledge, power, and goodness, Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible; that in the unity of this Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the second person of the triune Godhead; that He was eternally of one substance with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit; was born of the Virgin Mary, thus uniting in one perfect personality forever two whole and perfect natures, Godhood and manhood, very God and very man, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

3. We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit; that He did proceed from the Father and the Son and is the third person of the Godhead, of one substance, power, and eternity with them; that He is present with and active in the church, convicting the whole world of sin and righteousness and judgment.

4. We believe that the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which the church has universally accepted as the Holy Scriptures, were given by divine inspiration and constitute the revealed Word of God, as the only supreme, sufficient, and authoritative rule of faith and practice, and that the Holy Spirit, who motivated men of God to speak through the written Word, has providentially guarded, in its preservation, the integrity of the message, and continues to illumine the hearts of those who read that they may understand God's redemptive plan.

5. We believe that man was a special creation by God but that he forfeited his first estate and is very far fallen from original righteousness; and because of the corruption of his nature, as received from Adam, he is inclined to evil and that continually.

6. We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and by the shedding of His blood made an atonement for the sins of all mankind, that this atonement is the only ground of salvation. We also believe in Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead, that He ascended into Heaven to the right hand of the Father and is there engaged in intercession for us.

7. We believe that penitent sinners are justified before God only by faith in Jesus Christ; that at the same time they are regenerated and adopted into the household of faith, the Holy Spirit bearing witness with their spirit to this gracious work. This is sometimes called implicit or initial sanctification.

8. We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God by which believers are made free from original sin and brought into a state of complete devotement to God. We further believe that this work is accomplished by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, conditioned upon consecration and faith, and that to this work the Holy Spirit also bears witness. We also believe that while the approach may be more or less gradual the actual experience is consummated in an instant and the life that follows should be characterized by a continual maturing of the Christian graces.

9. We believe that Christians are called to be holy in all manner of living so that any conduct contrary to this rule of Scripture is not only repugnant to sight but is also inconsistent with a true Christian profession.

10. We believe in the holy universal Church; that it is composed of all true believers of Jesus Christ; that it is for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole world.

11. We believe in the imminent, personal return of Jesus Christ to this world to establish His Kingdom, to rule in righteousness, and to judge all men.

12. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, that the bodies of both the just and the unjust shall be reunited with their spirits; that everlasting life is assured to all who believe in and follow Jesus Christ; and that the finally impenitent shall go away into everlasting punishment in hell.

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\* As found in the 1979-80 Catalog (pp. 16-17).

## APPENDIX C

### TABLES



TABLE C 1  
EDUCATION OF PARENTS

	Pastors		Ex-pastors E		Ex-pastors S	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than High School						
Father	66	53.7	15	44.1	37	56.0
Mother	54	43.9	10	29.4	22	33.3
High School Graduates						
Father	32	26.0	14	38.2	21	31.8
Mother	46	37.4	18	52.9	35	53.0
College Graduates						
Father	13	10.6	4	11.8	6	9.1
Mother	18	14.6	4	11.8	6	9.1
Graduate School						
Father	12	9.7	2	5.9	2	3.0
Mother	5	4.1	2	5.9	3	4.6

TABLE C2

## SEMINARY MAJORS OF PASTORS AND EX-PASTORS

	MAJORS					
	Biblical Studies No.    %	Theology No.    %	Pastoral Ministries No.    %	Christian Education No.    %	Church History No.    %	Other No.    %
Pastors	41    33.3	27    22.0	24    20.0	16    13.0	13    10.6	2    1.6
Ex-pastors E	9    26.5	6    17.6	6    17.6	8    23.5	2    5.9	...    ...
Ex-pastors S	20    30.3	13    19.7	14    21.2	16    24.2	3    4.5	3    8.8

## APPENDIX D

### THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

# CAREER CHANGE DECISION QUESTIONNAIRE

There are two parts to this questionnaire. Part I is aimed at gathering information from all who have had experience in the pastoral ministry. Part II is designed to gain specific information regarding those who have left the pastoral ministry.

Do not allow yourself to become involved in the definition of terms used. Space does not allow a definition to be given for each term, so simply answer each question as you believe it would be most commonly understood.

Feel free to make additional comments on any of the questions.

## PART I

### INFORMATION FROM PASTORS AND NON-PASTORS

1. Are you (check one) male? ☐ female? ☐
2. What was your position in your family? (check one)  
☐ Only child  
☐ First born  
☐ Second  
☐ In-between (no.? ☐)  
☐ Last born
3. Which type of high school did you attend?  
☐ Christian  
☐ Secular
4. Which type of college did you attend?  
☐ Bible College  
☐ Christian Liberal Arts  
☐ Secular
5. What was your Father's occupation?

<input type="checkbox"/> Clergy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service and/or unskilled
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Semi-skilled
<input type="checkbox"/> Managerial and/or owner	<input type="checkbox"/> Factory and/or assembly-line worker
<input type="checkbox"/> Salesman	<input type="checkbox"/> Farmer
<input type="checkbox"/> Craftsman	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

6. In your estimation, what was the economic status of your childhood family?
- ☐ Wealthy  
☐ Above average  
☐ Middle income  
☐ Below average  
☐ Poor
7. Where did you live between the ages of:
- |       |       |                          |                       |                          |                       |                          |
|-------|-------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1-6   | rural | <input type="checkbox"/> | town (2,500 - 50,000) | <input type="checkbox"/> | city (50,000 or more) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7-12  | "     | <input type="checkbox"/> | "                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | "                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13-20 | "     | <input type="checkbox"/> | "                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | "                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
8. In which pastoral setting do you feel most effective?
- ☐ rural  
☐ town  
☐ city  
☐ makes no difference
9. What was the educational level attained by your father? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What was the educational level attained by your mother? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are you (check one):
- ☐ Single?  
☐ Married?  
☐ Widowed?  
☐ Divorced?  
☐ Legally Separated?  
☐ Widowed & Remarried?  
☐ Divorced & Remarried?
11. Did you attend church throughout your childhood years? yes ☐ no ☐  
 If yes, how often?
- ☐ All services each week  
☐ Most services each week  
☐ Sunday Morning only  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. What was your major in Seminary?

- ☐ Pastoral Ministries
- ☐ Biblical Studies
- ☐ Christian Education
- ☐ Church History
- ☐ Theology

13. What was your major in College?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religion                | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Science         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering             | <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social work, Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Science & Math |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____            |

14. In making your decision to enter the ministry would you say

- ☐ A. You answered a "call" more compelling than any rational personal assessment?
- ☐ B. You were guided by your abilities, likes and dislikes?
- ☐ C. Other \_\_\_\_\_

15. Would you define the term "call" as

- ☐ A. An unusual, supernatural kind of experience that separates a person to God's work?
- ☐ B. A very natural experience, similar to what prompts a person to go into any vocation?
- ☐ C. Other \_\_\_\_\_

16. Indicate (with an X) the degree to which the following persons or institutions influenced your decision to enter the ministry:

	Low					High
Mother	/		/		/	/
Father	/		/		/	/
Local Church	/		/		/	/
College Professor	/		/		/	/
Christian Layperson	/		/		/	/
Pastor	/		/		/	/
Other _____	/		/		/	/

17. Did you receive opposition from any of the following?    yes \_\_\_\_    no \_\_\_\_

If yes, which?

- \_\_\_\_ Mother
- \_\_\_\_ Father
- \_\_\_\_ Local Church
- \_\_\_\_ College Professor
- \_\_\_\_ Christian Layperson
- \_\_\_\_ Pastor
- \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

18. What were your reasons for entering the ministry? (Indicate with an X the degree to which each was a factor.)

	Low					High
Attracted to pastoral work	/		/		/	/
Salvation of others	/		/		/	/
Strong sense of "call"	/		/		/	/
Love of God	/		/		/	/
Sense of service to humankind	/		/		/	/
The urging of others	/		/		/	/
Other _____	/		/		/	/

19. If you had the choice to make again, would you enter the pastoral ministry?

yes \_\_\_\_    no \_\_\_\_

20. Give your age at the time the following events occurred in your life:

- \_\_\_\_ Joining the church
- \_\_\_\_ Age at which you decided to enter the ministry
- \_\_\_\_ Ordination/ recording/licensing
- \_\_\_\_ Beginning of first pastorate
- \_\_\_\_ Most recent change of position
- \_\_\_\_ Present age

21. Have you changed denominations since you were 20 years of age?    yes \_\_\_\_    no \_\_\_\_

If yes, from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

22. Rank the following professions from 1(high) to 8 (low) according to prestige as you believe the people of your community would.

<input type="checkbox"/> Public School Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Lawyer
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Executive	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Worker
<input type="checkbox"/> Clergy	<input type="checkbox"/> Banker
<input type="checkbox"/> College Professor	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Physician	

23. Are (were) you comfortable with your level of achievement (or success) in the ministry?

yes ☐ no ☐

24. Do (did) you accomplish your goals in the ministry? yes ☐ no ☐

25. Are you impatient when your purposes are frustrated? (check one)

Always ☐ Frequently ☐ Seldom ☐ Never ☐

26. Do you enjoy working with people? yes ☐ no ☐

27. Do you believe you communicate well with people? (check one)

Always ☐ Frequently ☐ Seldom ☐ Never ☐

28. What areas of the ministry do you feel are the most important? Rank the following from 1 (high) to 5 (low).

☐ Preaching  
☐ Teaching  
☐ Administration  
☐ Calling  
☐ Counseling  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

29. Give the approximate percentage of time actually spent in your ministry on these areas.

☐ Preaching (including preparation)  
☐ Teaching  
☐ Administration  
☐ Calling  
☐ Counseling  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_



30. Check any of the following which you feel hinder you from being fully effective in the pastorate.

- ☐ Difficult to preach
- ☐ Difficult to say the right thing while calling
- ☐ Ability to raise money
- ☐ Ability to plan long-range programs and carry them out
- ☐ Difficult to motivate laypersons to do the work of the church
- ☐ Difficult to call on strangers
- ☐ Ability to work with people
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

31. Rank the following according to the order in which you would seek help from them in times of stress (1 being the primary source).

- ☐ Colleagues
- ☐ Spouse
- ☐ Superiors
- ☐ Laypersons
- ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Carry the burden yourself

32. Rank the following according to the order in which you have received help in times of stress (1 being the primary source).

- ☐ Colleagues
- ☐ Spouse
- ☐ Superiors
- ☐ Laypersons
- ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Yourself

33. What is your church's form of government?

- Congregational \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopalian \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian \_\_\_\_\_  
Connectional \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

34. Rank the following according to which group's or person's approval and/or praise you most highly value (1 being the most valued source).

- ☐ Spouse
- ☐ Laypersons
- ☐ Superiors
- ☐ Fellow pastors in your denomination
- ☐ Fellow pastors in your community
- ☐ Church staff
- ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_

35. Now rank the same persons or groups according to how supportive you have actually found them to be (1 being the most supportive).

- ☐ Spouse
- ☐ Laypersons
- ☐ Superiors
- ☐ Fellow pastors in your denomination
- ☐ Fellow pastors in your community
- ☐ Church staff
- ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_

36. What other profession would you have chosen had you not entered the ministry?

\_\_\_\_\_

37. Do you regard yourself now as: (check one)

- ☐ Still in the pastoral ministry?
- ☐ Still in the ministry, but not in the pastoral ministry?
- ☐ Temporarily out of the pastoral ministry?
- ☐ Permanently out of the pastoral ministry?
- ☐ Planning to leave the ministry for secular employment?
- ☐ Other? \_\_\_\_\_

38. Several role activities are listed below. Rate them from 1 through 6 by circling the appropriate number. If you disliked or detested the task, rate it on the 1 side of the scale; if you enjoyed the task, and did it with enthusiasm, rate it on the 6 side of the scale.

	Disliked Intensely				Enjoyed Intensely		N/A
(1) Calling in general	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(2) Hospital calling	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(3) Preaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(4) Conducting and/or attending board or committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(5) Planning and programming activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(6) Assisting individuals in making a commitment to Christ	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(7) Giving leadership in community functions	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____

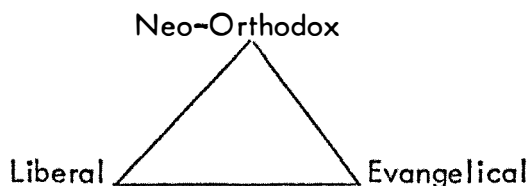
	Disliked Intensely				Enjoyed Intensely		N/A
(8) Studying and/or writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(9) Teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(10) Counseling individuals with personal problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(11) Conducting worship services	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(12) Administrative duties	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____

39. Rate the factors listed below as you felt about them in your last pastorate, circling the appropriate number.

	Very Dissatisfied				Very Satisfied		N/A
(1) The congregation's willingness to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(2) The quality and amount of leadership ability in the church	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(3) The receptiveness of the congregation to innovative ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(4) Your spouse's contribution to your effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(5) The <u>potential</u> church budget amount compared to the <u>actual</u> amount	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(6) The use of church monies	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(7) The amount of time you had for family and private life	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(8) The freedom to speak your convictions	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(9) Your total contribution to the life of that church	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(10) The amount of time allowed you for private study	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____

	Very Dissatisfied				Very Satisfied		N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(11) The degree to which the work utilized your strengths rather than your weaknesses as a minister							_____
(12) Your salary and living arrangements	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(13) The congregation's demonstration of its appreciation for your work	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____
(14) Support from denominational leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6	_____

40. Place an X on (or around or in) the triangle below at the point you were when you left seminary. Place an O where you are now.



41. Given the opportunity, what would you like to say to your last congregation?

42. To your denominational superiors?

43. To your seminary?

44. On the next page is an "Occupation Grid" on which you are asked to supply information on all full-time, non-temporary employment you have had since leaving seminary. Under each heading, write in the number which will indicate the appropriate answer as it is found in the specific instructions given below for each of the seven vertical columns.

Example: if, under (2) Size of Church, your church has 275 members, the correct response would be to place in that column, for that position, the number 3. Please respond to all questions for all positions as best you can. If, in any case, a question is not applicable, signify this by entering N/A in the appropriate box.

- (1) Give the title or position of each job in chronological order beginning with the time you left seminary. (e.g., teacher, pastor, C.E. Director, etc.)

- (2) Indicate the membership of the church by writing in the appropriate number.

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Under 100 | 4. 401-700    |
| 2. 101-200   | 5. 701-1,000  |
| 3. 201-400   | 6. Over 1,000 |

- (3) Indicate the size of the community by writing in the appropriate number.

- |                  |                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Under 2,500   | 4. 40,000+ (suburban setting)   |
| 2. 2,500-9,999   | 5. 50,000+ (inner city setting) |
| 3. 10,000-49,999 | 6. 50,000+ (other metropolitan) |

- (4) Indicate the average salary range (including housing and other benefits) by writing in appropriate number.

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Under \$3,000 | 4. \$9,000-11,999  |
| 2. \$3,000-5,999 | 5. \$12,000-14,999 |
| 3. \$6,000-8,999 | 6. Over \$15,000   |

- (5) Rate your feeling of success and/or adequacy in each position by writing in a number from 1 through 6, with 1 for the least sense of success and 6 for the highest sense of success.

- (6) Rate your feeling about the amount of stress felt in each position. Again use the scale 1 through 6, with 1 being the least amount of stress and 6 the greatest amount of stress.

- (7) Indicate how many years you served in each position.

# OCCUPATION GRID

(1) Title or Position	(2) Size of Church	(3) Size of Communi- ty	(4) Salary Range	(5) Rating of Success	(6) Rating of Stress	(7) Number of Years
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						

## PART II

### INFORMATION FROM NON-PASTORS

1. What was (were) your reason(s) for leaving the pastorate? (If more than one reason, rank them in order of importance to your decision, (1 being most important).

☐ Change was a planned step in your life-long goals  
☐ Opportunity for larger and more meaningful area of service arose  
☐ Low income  
☐ Unable to relocate (find another pastorate)  
☐ Personal crisis forced decision to leave  
☐ Felt personally inadequate  
☐ Offered higher salary and/or benefits  
☐ Disillusioned with church's relevance to world's problems  
☐ Uncertain of your calling  
☐ Poor health  
☐ Marital or family problems  
☐ Hostile congregation  
☐ Frustration over multiplicity of tasks  
☐ Did not like living in a "fishbowl"  
☐ Felt church was irrelevant (not keeping up with the times)  
☐ Difficulty in getting laymen to see the value of church program  
☐ Difficulty in keeping a disciplined schedule  
☐ Felt church was confining itself to a narrow social stratum  
☐ Conflict with laymen on how to run the church  
☐ Trouble among parishioners hindered your effectiveness  
☐ Your own personal faith changed  
☐ Local congregation forced you to move  
☐ To improve that church seemed a hopeless task  
☐ You simply did not enjoy the pastorate  
☐ Church did not take your leadership seriously  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did you feel that your work load in your last pastorate was:  
Light \_\_\_\_ About right \_\_\_\_ Heavy \_\_\_\_ Impossible \_\_\_\_

3. Was there a specific event or incident which precipitated your decision to leave the pastoral ministry? yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_

4. Did you have financial resources available to help you make the transition from the pastorate to new employment? yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_

5. Indicate below the response of the persons or groups listed when you made public your decision to leave the pastorate.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Spouse	___	___	___
Other family members	___	___	___
Denominational superiors	___	___	___
Pastors of your denomination	___	___	___
Pastors of other denominations	___	___	___
The congregation	___	___	___

6. How did you secure new employment?  
(check one)

\_\_\_ Unsolicited offer  
\_\_\_ Returned to former area of expertise  
\_\_\_ Help of friends or relatives  
\_\_\_ Actively sought employment through regular job-hunting channels  
\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. When you left the pastorate, did your financial circumstances:  
(check one)

\_\_\_ Improve greatly?  
\_\_\_ Improve some?  
\_\_\_ Stay approximately the same?  
\_\_\_ Decline some?  
\_\_\_ Decline greatly?

8. How did your spouse feel about your decision to leave the pastorate?  
(check one)

\_\_\_ Very reluctant to leave  
\_\_\_ Willing to leave but preferred to remain  
\_\_\_ Neutral  
\_\_\_ Preferred to leave but willing to stay  
\_\_\_ Eager to leave

9. At the time you were making the decision to leave the pastorate, was the relationship between you and your spouse:  
(check one)

\_\_\_ Warm and supportive?  
\_\_\_ Usually supportive, but unpredictable?  
\_\_\_ Mediocre?  
\_\_\_ Tending toward separation?  
\_\_\_ Separated or divorced?



10. In the years preceding your decision to leave the ministry, did you make any of the following changes in theological position? If so, check that statement. Then rank any of these changes which you made in the order of the effect they had on your decision to leave the pastoral ministry in the right hand column. Opposite the most important change place the number 1, opposite the next most important change place the number 2, etc. If the change had no effect on your decision, then leave it blank.

		Rank of Importance to Decision to Leave
<input type="checkbox"/> From theoretical to practical emphases	<input type="checkbox"/> From practical to theoretical emphases	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> From liberal to conservative theological doctrine	<input type="checkbox"/> From conservative to liberal theological doctrine	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> From humanistic to evangelistic emphasis	<input type="checkbox"/> From evangelistic to humanistic emphasis	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> From rather tolerant to rather strict views	<input type="checkbox"/> From rather strict to rather tolerant views	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> From a strong committed faith to weak faith	<input type="checkbox"/> From weak faith to a strong committed faith	<input type="text"/>

11. Are you considering returning to the pastoral ministry? yes  no

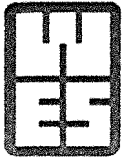
If not, would you ever consider returning to the pastoral ministry? yes  no

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you so much for your cooperation

APPENDIX E

LETTERS SENT TO SURVEY SUBJECTS



# Western Evangelical Seminary

A Graduate School of Theology  
and Christian Ministries

August 17, 1978

Dear

As a graduate student at San Francisco Theological Seminary, I am doing research on factors which have contributed to career change decisions among Western Evangelical Seminary Alumni. Many who have made this major decision to leave the pastoral ministry have never been given the opportunity to express their opinions regarding this decision. This project grew out of a concern to discover not only the reasons why men and women are leaving the pastorate, but also to give them an opportunity to express their concerns to the Seminary and to their denominational leaders. I am also asking for a response from those presently pastoring for purposes of comparison.

Because it is believed that such a study will make a contribution to the understanding of a contemporary problem of major concern I am asking you to cooperate by completing the enclosed questionnaire (This should take approximately 25 minutes). The information gained in this questionnaire will be held in strict confidence. You will note that there is a code number on the first page; this is only for use in follow-up mailings and for possible use of random samplings of the larger group. I have employed the services of a secretary to open the returned mailings for me so that all replies will be completely anonymous and will be treated as grouped data.

A stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Since I am surveying a relatively small group of potential respondents, each one is very important. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Bruce A. Hicks

pgj; enclosure



September 18, 1978

You recently received a letter and an enclosed questionnaire concerning career change decisions among pastors. This questionnaire was from Mr. Bruce Hicks who is doing research under my supervision for his doctoral dissertation at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Since Mr. Hicks needs a good percentage of returns and the findings will indeed be beneficial to denominational leaders your response is important.

If you did not receive the questionnaire or have misplaced it, please request another with the enclosed postal card. If you have already responded please disregard this letter.

Thank you for your helpfulness.

Sincerely yours,

Myron D. Goldsmith, Ph. D.

MDG:lk

Enclosure