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Thriving Holistically as a Woman Married to a Minister: A Spiritual Formation Model to Support Women in the United States in the Role of Pastor's Wife

Elisa Renae Ashley

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THRIVING HOLISTICALLY AS A WOMAN MARRIED TO A MINISTER:
A SPIRITUAL FORMATION MODEL TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN THE UNITED
STATES IN THE ROLE OF PASTOR'S WIFE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2020

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I reflect on this doctoral journey, I am humbled and amazed by the powerful movements of God's hands. The Holy Spirit has called, empowered, cajoled, prodded, comforted, carried, enlightened, and powerfully transformed. I'm grateful for the journey, difficult though it has been, and for God's clear and powerful call to serve such beautiful and complex women who walk in the embodied role of pastor's wife. I'm grateful for the millions of women who have served God and God's children through the role and who have shared their stories through the years (especially Kay Bytwerk and Heidi Joy). It is a meager offering, but I offer my sincere gratitude, appreciation, and respect.

Thank you Dr. MaryKate Morse; you set such a warm, authentic, and harmonious table of spiritual formation and your leadership provided such a powerful holding environment for our cohort as we grew and adapted in our transformations. Thank you, Dr. Jeffery Savage, for your wise advising, calm and steady presence, and unfailing encouragement and belief in this advisee. Thank you Patricia Stadolnik, my editor, for skillfully working selflessly and with a servant's heart for God's kingdom. Thank you, Barnabas Ministries, Inc. – especially Executive Director Sean Bowen – for providing me a veritable internship in small group community and leadership of para-church ministry; thank you for your knowledge and a seat at the table. To my cohort small group – Lynn, Linda, Bev, Lynn – thank you for your ministry of presence, vulnerability, and healing. To my spiritual friend, Lynn Pottenger, thank you for adding sweetness and comfort to this journey. Thank you to my many friends and colleagues who have so graciously and faithfully held me in prayer.

Thanks to all the students, researchers, and authors of the past and present who worked so diligently to prepare meaningful materials upon which this paper stands. Thanks to the influential women in my life, some of you stand even now in the Lord's presence. Just to name a few of you who are professors, teachers, and counselors upon whose shoulders I stand and without whom my journey would be incomplete: Dr. June Hutchinson, Dr. Gwenfair Adams, Dr. Aida Spencer, Beverly Smith, Rose White, Pattie Hubbard, Mrs. Walters, and Mrs. Pierson. Deep gratitude to my grandmother, Era Seat, and my mother, Katherine Shipley, you walked journeys full of deep pain and great joy; you held on to Christ in times when that was all you had and you taught me to do the same.

Unspeakable gratitude and appreciation to my beloved husband, Keith. Thank you for your love, respect, and belief in me. For your willingness to journey as a ministry spouse and your conviction in my calling. For accepting all the disruptions of this journey without grumbling. For your support of women and equity. For your own desire, willingness, and action to continually be transformed by God in spirit, mind, and body. "It's always better when we're together."¹

¹ Jack Johnson, "Better Together," *In Between Dreams* (Brushfire, 2006).

ABSTRACT

While women married to ministers are blessed by God in many ways through their role as pastor's wife, the role also presents many particular stressors. These stressors impact the systems of self, family, and church. A majority of clergy wives struggle to some degree with interpersonal loneliness, with finding confidants, and creating spiritual community wherein they can be authentically vulnerable. These struggles negatively impact the spiritual, physical, and psycho-emotional health of the women in this role. In order for them to deepen their spirituality and thrive holistically as they navigate the challenges of this role, a tailored spiritual formation model is needed which includes: individual spiritual practices; cross-affinity, small group spiritual community; and continued exploration of their embodied roles as a clergy wife.

In chapter one, the unique needs and stressors of pastors' wives are reviewed, as they are an under-researched and underserved demographic whose holistic health is vital to the Church. Chapter two reviews the history of the role and offers insight to the current trends, which is important for women as they explore thinking deeply about how to follow God's lead in their role. The way women seek to fulfill the role may vary based on giftings, call, and season of life. Chapter three unpacks some of the foundations of spiritual theology and spiritual formation, providing a basis for the proposed spiritual formation model. Particularly, this chapter looks at the life of Jesus as an example to be followed in the practice of both solitude and small group spiritual community. Chapter four stresses both the need and difficulty for women married to ministers to cultivate small group community. It also unpacks some necessary components of effective cross-

affinity small groups for pastors' wives. Chapter five provides a vision for the application of the proposed model as conducted by Journey Partner Ministries.

CHAPTER ONE:
THE COMPLEX CHALLENGES AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS
ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROLE OF A PASTOR'S WIFE

Introduction

Isolated and virtually friendless.¹ Stressed.² Stagnating spiritually, resulting in feeling farther away from the heart of God. Second-guessing God's vocational call while deeply and seriously considering leaving their church.³ Feeling so physically exhausted that perhaps even if they want to stay, they doubt they are able.⁴ This doubt precipitates deep guilt and personal judgement, "Maybe I'm just not cut out for this after all."⁵

The above, either in part or in full, describes almost half of all pastors in the United States of America.⁶ This author has spent a good deal of time researching pastoral

¹ H. B. London, Jr. and Dr. Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, rev. ed. (Raleigh, NC: Regal, 2003).

² Carol Anderson Darling and E. Wayne Hill, "Understanding Boundary-Related Stress in Clergy Families," *Marriage and Family Review* 35 (2003): 154, https://doi-org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1300/J002v35n01_09.

³ Linda Hileman, "The Unique Needs of Protestant Clergy Families: Implications for Marriage and Family Counseling," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 10, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 131, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349630802081152>.

⁴ Cameron Lee, "Patterns of Stress and Support Among Adventist Clergy: Do Pastors and Their Spouses Differ?" *Pastoral Psychology* 55, no. 6 (July 1, 2007): 761, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11089-007-0086-x>.

⁵ Anugrah Kumar, "Nearly 3 in 4 Pastors Regularly Consider Leaving Due to Stress, Study Finds," *Christian Post*, last modified June 21, 2017, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/nearly-3-in-4-pastors-regularly-consider-leaving-due-to-stress-study-finds-121973/>.

⁶ Stephen Muse, "Clergy in Crisis: When Human Power Isn't Enough," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 61, no. 3 (2007): 183–195; Douglas W Turton, *Clergy Burnout and Emotional Exhaustion: A Socio-Psychological Study of Job Stress and Job Satisfaction* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), EBSCOhost.

life, the original focus of my doctoral work.⁷ (Additionally, I lived it first-hand as a pastor myself.) The breadth of material is generous. The non-profit organizations serving pastors are well documented and forthcoming with information and resources. It was this in-depth journey into pastoral research that brought this author to a shift in doctoral focus.

While the description from the first paragraph describes almost half of all pastors, it also describes almost half of all the women who are married to pastors. For example, roughly half of both pastors and pastors' wives report not having one close friend.⁸ Here is a representative story: Eve has always loved the Lord, at least for as long as she can remember. Lately, however, it is getting harder. She is thirty-five with two young kids and endless laundry. Sometimes she stares into the washing machine and watches the water swirl, back and forth. That is how her life feels: kids, clean, cook, work, church, sleep, repeat. Her college degree didn't prepare her for this. Her husband seems to be rarely home. When he is home in body, he is often not in mind. He has just started his second pastorate, and the demands are high.⁹ He gives so much physically and

⁷ Lee, "Patterns of Stress and Support," 761.

⁸ *Survey of American Pastors' Spouses Quantitative Long Report*, Research Survey (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Research: Biblical Solutions for Life, September 2017), <http://lifewayresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pastor-Spouse-Quantitative-Long-Report-2017.pdf>. London, Jr. and Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*.

⁹ "...work-related stressors exacted a heavy toll [on clergy]:... by eroding marital adjustment and quality of life..." Carol Anderson Darling, W. Wayne Hill, and Lenore M. McWey, "Understanding Stress and Quality of Life for Clergy and Clergy Spouses," *Stress and Health* 20, no. 5 (2004): 262, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_wos000226075400005.

emotionally to the church that he feels empty by the time he gets home.¹⁰ Who can blame him, and how is she supposed to compete with a calling from God?¹¹

As the new pastor's wife on the block, she was asked to lead VBS this coming summer. Panic swept over her body, her gut tightened, and her mouth got dry. She knew it would not be her gifting, but those looming expectations from the church and those she had of herself... They were haunting and daunting. Who could she talk to? Who would understand?

Indeed, who would understand? One cannot understand the complexities and implications of being married to a pastor without understanding the complexities of performing in a pastorate. Regardless of the independent nature or independent desires of the spouse, the spillover of being married to a pastor is unique and undeniable.¹² With this in mind, the author's previous research on pastors is invaluable to the focus on pastors' wives.

The role of pastor's wife often involves a wide range of responsibilities, such as emotionally supporting her pastor-husband, conforming to certain congregational expectations of appearance and/or participation (often influenced by the previous pastor's wife), setting an example both personally and within her family and marriage, and

¹⁰ Sandi Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life: A Survey of Pastors' Wives" (Master's thesis, Marquette University, 1991), 41, http://www.marquette.edu/library/theses/already_uploaded_to_IR/brune_s_1991.pdf.

¹¹ John Cattich, "Three Models of Clergy Systems: Analysis of Couple Processes and Spiritual Meaning," *Pastoral Psychology* 61, no. 2 (April 1, 2012): 188, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-011-0379-y>.

¹² *Ibid.*, 40.

remaining silent to keep from making waves.¹³ Research reveals the myriad of challenges and negative impacts that often accompany the role of clergy wife. Women married to pastors frequently and consistently suffer from isolation, emotional pain, and stress and anxiety that negatively impact their spirituality and quality of life. These negative impacts may be found across multiple life systems, as will be unpacked shortly. The trying situation of ministers' wives prompted the research question, "How can women married to ministers deepen their spirituality and thrive as they navigate the challenges of the role?" The primary resulting answer is a spiritual formation model (SFM) that creates an optimal environment for spiritual growth and leads to an increased quality of life for pastors' wives. The proposed SFM includes three major anchors: individual spiritual practices, cross-affinity spiritual formation small groups, and continued exploration of women's embodied role as a pastor's wife. Women married to pastors who engage in this SFM develop a deeper spirituality, a social support system, better psycho-emotional well-being, and build immunity to stress.

¹³ Rene Drumm et al., "Love Everybody, Keep Your Mouth Shut, Don't Have an Opinion': Role Expectations among Seventh-Day Adventist Pastor Spouses," *Social Work and Christianity* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 94, ProQuest; Ryan C. Staley, "An Investigation of the Strategies Employed by Clergy and Their Spouses to Prevent and Cope with Interpersonal Isolation" (PhD diss., George Fox University, 2012): 5, <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/psyd/127>; "This spouse shared that she does not feel free to lend her views to discussions of church business and ministry planning: I think, 'I am contributing to the church, you know, and I have just as much say.' I'm a member, but I don't get to... come to a business meeting and voice my opinion on a particular hot item in a church. I don't think that's fair to us as pastors' wives, that we are expected not to say anything or not to even participate in board meetings or business meetings or things like that. I think that is unfair to us as spouses." One wife expressed it this way, "Whether it is fair or not, I have a position that requires me to be an example and whether or not I have chosen to be an example, I am looked at and observed and emulated to some extent." Drumm et al., "Love Everybody," 103, 106.

The focus of this paper is women married to male pastors in the U.S.; these women thereby function in the role of pastor's wife.¹⁴ These women, as they function in this role, are here equally referenced as any of the following: pastors' wives, ministers' wives, clergy wives. The research surveyed spans multiple Christian faith traditions, which is significant considering that similar challenges and impacts were seen across such a wide variety of Protestant faiths.¹⁵ The experiences of a woman married to a male pastor vs. a man married to a female pastor are very different, due to the gender expectations and cultural norms still strongly at play in the U.S. and most American churches. Thus, her needs are unique and require a gender focus. As a pastor's spouse, men are "significantly more likely to be nontraditional than their female counterparts."¹⁶ Here is the point-of-view from one non-clergy pastor's husband who participated in a study with thirty-nine pastor's wives: "I don't have those stereotypic expectations of the [female] pastor's spouse. Are there expectations? Sure, but they are dramatically different, it feels like. And so, I am blessed."¹⁷

¹⁴ These women may be married to solo pastors, senior pastors, associate pastors or youth pastors.

¹⁵ Faith traditions include: both mainline and evangelical Protestant, American Baptist, Baptist, Assemblies of God, Church of Christ, Church of God, Evangelical Covenant Church, Evangelical Free, Christian Missionary Alliance, Foursquare, Free Methodist Church, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, Lutheran, Lutheran Missouri Synod, Methodist, Nazarene, Non-denominational, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Presbyterian Church USA, Seventh Day Adventist, Southern Baptist, United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, Unitarian Universalist, Wesleyan.

¹⁶ Gail E. Murphy-Geiss, "Married to the Minister: The Status of the Clergy Spouse as Part of a Two-Person Single Career," *Journal of Family Issues* 32, no. 7 (2011): 932, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X10396660>.

¹⁷ Drumm et al., "Love Everybody," 98.

Compared to the research on clergy, there is a small amount of research focused directly on spouses of clergy in the U.S. and even less in areas outside of the U.S. such as South Africa.¹⁸ In the small amount of research that exists, the responses from men married to pastors is statistically insignificant due to the still very small number of female pastors.¹⁹ Therefore, limiting the focus to women married to pastors “is common” in research.²⁰ While there are many reported intrinsic rewards for women married to clergy, this paper is not about those.²¹ This paper is about isolating some of the major difficulties

¹⁸ “Most of the research has been conducted using the individual responses of male pastors. Comparatively little empirical research has been done with pastors’ wives, and still less where both the husbands’ and the wives’ responses are matched and compared.” Lee, “Patterns of Stress and Support,” 761; “The research, which is limited, has focused on...the minister... Little has been devoted to clergy spouses, and less still to clergy children.” Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 120; Amy Luedtke, “The Lived Experience of Being a Wesleyan Clergy Wife: A Phenomenological Study” (Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, Capella University, 2011): 1, ProQuest. Leschenne Darmé Rebuli, “The Biblical Role of the Pastor’s Wife in the Local Church: A Case Study of Churches in Somerset West, Western Cape” (master’s thesis, South African Theological Seminary, 2008): 10, <https://www.sats.edu.za/userfiles/Rebuli%20L%20Full%20Thesis%20FINAL%202021%20Oct%2008.pdf>.

¹⁹ Drumm et al., “Love Everybody,” 96; *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, 48; Darling et al., “Understanding Stress,” 264. In some instances the male-spouse response is as small as 2.5% - 4%, and in some cases the male-spouse response is ejected from data analysis for varying reasons which include the male-spouse being clergy himself. Yet in other research, the number of female pastors is so small that they are not included in the samples at all.

²⁰ Murphy-Geiss, “Married to the Minister,” 937.

²¹ To note a few: Many wives acknowledge the good and bad of the church, “including appreciation for the church as their healer and sustainer.” Ibid.; Brunette-Hill, “His Job, Her Life.” Wives find meaning and self-fulfillment in their participation in the church and contributing to other’s lives, interacting with a wide range of people and they deeply appreciate the gratitude and respect that may be shown them. Amy C. Luedtke and Katti J. Sneed, “Voice of the Clergy Wife: A Phenomenological Study,” *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 72, no. 1 (March 2018): 63–72, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1542305018762212>. Wives express enjoyment when they are able to direct the activities and responsibilities they endeavor, mention how some congregants support them like extended family and mention their appreciation for the influence they have in their role. Sarah Pierson Kerrick, “Positive Coping Practices Among Wives of Male Christian Clergy: Translating Qualitative Findings for a Lay Audience” (PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2010), ProQuest. Many wives report a thanksgiving at seeing God at work up-close, find joy in loving others, feel rewarded when they are able to function in their gifting and find their faith and sensing God’s presence to be a solace in the difficult times. “85 percent [of clergy wives] feel cared for by their church.” Kara Bettis, “Survey: Pastors’ Wives Often Feel Disconnected, Isolated,” Academic Resource Library, *The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist*

and furthering understanding with an eye toward spiritually directed approaches to ease them.

Challenges and Negative Impacts Divided by Systems

The struggles of women married to pastors create a complex ministry problem including a wide range of stressors: lack of social support, loneliness, lack of time/time pressures, role expectations/confusion, lack of privacy/fishbowl effect, financial strain, boundary issues, etc. These women live in a web of overlapping and interconnected systems with one influencing the other in constant feedback and modification. Three of these systems here addressed are: the *self system* (spiritual, mental, psycho-emotional), the *family system* (household functioning, marriage, time management), and the *church system* (expectations and demands both congregationally and denominationally).²² A breakdown in any of these systems can instigate similar negative emotions in any of the others. Thus, when one or more systems is precipitating a negative impact, such as loneliness, the feeling experienced by the woman may be intensified by the input from multiple systems. Therefore, the repercussions from the breakdown of one particular system can be difficult to parlay.

Convention, last modified September 20, 2017, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/survey-pastors-wives-often-feel-disconnected-isolated>.

²² In the church system, it is here duly noted that many Christian churches do not exist within denominations but rather associations or networks. In this paper, the term *faith traditions* or *denominations* is utilized with this understanding and inclusion of such Christian associations or networks.

For example, the *self system*'s negative impacts include, but are not limited to, interpersonal isolation, family stress, and unmet expectations of the wife.²³ However, these negative impacts may be found in the *church system* as well. The breakdown and clash of these systems often leaves the wife feeling lonely and fearful to share her loneliness or other negative feelings including burn-out, anxiety or suffering, from either languishing spirituality or declining health, or both.²⁴ A vicious complication is the general lack of resources for wives and the reluctance of many wives to seek the resources that are available, even though research has shown that "spiritual resources had the greatest total effect on their quality of life."²⁵

We will now examine the three systems mentioned above, exploring the challenges and negative impacts for each.

The Self System: Spiritual, Mental, Psycho-Emotional

Table 1.1. Statistical data for the self system: clergy wives report struggling to some degree

Data Reported	Respondents	Source, Page #
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²³ Murphy-Geiss, "Married to the Minister," 933; Staley, "Strategies," 4; Drumm et al., "Love Everybody," 94; Lenore M. Knight-Johnson, "Models of Clergy Spouse Involvement in Protestant Christian Congregations," *Review of Religious Research* 54, no. 1 (November 20, 2011): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-011-0038-x>; Hileman, "Unique Needs," 122; Ervin L. Shirey, Jr., "The Use of Support Systems by Pastors of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church as a Means of Maintaining Spiritual Well-Being and Coping with Burnout" (DMin. diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2001): 126, <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/ecommonsatsdissertations/435/>; Lee, "Patterns of Stress and Support," 35.

²⁴ Cattich, "Three Models of Clergy Systems," 180; Darling et al., "Understanding Stress," 262; Staley, "Strategies," 1; Hileman, "Unique Needs," 138; Kenneth R Pelletier, *Sound Mind, Sound Body: A New Model for Lifelong Health* (New York: Fireside, 1995); Kathleen A Kendall-Tackett, *The Psychoneuroimmunology of Chronic Disease: Exploring the Links Between Inflammation, Stress, and Illness*, (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2010).

²⁵ Darling et al., "Understanding Stress," 261; Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 21; Drumm et al., "Love Everybody," 107; Murphy-Geiss, "Married to the Minister," 945; Staley, "Strategies," 5; Marsha Wiggins Frame, "Relocation and Well-Being in United Methodist Clergy and Their Spouses: What Pastoral Counselors Need to Know," *Pastoral Psychology* 46, no. 6 (July 1, 1998): 415, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023098120436>; "Counseling Can Be a Drain on an Already Strained Budget of Many Clergy Families," Hileman, "Unique Needs," 137, 141.

		<i>Survey of American Pastors' Spouses Quantitative Long Report</i>
Having enough emotionally connected relationships	72%	27
Finding relationships where they can simply be themselves	69%	27
Counting on friends in church when stressed	68%	19
Counting on friends outside church when stressed	65%	19
Percent who count on a counselor	15%	20
Those who do spend “regular time with friends”	28%	47
Having confidants	80%	27
		<hr/> “His Job, Her Life” <hr/>
Few personal friends/lack of social support	50%	76
Hard to be yourself (especially women 41-50)	49%	53
Report being close to burn-out	33%	75
Would like help overcoming discouragement	43%	75
Need help coping with stress	60%	75

Sources: *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, LifeWay; Brunette-Hill, “His Job, Her Life.”

The first system here examined is the self system. This system highlights the internal workings of the woman, how the Spirit is moving in her life, how she is processing her feelings, the status of her psychological development, etc. Women married to ministers face challenges such as varying types of loneliness combined with little to no social support system, all working together to compromise both emotional and physical health and function.

“Humans have an innate need to engage with others, to communicate interpersonally, and to participate in mutually satisfying relationships...”²⁶ When engagement with others is not mutually satisfying, interpersonal isolation occurs. It is a defining attribute of loneliness, a condition where there is a gap between one’s desired social connectedness and one’s actual level of social connectedness.²⁷ Sadly, loneliness has been consistently and pervasively reported by women married to ministers throughout each and every published report on clergy wives.²⁸ “It is important to note that interpersonal isolation refers to a feeling, and that even one with many social connections may still experience loneliness.”²⁹ Additionally, research shows that lonely people still engage in many social activities and do not necessarily spend more time alone.³⁰ That is the situation of most pastors’ wives, as gleaned from the statistics above.³¹ Lonely people are still engaging, still eating the ice cream...it is just not satisfying, not tasting as good.³²

²⁶ Julie Leming, “The Emotional Toll of End-Stage Renal Disease: Differentiating Between Social Isolation, Loneliness, and Disengagement,” *Canadian Association of Nephrology Nurses and Technologists* (July 1, 2016): 1, https://www.thefreelibrary.com/_/print/PrintArticle.aspx?id=470369585.

²⁷ Elliot A. Layden, John T. Cacioppo, and Stephanie Cacioppo, “Loneliness Predicts a Preference for Larger Interpersonal Distance within Intimate Space,” *PLoS One* 13, no. 9 (2018): 1, <http://dx.doi.org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0203491>.

²⁸ Staley, “Strategies,” 8. Staley alone notes over five studies. Each study found in this bibliography notes loneliness as a leading issue as well.

²⁹ Leming, “Social Isolation, Loneliness, and Disengagement,” 4.

³⁰ Tara L. Queen et al., “Loneliness in a Day: Activity Engagement, Time Alone, and Experienced Emotions,” *Psychology and Aging* 29, no. 2 (2014): 10, <http://doi.apa.org/getdoi.cfm?doi=10.1037/a0036889>.

³¹ Staley, “Strategies,” 8.

³² Queen et al., “Loneliness in a Day,” 10-11.

One wife explains, “The loneliest feeling in the world can be sitting on a pew by yourself in a sanctuary full of people where your spouse is preaching.”³³ Yet even in their loneliness, many wives feel guilty about sharing the depths of their need even to their husbands; many believe it would be selfish or might pull their husbands away from “the Lord’s work.”³⁴

Alienation is a specific type of loneliness: feeling different, separated, misunderstood, and having no close friends.³⁵ Many clergy wives believe they are perceived by others as being different and believe that those not in ministry do not understand their situation, yet due to factors within the church system, they do not typically connect with other pastors’ wives either.³⁶ Alienation may be exacerbated by the sensitive information the wife must keep in confidence.³⁷ This vigilance can create a habitual state of being guarded.³⁸

³³ Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 123.

³⁴ Cattich, “Three Models of Clergy Systems,” 125.

³⁵ Carin Rubenstein and Phillip Shaver, “The Experience of Loneliness,” in *Loneliness: A Sourcebook of Current Theory, Research, and Therapy*, eds. Letitia Anne Peplau and Daniel Perlman, Wiley Series on Personality Processes (New York: Wiley, 1982), 213; Staley, “Strategies,” 1. Some refer to alienation as isolation.

³⁶ Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 123; Only 9% count on other ministers’ wives when they are under stress or feeling bad. *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, 5.

³⁷ “Loneliness. One hundred percent of the participants talked about how their relationships are affected because of their position. Whether they have to be extra guarded within the church because of confidential information being held inside or being treated differently than an average peer at church, the women sensed a difference.” Luedtke and Sneed, “Voice of the Clergy Wife,” 68.

³⁸ “Because they have practiced being guarded in their communication with those outside the family, it may be difficult for clergy couples to learn the same self-disclosing behaviors.” Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 136, 138.

Most clergy wives lack enough emotionally connected relationships where they can simply be themselves. When humans are not able to engage in personal authenticity (be themselves), symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress occur, which have been linked to physical illness.³⁹ For example, congregants invite the wife to birthday parties or showers and fail to understand that while this event may be a *social outlet* for the church member, it is essentially an *at work* event for the wife, as she is still seen as and must maintain the position of a representative of the church.⁴⁰ Research explains this as separating social networks from social support; it is the quality and depth of the relational interaction, not the number and frequency of contacts, that provides social support.⁴¹ Social support is vital because it serves as a buffer for loneliness of all types and promotes both physiological and emotional well-being.⁴² Loneliness is hazardous to wives on several fronts, negatively impacting multiple health systems: mental health, depression, cardiovascular health, high cholesterol, immunological health, chronic disease, diabetes, obesity, poor sleep, alcoholism, Alzheimer's disease, suicidal ideation, and all-cause mortality.⁴³ Since clergy wives have a greater difficulty developing deep,

³⁹ Drumm et al., "Love Everybody," 107; Lee, "Patterns of Stress and Support," 418.

⁴⁰ Hileman, "Unique Needs," 127.

⁴¹ Laura Alejandra Rico-Urbe et al., "Loneliness, Social Networks, and Health: A Cross-Sectional Study in Three Countries," ed. Stephen E Gilman, *PLOS One* 11, no. 1 (January 13, 2016): 1-2, <https://dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0145264>.

⁴² Michael Morris and Priscilla Blanton, "Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses: Influences of Social Context and Perceptions of Work-Related Stressors," *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 38, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022955912433>.

⁴³ Rico-Urbe et al., "Loneliness, Social Networks, and Health," 2; Chris Segrin, Tricia J. Burke, and Michelle Dunivan, "Loneliness and Poor Health within Families," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 29, no. 5 (August 2012): 660, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0265407512443434>; Queen et al., "Loneliness in a Day," 1; Aline Richard et al., "Loneliness Is Adversely Associated with

intimate and mutually satisfying relationships...establishing social support...feelings of loneliness are no small matter and can be no small hurdle.⁴⁴

Christine Hoover, author and clergy spouse, states, “The deepest truth is that what I really want is friendship. I’m surrounded by lovely people and countless relationships, but relationships don’t always equate to friendship.”⁴⁵ Research data from 1962 to 2017, across multiple faith traditions, all report a common trend of clergy wives struggling to find and maintain fruitful friendships and confidants. This creates a weak social support system for these women, as they often are left to rely solely on their overworked clergy-husband.

This lack of friendship has led these women to be described as “impoverished”: having an inability to find “friends/support networks whether inside or outside of the church.”⁴⁶ Some of this inability is due to the fact that others have an expectation “that clergy couples do not need to have close friends.”⁴⁷ Another mitigating factor is that congregants often become jealous when the clergy wife becomes close to certain other church members, causing conflict and grief for the clergy couple.⁴⁸ If the wife lacks a

Physical and Mental Health and Lifestyle Factors: Results from a Swiss National Survey,” ed. Antony Bayer, *PLOS One* 12, no. 7 (July 17, 2017): 1, <https://dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0181442>.

⁴⁴ Morris and Blanton, “Predictors,” 38; Staley, “Strategies,” 12.

⁴⁵ Bettis, “Survey: Pastor’s Wives,” 1.

⁴⁶ Brunette-Hill, “His Job, Her Life,” 34.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 124.

social support system, she has no safe space to share her burdens; she is often left “to work this all out for herself, reading, writing, crying, and getting away alone.”⁴⁹

The Family System: Household Functioning, Marriage, Time Management

Table 1.2. Statistical data for the family system: clergy wives report struggling to some degree

Data Reported	Respondents	Source, Page #
		<i>Survey of American Pastors' Spouses Quantitative Long Report</i>
Family is negatively affected by the clergy husband's relocation	68%	28
Relocation created financial concerns	67%	28
Just making ends meet each month	48%	25
Need more than just husband's salary	70%	25
Church's needs are met and theirs are not	57%	31
Husband works 50 or more hrs/wk	46%	38
Spending “quality time” alone with husband 3x/month or less	69%	38
Demands of the church interfere with family time	74%	29
		“Understanding Stress and Quality of Life for Clergy and Clergy Spouses”
Pastors who spend 10 hours or less with family/week	50%	275
Wives and husbands at risk for compassion fatigue	27%	266
Wives at risk for burn-out	21%	266
Pastors at risk for burn-out	22%	266
		“His Job, Her Life”
Need more time with husband	74%	43

⁴⁹ William O. Douglas, *Ministers' Wives* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 41.

Data Reported	Respondents	Source, Page #
Need more time as a family	72%	43
Lack of communication with husband	40%	43

Sources: *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, LifeWay; Darling et al., "Understanding Stress"; Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life."

The second system here examined is the family system. This system highlights the interplay of ministry on family function. Women married to ministers face challenges, such as family relocation, financial strain, time management between the family as a whole and ministry, and compassion fatigue. Even one of these stressors is enough to throw a family into dysfunction, and clergy families often face more than one simultaneously, which can compromise the health of the family unit.

Clergy families face many stressors; one highly impactful one is relocation. Relocation "can disrupt family functioning, be a significant source of stress, and adversely affect overall life satisfaction," not to mention create additional financial strain.⁵⁰ These moves may generate a particular type of loneliness for the family: dislocation.⁵¹ Relocation and dislocation stressors are a high concern because of the frequency of pastorate moves: "clergy families move, on average, every 4-5 years" across multiple faith traditions.⁵² Clergy relocation has its own unique stressors, especially: if the constraints of a parsonage are involved (although their use is on the decline), if the size of the town or city is a radical change/adjustment for the family, if they will be removed from extended family, and due to the loss of control over the place the family must

⁵⁰ Staley, "Strategies," 6; Morris and Blanton, "Predictors," 38.

⁵¹ Rubenstein and Shaver, "The Experience of Loneliness," 35.

⁵² Hileman, "Unique Needs," 121.

worship and the congregants with whom they must socialize.⁵³ Relocation and dislocation may create feelings of powerlessness, regardless of denominational polity or whether the move was pastor initiated.⁵⁴ Relocation disrupts family routines, severs support systems, and may lead to loss of employment for the wife, leading to personal sadness and loss of income.⁵⁵ Research shows that the clergy spouse suffers a stronger negative impact from relocation and reports significantly lower rates of well-being due to relocations, possibly manifesting “depression, sadness, loneliness, and alienation from the community.”⁵⁶ If the wife is separated from her extended family, she may lose the positive impact of a significant coping mechanism, as close and satisfying family relationships “have been found to contribute significantly to overall quality of life.”⁵⁷

Grief and loss are major hurdles faced by clergy wives.⁵⁸ She and the family endure loss during relocation and are expected by the new congregation to be overjoyed with their new situation, which often forces grief to go unprocessed.⁵⁹ This unprocessed grief may linger for many years, as many families are reluctant to seek counseling or

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 125; Frame, “Relocation and Well-Being,” 418.

⁵⁵ Frame, “Relocation and Well-Being,” 415; Murphy-Geiss, “Married to the Minister,” 951.

⁵⁶ Staley, “Strategies,” 6; Darling et al., “Understanding Stress,” 263; Frame, “Relocation and Well-Being,” 417, 422.

⁵⁷ Darling et al., “Understanding Stress,” 263.

⁵⁸ Frame, “Relocation and Well-Being,” 426.

⁵⁹ Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 127.

other assistance.⁶⁰ To complicate the adjustment of relocation, the wives often bear the greatest burden in adapting the family into the new home and community.⁶¹

In some situations, the new church may be a welcomed change due to conflicts from the previous church. However, those hurts may go unprocessed as well: 59 percent of wives struggle to some degree with still feeling pain from previous ministry conflicts.⁶² Most pastors' wives carry the pain not only of previous congregational injuries but from previous relocations as well.⁶³ This pain has kept some from investing in new friendships.⁶⁴

There is a lengthy history of clergymen receiving less than adequate pay, regardless of the biblical mandate, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."⁶⁵ Research from the 1980s through 2017 all reflect the same struggle and conflict finances bring to the majority of pastors and their wives.⁶⁶ In fact, a full 68 percent of wives are concerned the family will not have enough for retirement.⁶⁷ Indeed, low income is one of the reasons often given by wives for working outside of the home.⁶⁸ Early in the Protestant

⁶⁰ Frame, "Relocation and Well-Being," 426.

⁶¹ Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 38.

⁶² *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, 5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁴ Staley, "Strategies," 9.

⁶⁵ 1 Timothy 5:18; all Scripture references are NAS unless otherwise noted.

⁶⁶ Staley, "Strategies," 7; Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 76; Hileman, "Unique Needs," 121; Murphy-Geiss, "Married to the Minister," 945; *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, 14.

⁶⁷ *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, 6.

⁶⁸ Murphy-Geiss, "Married to the Minister," 945. In 2008, the average annual compensation for one conference of a mainline denomination was \$56,044, which is lower than the 2007 U.S. Census

movement, many wives worked domestic or educational jobs to provide additional income. While this trend dropped off in the nineteenth century, the number of clergy wives working at least part-time outside the home has been climbing steadily since the 1960s, as noted below in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3. Percentage of clergy wives working outside the home

Year	Full-Time Employment	Part-Time Employment	Total Employment
1965	10%	19%	29%
1987	30%	35%	65%
1990	34%	36%	70%
1997	—	—	80%

Sources: Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 24; Brunette-Hill, "A Life of Her Own: Role Change Among Clergy Wives," *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 10 (1999): 85, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_proquest61440428.

This stands to reason in light of the 1982 report stating that while pastors ranked in the top 10 percent of the population for educational achievement, they ranked 325 out of 432 professional occupations in terms of financial compensation.⁶⁹ It is no wonder that 70 percent of pastors believe that their lack of compensation contributes to marital and family stress and conflict.⁷⁰ Part of the poor compensation for pastors includes poor insurance: medical, dental, counseling.⁷¹ This may provide one reason why so many clergy families fail to seek professional counseling.

Bureau's median family income of \$60,374. Hileman, "Unique Needs," 121. The median value of clergy compensation at large in 2008 was \$38,214, much lower than the 2004 U.S median compensation for workers with a master's degree, which was \$77,935 (which most clergy possess).

⁶⁹ Staley, "Strategies," 7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; Morris and Blanton, "Predictors," 39.

⁷¹ Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 21.

There are only twenty-four hours in a day. No amount of spirituality or wishing will change that. Since the hours in a day were set by God, we must trust that in God's infinite wisdom they are enough. However, most pastors might disagree. It is one of their greatest struggles: to manage the time allotment between ministry and family. As such, it is one of their wives' most painful and pressing concerns.⁷² From 1960 to 2017 the trend has continued. As husbands work long hours to meet the needs of the church, the wives' needs are often left unmet. Between multiple pastoral obligations and clergy working nights and weekends, clergy wives struggle to connect with their husbands.⁷³ The couple fails to schedule regular time together to talk, and intimacy fades.⁷⁴ It is crucial to clarify that *regular time to talk* does not include discussing ministry business or plans. For many pastors, their wife is their only confidant; this creates a great deal of strain on the marriage.⁷⁵

Part of the time management obstacle is "the lack of boundaries clergy families encounter."⁷⁶ Ministry time blends into family time and the family often feels compelled

⁷² Hileman, "Unique Needs," 128; Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 34; Morris and Blanton, "Predictors," 39.

⁷³ Lee, "Patterns of Stress and Support," 761.

⁷⁴ Hileman, "Unique Needs," 139.

⁷⁵ Staley, "Strategies," 9; Shirey, Jr., "Support Systems," 65; Hileman, "Unique Needs," 129; There are organizations that facilitate pastoral support groups where pastors can freely and confidentially discuss ministry burdens; these organizations have had extremely positive impacts on clergy marriages. Barnabas Ministries, Inc., John1723.net.

⁷⁶ Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 20; Darling et al., "Understanding Stress," 263; Staley, "Strategies," 3; Hileman, "Unique Needs," 130.

to attend all church events.⁷⁷ One wife explains: “We no longer have the time, energy, or the opportunity for any social life beyond the two of us together. I miss having family close (they all reside in another state) and I miss having friends.”⁷⁸

Pastoral couples experience “significantly more loneliness and diminished marital adjustment” compared to non-pastoral couples. The isolation pastoral couples feel socially often creeps into their marriage relationship, as both emotional and physical intimacy wane.⁷⁹ This risk of marital isolation is a particular concern when the family has young children, and this can be especially painful for the wife.⁸⁰ If intimacy is lost, it becomes more and more difficult to recapture as the children grow older. Pastoral couples, especially the wives, report fewer support resources, and all of the above-mentioned stressors (intrusiveness of ministry, mobility, time demands, lack of social support) negatively impact family functioning across multiple dimensions, with wives being more negatively affected.⁸¹ All things considered, being a pastoral couple is “risky business” for all spouses and particularly for nonclergy spouses.⁸²

⁷⁷ These types of stressors may be felt uniquely by pastoral children, as the small amount of completed research for them has indicated. However, the scope of this paper will not include their specific needs.

⁷⁸ Brunette-Hill, “His Job, Her Life,” 40.

⁷⁹ Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 138.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁸¹ Morris and Blanton, “Predictors,” 37-38.

⁸² Darling et al., “Understanding Stress,” 262.

In this “risky business” of pastoral life, compassion fatigue is a risk for both wife and husband. How much empathy and compassion can a couple provide “before their emotional reservoir becomes bankrupt?”⁸³ Compassion fatigue in ministry is understood as the spiritual, mental, and physical exhaustion experienced by those who care for others.⁸⁴ The more commonly known condition, *burnout*, is actually an aspect of compassion fatigue “that is characterized by feelings of depression, disconnectedness, and anxiety in the workplace environment.”⁸⁵ Clergy exhibit high levels of burnout across multiple faith traditions, but pastoral burnout does not occur in a vacuum, and pastoral families also suffer.⁸⁶

The pastorate can create the perfect compassion fatigue storm for families, especially when the following are at play: high pastoral expectations/demands from the congregation; minimal family training in clinical, mental health and spiritual practices; exposure to the pain experienced by congregants.⁸⁷ Wives are often exposed to both the pain of congregants and the pain of their pastor-husbands, and an overexposure to pain

⁸³ Ibid., 272.

⁸⁴ “Compassion fatigue is a more user-friendly term for secondary traumatic stress disorder. It is related to the cognitive schema of the therapist or caregiver (social and interpersonal perceptions of the morale).” Daniël Louw, “Compassion Fatigue: Spiritual Exhaustion and the Cost of Caring in the Pastoral Ministry. Towards a ‘Pastoral Diagnosis’ in Caregiving,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies; Pretoria* 71, no. 2 (2015): 1, ProQuest.

⁸⁵ Tifani-Crystal Enid Hanley, “Compassion Fatigue, Self-Care, and Clergy Members: How Social Workers Can Help” (master’s thesis, California State University San Bernardino, 2019): 1, https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/820/?utm_source=scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu%2Fetd%2F820&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

⁸⁶ C.A. Lewis, D.W. Turton, and L.J. Francis, “Clergy Work-Related Psychological Health, Stress, and Burnout: An Introduction to This Special Issue of Mental Health, Religion and Culture,” *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 10, no. 1 (January 2007): 1,5, EBSCOhost.

⁸⁷ Hanley, “Compassion Fatigue, Self-Care, and Clergy” 2.

can prompt compassion fatigue.⁸⁸ Clergy wives may be exposed to compassion fatigue's general symptoms of feeling emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically drained.⁸⁹ Those in the midst of compassion fatigue grow less and less able to exhibit compassion, less able to care for others and less able to experience joy.⁹⁰ A wife is at risk when she expends a great deal of energy and compassion yet feels little internal peace or receives little positive feedback.⁹¹

Compassion fatigue is mitigated by *compassion satisfaction*:

...positive cognitive and emotional consequences as a result of feeling empathy. These consequences include feeling strengthened by having been able to help, satisfied with one's own situation, developed as a person, and the like.⁹²

The needed ingredients for compassion satisfaction are listed below in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4. Critical ingredients for compassion satisfaction

Factor	Description(s)	
Efficacy	How efficient is my input?	
Beneficiary	How beneficial is the helping relationship?	Did the person benefit?
Healing	Did the helping relationship instigate change?	Did it make any difference (result)?

⁸⁸ Darling et al., "Understanding Stress," 263.

⁸⁹ Hanley, "Compassion Fatigue, Self-Care, and Clergy," 2.

⁹⁰ Robin John Snelgar, Michelle Renard, and Stacy Shelton, "Preventing Compassion Fatigue Amongst Pastors: The Influence of Spiritual Intelligence and Intrinsic Motivation," *Journal of Psychology and Theology; La Mirada* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 248, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2085005112/abstract/8C2DE507AD294EB7PQ/1>.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Eric M. Hansen et al., "Does Feeling Empathy Lead to Compassion Fatigue or Compassion Satisfaction? The Role of Time Perspective," *The Journal of Psychology* 152, no. 8 (November 17, 2018): 632, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00223980.2018.1495170>.

Experience of fulfillment	Do I have a feeling of being content with my work (success).
Constructive feedback	The experience of being competent and acknowledged by peers in the field.

Source: Louw, "Compassion Fatigue," 6.

Unfortunately, 52 percent of clergy wives have a "low to modest potential for compassion satisfaction." This places them at greater risk for suffering fatigue, especially as compared to their pastor-husbands, who have a much greater capacity for compassion satisfaction.⁹³ All of these contributing negative impacts can stack up on clergy families: compassion fatigue, loneliness, unprocessed grief or anger, depression. In 2005 one mainline denomination, in conjunction with their insurance agency, found that clergy and clergy families were treated for mood disorders at a rate 40 percent higher than the general population.⁹⁴

With so much stress on the family system, it is understandable that families struggle with their satisfaction in ministry. A couple or family's unhappiness, disappointment or dissatisfaction with ministry life may result in guilt, as they wonder if they are being selfish and may begin questioning their call or if they are fit for the task.⁹⁵ While researchers and reporters disagree on the numbers of pastors leaving the ministry and the numbers of pastoral couples getting divorced, it is evident that many more are leaving and divorcing than need be. With increased support, more would be able to stay married in ministry.

⁹³ Darling et al., "Understanding Stress," 266.

⁹⁴ Hileman, "Unique Needs," 139.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 131.

The Church System: Congregationally and Denominationally

Table 1.5. Statistical data for the church system: clergy wives report struggling to some degree

Data Reported	Respondents	Source, Page #
		<i>Survey of American Pastors' Spouses Quantitative Long Report</i>
Have experienced personal attacks at their current church	59%	25
Not willing to confide in congregant because of multiple past betrayal	66%	32
If they were honest at church about prayer needs, they would become gossip	68%	32
Feel that congregation expects her to have a model family	87%	21
Feel congregation expects family needs to be secondary	64%	21
Feel congregation believes marriage should be a role model	93%	23
Feel they live in a “fishbowl”	89%	24
They do not get the attention they need from their pastor-husband because the church needs so much attention	76%	31
Church events interrupt marriage time	69%	30
Congregational demands interfere with family time during the week	74%	29
		<i>“Understanding Stress and Quality of Life for Clergy and Clergy Spouses”</i>
Evenings/Weekends are especially hard	86%	43
Competing with congregational demand on husband	62%	43
Expected to have ideal marriage	69%	53
Congregants confronted them with personal complaints about the pastor’s wife herself	55%	54
Congregants complained about wife to pastor	54%	58
Congregants complained about pastor to wife	67%	61
Pastors cannot minister to wife’s spiritual needs	50%	69
Congregation intrudes on time-off	66%	77

Data Reported	Respondents	Source, Page #
Buffered children from congregation	36%	78
Need more emotional support from their Association	46%	91

Sources: *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, LifeWay; Darling et al., “Understanding Stress”;

The third and final system here examined is the church system. This system highlights the interplay of the congregation, faith tradition, and the clergy family. Women married to ministers face challenges, such as ministry intrusion, lack of support or resources, and the demands of congregational expectations. These challenges can negatively impact the woman’s spiritual growth and development, turning an intended sanctuary of love and nurturing into a maze of anxiety and withdrawal.

One clergy member explains, “Learning to set boundaries and learning to protect my family’s privacy have been our biggest stressors.”⁹⁶ When the lines between congregation and pastoral family are breached, intrusion occurs.⁹⁷ Intrusion comes in all shapes and sizes from members showing up unannounced, to the congregational interruption of family vacations, to members telling the pastoral family how to raise their children.⁹⁸ Pastors’ wives feel as though multiple aspects of their lives are on display for the congregation to see: their marriage, their children, their spirituality, etc. This is commonly referred to as the “fishbowl” effect and fosters stress related to the perceived expectation of perfection in the areas of life observed by the congregation.⁹⁹ To

⁹⁶ Darling and Hill, “Boundary-Related Stress,” 158.

⁹⁷ Cameron Lee and Jack O. Balswick, *Life in a Glass House: The Minister’s Family in Its Unique Social Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1989), 180.

⁹⁸ Darling and Hill, “Boundary-Related Stress,” 158.

⁹⁹ Staley, “Strategies,” 4-5; Morris and Blanton, “Predictors,” 38; Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 132.

complicate matters, the congregation may have an exalted view of the pastoral family, particularly of the pastor and wife; this view may limit the congregation's willingness to view or experience the couple outside of their church roles.¹⁰⁰ As such, the congregation consistently crosses boundaries when they fail to recognize the needed time for the couple to function both as individuals and in intimacy as simply husband and wife. When these intrusions occur, family functioning is compromised, and the wife and family may feel taken advantage of.¹⁰¹ This may be felt deeply by the family in times of congregational conflict; the family may feel the congregation is treating a family member badly but feel pressured to continue to attend worship and present a friendly face...since "everyone" is watching.¹⁰²

Feelings of constant scrutiny can make pastoral families hesitant to seek the help and support they need, fearing it will negatively impact the pastor-husband's career.¹⁰³ A wife may feel as though no one outside the ministry can really understand, but she fears seeking help within the ministry for fear of hurting her husband's vocation or becoming gossip, or both.¹⁰⁴ Yet even in their trepidation, "the majority of clergy and their wives expressed the perception that their denominations did not provide the services which were important to enhance the lives of the clergy family system."¹⁰⁵ Additionally, some

¹⁰⁰ Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 63; Staley, "Strategies," 19.

¹⁰¹ Morris and Blanton, "Predictors," 38.

¹⁰² Hileman, "Unique Needs," 134.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁰⁴ Lee, "Patterns of Stress and Support," 769.

¹⁰⁵ Hileman, "Unique Needs," 137.

congregations have a false impression that a pastor's wife should have such a deep personal faith that she does not require additional support.¹⁰⁶

Yet, the woman married to the pastor and the pastorate family's children do indeed need additional support. They have been referred to as "a people without a pastor."¹⁰⁷ Research indicates that the younger generation of wives are even more likely to report that their personal pastor is someone other than their husband or no one at all.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, pastoring one's own family feels like a conflict of interest. We certainly would not expect a psychologist to counsel his own child or a heart surgeon to perform bypass on her own child. Yet many faith traditions expect these families to surmount this steep obstacle of the pastor cross functioning in the roles of pastor-husband-father. In the roughly 500 years since the Reformation, Protestantism has still not completely deciphered how to fully serve the families of pastors.¹⁰⁹

Congregations and leaders of various faith traditions, both regional and national, bear some responsibility in providing support for clergy and their families.¹¹⁰ The state of the woman married to the pastor affects the pastor, as he serves the congregation. As such, if the spiritual health of one of them is compromised, the ministry to the congregation itself is compromised. The widespread effects of stress and burnout for pastors is a concern for church leaders, as "the particular circumstances related to

¹⁰⁶ Shirey, Jr., "Support Systems," 59.

¹⁰⁷ D.P. Troost, "The Minister's Family," *Reformed Review*, no. 31 (1978): 71-77.

¹⁰⁸ Murphy-Geiss, "Married to the Minister," 945.

¹⁰⁹ Hileman, "Unique Needs," 140.

¹¹⁰ Lewis et al., "Clergy Work-Related Psychological Health, Stress, and Burnout," 6.

spiritual and religious leaders in the community have a special and unique dynamic.”¹¹¹ This dynamic includes the pastor’s wife and family. Many congregations place a double bind on a pastor: when two contradictory expectations are placed upon one person whereas it is impossible to meet both; often one, or both, of the expectations is unspoken.¹¹² For example, a congregation might simultaneously think of a pastor, “You should have a model family, but we also want you to pick up when we call and be present at evening meetings.”¹¹³ The double bind of wanting a pastor-husband who dedicates time to his family so that they are all healthy and at the same time wanting a pastor who is on call twenty-four hours a day with an open-door policy creates an untenable situation for both clergy and clergy families.¹¹⁴ The same type of a double bind may be placed on the wife or children, causing stress and conflict. For example, the congregation may think, “We want you to sustain a healthy nuclear family, but we cannot really afford to pay you enough to support that nuclear family.”

The expectations of a double bind may be unspoken or unrecognized. In the example above, the congregation may not realize that the two expectations create a double bind. Likewise, often the clergy family has high, unspoken expectations which may also create a double bind.¹¹⁵ For example, the wife may want/financially need to

¹¹¹ Ibid., 2.

¹¹² Kevin A. Miller, “Ministry’s Double Binds: Sometimes, No Matter What You Do, You End Up in the Wrong,” *Leadership Journal* (June 22, 2002): 12, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A89812343/AONE?sid=lms>.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Hileman, “Unique Needs,” 133.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 123-131.

have a full-time career and want/congregationally need to lead church ministry. She may want to have personal friends in the congregation and be fearful of showing any cracks in her marriage or faith. Women also have internalized expectations of what they believe is their role as clergy wives.¹¹⁶ With so many expectations swirling, there will be many that go unmet, leaving pain in the wake.

Some congregational expectations may be influenced by the previous pastor's wife; the congregation may want the new pastor's wife to be *just like* or *anything but* the previous woman.¹¹⁷ Role expectations may also be mitigated by the size of the congregation, where the family is less publicly prominent in larger settings.¹¹⁸ Some role expectations are carried down with tradition through the history of the church or faith tradition, with little consideration given to the woman's gifts or desires.¹¹⁹ Some churches are clinging to a strong nineteenth-century model of the "two-person single career," where the wife serves as an unpaid assistant.¹²⁰ However, with more women working outside of the home or church, congregations seeking the two-for-one deal are having a more difficult time filling their pulpit.

In John Cattich's work, congregational expectations place churches in one of two general categories: family-sensitive congregations or family-insensitive congregations.

¹¹⁶ Drumm et al., "Love Everybody," 98.

¹¹⁷ Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 35.

¹¹⁸ Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 36.

¹¹⁹ Debra D. Benoit, "The Changing Role of the Pastor's Wife in Today's Evangelical Church" (DMIN diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010): 9, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_proquest864030139.

¹²⁰ Murphy-Geiss, "Married to the Minister," 933.

Congregational expectations have the strongest influence over time management of the clergy family.¹²¹ Family-sensitive congregations, for example, proactively take responsibility for ministry tasks, allowing the pastor-husband to prioritize his family and encourage him to keep sabbath and vacation days.¹²² This allows both clergy and wife to have more freedom in defining their embodied roles, increasing the possibility of a wife taking a highly independent approach to her role. Family-insensitive congregations may be seen as “either inconsiderate or oblivious to the personal and relational needs of the pastor and their family.”¹²³ These congregations can create double binds on the pastoral family, creating conflict and burnout. The sensitivity of a congregation’s time expectations of a couple (how involved in church events they are) reflects their level of understanding that both clergy and wife need time for support outside of their church roles. When a church is highly insensitive, the family may begin to feel as though the church actually believes their needs *should* be secondary. However, the interaction of pastor, wife, and congregation is always fluid, adjusting to new or changing stimuli; a sensitive, or sensitively growing, congregation can contribute to healthy time management and ministry satisfaction.¹²⁴ In correlation, how a clergy family navigates the stressors of the church system influences the well-being of the congregation.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Knight-Johnson, “Clergy Spouse Involvement,” 34.

¹²² Cattich, “Three Models of Clergy Systems,” 189.

¹²³ Ibid., 190.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 190 - 191.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 189.

Conclusion

The role of pastor's wife comes with many stressors and challenges. The above-noted data, from LifeWay's *Survey of American Pastors' Spouses Quantitative Long Report*, communicates some of these. However, the situation may actually be worse than the numbers reveal. A recent Barna study revealed that 50 percent of pastors are age fifty-six or older.¹²⁶ This falls in line with LifeWay's survey demographics, where 46 percent of the respondents (pastor spouses) were age fifty-five or older.¹²⁷ Additionally, in the LifeWay survey 51 percent of respondents have been a clergy spouse for more than twenty years. These numbers are significant as evidenced by the additional analysis summaries provided by LifeWay in its summative document *Survey of American Pastors' Spouses Research Study Report*, as noted below in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6. Additional analysis from LifeWay's *Survey of American Pastors' Spouses Research Study Report*

Demographic	Focused Challenges	Positive Reports	Page #
Without children at home		More happiness and positive feelings in both ministry work and daily life	11
Older age groups		More happiness and positive feelings in both ministry work and daily life	11
With children at home	More financial challenges		13

¹²⁶ *The Aging of America's Pastors, Leaders & Pastors* (Barna, March 1, 2017): <https://www.barna.com/research/aging-americas-pastors/>.

¹²⁷ *Survey of American Pastors' Spouses Research Study Report*, Research Survey (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Research: Biblical Solutions for Life, September 2018): 144, <http://lifewayresearch.com/wpcontent/uploads/2017/09/Pastor-Spouse-Research-Report-Sept-2017.pdf>.

Younger age groups	Fewer safe, emotionally connected relationships	13
	More conflicts and emotional pain within church	13
	More financial challenges	15
	Less time for marriage due to ministry demands	17
Younger and with children at home	Stronger lack of trust and “fishbowl” effects	13
	Less time for marriage due to financial constraints	17

When taking into account the high percentage of older respondents and the higher percentage of focused challenges skewing toward the younger families, the picture for women age fifty-four and younger may actually be worse. This is a serious ministry problem, as “churches say they are struggling to find young Christians who want to become future pastors.”¹²⁸ With the state of these younger women married to pastors trending with more challenges and stressors, faith traditions may find it harder to recruit and keep younger families in pastorates.

Because of the struggles pastor’s wives of all ages experience in the three major systems of their life—self, family, church—they need social and spiritual support in navigating and embodying their role, however they feel called to define it.

¹²⁸ Aaron Earls, “How Old Are America’s Pastors?” *LifeWay: Facts & Trends*, last modified March 9, 2017, <https://factsandtrends.net/2017/03/09/how-old-are-americas-pastors/>.

CHAPTER TWO:
A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE ROLE OF MINISTER’S WIFE

Introduction

In the 1500s John Calvin had a short, yet still demanding, list of requirements for his wife: “The only beauty that seduces me is of one who is chaste, not too fastidious, modest, thrifty, patient, and hopefully she will be attentive to my health.”¹ Later in some 1879 churches, wives were expected to “visit the whole flock, to preside over the sewing society, to teach the big bible class or the little infants, to sing in the choir, to take charge of the tract distribution, the female mite society, and the association for relieving the necessities of the colored orphans on the shores of the Congo River.”² Yet they would still need to yield to the 1830s warning “that if the minister’s wife does too much in the church she will be accused of neglecting her family, but if not enough, then she will be accused of want of interest.”³ The following fictitious ministerial want ad from 1972 is surprisingly similar: “Applicant’s wife must be both stunning and plain, smartly attired but conservative in appearance, gracious and able to get along with everyone, even women. Must be willing to work in church kitchens, teach Sunday school, baby-sit, run multilith machine [that is like a copy machine for you youngsters], wait tables, never

¹ John Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin’s Geneva* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 80.

² Lois A. Boyd, “Presbyterian Ministers’ Wives—A Nineteenth-Century Portrait,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1962-1985) 59, no. 1 (1981): 12, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23328155>.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

listen to gossip, never become discouraged.”⁴ 2007 did not fare much better: “HELP WANTED: Pastor’s wife. Must sing, play music, lead youth groups, raise seraphic children, entertain church notables, minister to other wives, have ability to recite Bible backward and choreograph Christmas pageant. Must keep pastor sated, peaceful and out of trouble. Difficult colleagues, demanding customers, erratic hours. Pay: \$0.”⁵

What is the role of a clergy wife? How did it begin? How has it changed? What factors influence the role? In short, how did we get here? To understand and support today’s women in the role of clergy wife, it is important to understand the history of the role, which has a tumultuous past and a trying present. Yet, this paper affirms a path to a hopeful future. The role of each pastor’s wife does not exist in a vacuum and is influenced by the culture and philosophy of the time, congregational doctrine, the marriage relationship and, hopefully but not always, the giftings and call of the wife herself. Some factors have remained constant: the role is inescapable, it is difficult, and God does use it to bless the women filling it. This chapter will explore the wide-ranging history of the role as it comes to us through Christian history.

Biblical Examples

There are no 1:1 biblical correlations to the office we currently view as pastor, much less the role of pastor’s wife. There are too many external differences in the season

⁴ Frances Norland, *The Unprivate Life of a Pastor’s Wife* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 12.

⁵ Lisa Takeuchi Cullen, “Pastors’ Wives Come Together,” *Time* 169, no. 15, (2007): 46, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1604902,00.html>.

of the Christian movement, culture, time, environment, etc. However, we do glean insight from the biblical “pastor’s wives” we encounter.

Old Testament

In the Old Testament, we note Abram and Moses were both married when YHWH called them into service.⁶ When God more formally created the priesthood, Aaron and his children were married and were to remain so, in order to continue the priestly line.⁷ While the Scriptures provide a great deal of instruction to the priests, especially in Leviticus, we see neither instructions nor requirements for the wives. We do not see a priest’s wife highlighted until 2 Chronicles 22:11, when Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram and wife of the priest Jehoiada, is named as the rescuer and guardian of Athaliah. However, Jehoshabeath’s actions read to be motivated by the particular call God placed on her at the time and not as a result of the role she had as a priest’s wife. Certainly, all these women would have been expected to fulfill their roles as wife and mother according to the Jewish culture and to follow the commands of the law, as was expected of all women following YHWH.

New Testament

In the New Testament we find Elizabeth. She is the wife of a priest, Zacharias, from the Abijah line, and is descended herself from the line of Aaron. Elizabeth had to cope with the loneliness and responsibility that accompanied Zacharias’s absences when

⁶ Genesis 12:7; Exodus 2:21.

⁷ Exodus 28.

he went to Jerusalem to perform his priestly duties, as they lived in the hill country of Judea. However, since Elizabeth was barren, the responsibility was lighter even though the shame was heavier; that is, until John the Baptist was born to her in her old age. Elizabeth's character is equated with that of her husband's: "And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord."⁸ Elizabeth fulfills the role of prophet when Mary visits her, but again there is no indication that prophetess was a normative role of priest's wives, yet neither was it withheld.⁹ Elizabeth certainly fulfilled the Jewish role of wife, mother, and follower of YHWH and appropriately provided hospitality and love to Mary. She demonstrated her holy boldness at the temple, when she insisted on John's name in the mute state of her priestly husband. Again, however, Elizabeth's role as priest's wife seems to have little prescriptive value.

In Acts 18, we are first introduced to Priscilla, the nickname for the woman formally named Prisca. She "served faithfully in ministry alongside the apostle Paul, Apollos, and her husband," Aquilla.¹⁰ While Prisca does receive the higher recognition in the biblical text by having her name listed before Aquilla's four times by Paul, she nevertheless served with Aquilla as a ministry team.¹¹ While Prisca may have had the deeper giftings in the area of teaching and theology, she and her husband were equally

⁸ Luke 1:6.

⁹ Luke 1:41-45.

¹⁰ Ruth Tucker, *Dynamic Women of the Bible: What We Can Learn from Their Surprising Stories* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014).

¹¹ Acts 18:18; Acts 18:26; Romans 16:3; 2 Timothy 4:19; Prisca and Aquila may, indeed, be the first full-fledged wife/husband ministry team.

dedicated to the ministry of Christ and the support of Paul. They shared their home with him for months, included him in their tent-making business and both equally “risked their necks” for him.¹² Yet, Prisca’s gifts and actions, as Phoebe’s, were the exception and not the rule.¹³

In 1 Corinthians 9:5-7 Paul explains how “the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas” have believing wives that support and/or accompany them in their ministry. However, the wives’ actions are not noted in any biblical text. The two things that Paul does make clear here in the Corinthian text is that both the wives and the ministry-husbands have a right to be supported by the church, and that the husbands have a right to limit their ministry time in order to sustain their marriage. Therefore, Paul creates a protective boundary for the role of pastor’s wife.

1 Timothy 3:11 provides fodder for differing opinions in its interpretation.¹⁴ Some scholars, such as George Knight, affirm the verse’s application to the specific role of *deacon’s wife*.¹⁵ However, other scholars, such as Aida Besancon Spencer, Thomas Schreiner and Jennifer H. Stiefel affirm the verse’s application to the role of *female*

¹² Acts 18:2-3; Romans 16:3-4; Some scholars such as Ruth Hoppin and Ruth Tucker make a strong case that the author of Hebrews was Prisca.

¹³ Romans 16:1.

¹⁴ Leschenne Darmé Rebuli, “The Biblical Role of the Pastor’s Wife in the Local Church: A Case Study of Churches in Somerset West, Western Cape” (master’s thesis, South African Theological Seminary, 2008): 91, <https://www.sats.edu.za/userfiles/Rebuli%20L%20Full%20Thesis%20FINAL%2021%20Oct%2008.pdf>.

¹⁵ George W. Knight III, “The Family and the Church: How Should Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Work Out in Practice,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne A. Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 353.

deacons.¹⁶ This paper concurs with the Spencer exegesis. Therefore, 1 Timothy 3:11 informs neither the role of a deacon's *wife* nor the role of a pastor's *wife*.

In Titus 2:3-4 Paul describes a female role in the church: women elders. These *Πρεσβύτιδας* (female ambassador/elder), as the male *Πρεσβύτας* (male ambassador/elder) in verse two, may be understood in a couple of parallel lights. Firstly, *Πρεσβύτας* may indicate an older man or an ambassador/elder.¹⁷ The same would stand to reason for *Πρεσβύτιδας*. Although female ambassadors/elders in the Roman Era were rare, they did exist.¹⁸ Nevertheless, these roles may indeed be seen as *ambassadors*: representatives and/or promoters of the new Christian faith. These roles included standards for personal character and behavior while also serving to encourage and teach others of their same gender. Secondly, the *Πρεσβύτας* and *Πρεσβύτιδας* may imply less about chronological age and more about spiritual maturity. This view can be likened to 1 John 2:12-14, where John refers to spiritual progression and maturation with the terms “children,” “young men,” and “fathers.” Therefore, a *Πρεσβύτας* or *Πρεσβύτιδας* may not necessarily be an elderly person but a mature spirit.¹⁹ In verses four and five, Paul goes on to explain what the *Πρεσβύτιδας* are to urge, encourage, and teach the younger women, which does

¹⁶ Aida Besancon Spencer, *1 Timothy* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 92; Thomas R. Schreiner, “The Valuable Ministries of Women in the Context of Women in the Context of Male Leadership: A Survey of the Old and New Testament Examples and Teaching,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne A. Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 505; Jennifer H. Stiefel, “Women Deacons in 1 Timothy: A Linguistic and Literary Look at ‘Women Likewise...’ (1 Tim 3:11),” in *Women Deacons? Essays with Answers*, ed. Phyllis Zagano (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016): 12, ProQuest.

¹⁷ Joseph Henry Thayer, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, s.v. "4389, " (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996).

¹⁸ Aida Besancon Spencer, *2 Timothy and Titus* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 34.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

include ways of living as a loving wife and mother. Yet, these younger wives and mothers may indeed be of moderate chronological age but may be young (immature) spiritually in the faith.

The role of Πρεσβύτιδας may be performed by a pastor's wife, particularly if she is mature in the faith and is called to that role. However, there is nothing in the biblical text to indicate that Titus 2 describes a normative role for women married to ministers.

Conclusion

The biblical text does describe and provide examples of particular roles that women fulfilled in both the Old and New Testaments. A woman married to a pastor may or may not find herself called and gifted to perform in these roles. However, as for biblical mandates for the role of pastor's wife, there are no normative demands provided.

Early Church to the Reformation

As the early church continued to grow out of the New Testament Era and into the third century, women's involvement was vast: martyrs, leaders of house churches, teachers, widows, evangelists, deaconesses, prophetesses, ambassadors.²⁰ During the Roman persecution of the church, many women gave their lives in Christian service. However, as the church became more public and Constantine became emperor, these active female roles were crushed due to social and cultural norms of the Greco-Roman

²⁰ Catherine Kroeger, "The Neglected History of Women in the Early Church," *Christian History: Women in the Early Church*, no. 17 (1988): <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-17/neglected-history-of-women-in-early-church.html>.

world.²¹ As Christian women journeyed on to the eleventh century, their opportunity for ministry roles diminished. In particular, the road for Christian women married to clergy remained tumultuous and potentially hazardous to their health and well-being.

Fourth Century – Eleventh Century

In the early 300s, Constantine the Great became the ruler of the Western Roman Empire, but by 324 he ruled both the Western and Eastern divisions of the kingdom.²² Constantine, a follower of “The Way,” brought safety, legitimacy, and order to Christianity. Some might also add bureaucracy. Constantine was the first to make Christianity the state religion, and by 325 the Council of Nicea had greatly formalized the conduct of the faith. This Council ruled that priests would not be allowed to marry after their ordination.²³ By 352, the Council of Laodicea ruled that women were not to be ordained, which implies they were being ordained up until that time. By 385, Pope Siricius decreed that even priests who had married their wives prior to ministry were not to engage in sexual relations with them. It would appear that Gnosticism had planted its ugly seed. The successor popes’ decrees concerning priests’ wives became stricter, as the church progressed through the sixth century. However, by the seventh century in France,

²¹ Karen Torjesen, “The Early Controversies Over Female Leadership,” *Christian History: Women in the Early Church*, no. 17 (1988): <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-17/early-controversies-over-female-leadership.html>.

²² Donald MacGillivray Nicol and J.F. Matthews, s.v. “Constantine I,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., July 31, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Constantine-I-Roman-emperor>.

²³ Henry Charles Lea, *The History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1957).

the majority of priests were still married. By the eighth century in Germany, virtually no priest or bishop was reported as celibate.²⁴ In fact, popes from 483 – 1449 had children, and from 366-996, almost a dozen popes had a clergy member as a father.

The role of priest's wife during these centuries was contentious, continually risking censure or fines for producing children. In 1074 priests were again called upon to pledge celibacy with their wives, and in 1095 Pope Urban II reportedly had some priests' wives sold into slavery, leaving their children abandoned.

However, the story runs a bit differently for the Eastern Orthodox Church, which officially broke from the Western Church in 1054 after long-standing theological disagreements. These churches were strongest around the Mediterranean, especially around Constantinople. The Eastern Church never enforced celibacy laws for its priests or deacons, as long as they were married before they took the Holy Orders.²⁵ Bishops, however, were/are only chosen from celibate priests.

Twelfth Century – Fifteenth Century

In the twelfth century, the Roman Catholic Church was a force against clergy marriage. Consecutive Lateran Councils decreed and confirmed that clerical marriages were invalid: 1123, 1139, 1215. Nevertheless, priests still set up households, maintained

²⁴ “A Brief History of Celibacy in the Catholic Church,” FutureChurch, accessed July 30, 2019, <https://www.futurechurch.org/brief-history-of-celibacy-in-catholic-church>.

²⁵ David Curtis Steinmetz, *Taking the Long View: Christian Theology in Historical Perspective*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 122, ProQuest.

concubines, and had families as a result, for which many of them were fined.²⁶ Some church leaders viewed the fines “as a way of raising additional revenue for the diocese,” as a fine could equate to a year’s salary.²⁷ However, in the poorer rural areas the fines were often dismissed or reduced. In fact, in some areas 50-60 percent of priests maintained a household. The situation for the women and children of these households was dire upon the priest’s demise. “As far as civil and canon law were concerned, the pastor’s wife—no matter how faithful she had been to him—was only the priest’s whore. She had no claims against the estate that she could prosecute and no position in society that she could occupy.”²⁸

The continued practice of taking unofficial wives and creating a household continued. In fact, in both the thirteenth century and fifteenth century, there were popes who had children. In the fourteenth century it was very common for priests to have a *priestly wife* of sorts, especially in the more rural areas of Spain, Scandinavia, central Europe, and the Baltic.²⁹ Many of these relationships were long term, many produced children, many shared a home or a family home was established next-door to the parsonage or in a neighboring town. Some even exchanged vows on the steps of the chapel. For some unions, which even included a household contract, the only differing

²⁶ Michelle Armstrong-Partida, “Priestly Wives: The Role and Acceptance of Clerics’ Concubines in the Parishes of Late Medieval Catalunya,” *Speculum* 88, no. 1 (2013): 167, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23488713>.

²⁷ David C. Steinmetz, “Marriage, Celibacy, and Ordination,” in *Taking the Long View: Christian Theology in Historical Perspective* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011), 108, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199768936.003.0011>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Armstrong-Partida, “Priestly Wives,” 173.

factor from a formal marriage was the absence of a dowry. These *priestly wives* functioned as wives, fulfilling all the typical cultural duties of the time. Additionally, most of them also managed land, animals, side businesses and produced and sold goods; all this added to the usually low income of the rural priests. This image is counter to that of the reformers' literature; in fact, far from being seen as a harlot, most communities accepted the woman who was often a member of their longstanding community. "By comparison, ecclesiastical officials in England treated the concubines of clerics far more harshly: they were assigned publicly humiliating penances, evicted from their shared homes, and sometimes excommunicated and ordered to leave the diocese."³⁰ Additionally, there was a less frequent practice of priests dismissing a concubine after she became pregnant, to avoid church punishment.

Conclusion

As Christianity developed and was formalized with a hierarchical structure from the fourth century through the fifteenth century, the restrictions on marriage relationships of priests/pastors continued to increase in number and strength. Yet, priests still set up households and suffered the ecclesiastical consequences, which varied by region. The community's view of these *priestly wives* also varied by region. Some of the clerical concubines/wives supported the priests' work, as it was the common custom of the day for wives to support the work of their husbands. In the priests' cases, concubines/wives have been documented as keeping extra keys to the sacristy, preparing the eucharist bread

³⁰ Ibid., 175.

and wine, assisting in communion, ringing the church bells, lighting candles, cleaning the church, and caring for the linens. These instances, however, do not indicate that a standard role was normalized on a large scale.

Sixteenth Century (Reformation)

In 1517 Martin Luther's "95 Thesis" did not mention the marriage of clergy, yet marry they did. The new rebels of the Reformation eventually found wives, many of them former nuns who had received religious training themselves. The acceptance of this Reformation, the marriages, and the newly minted pastors' wives happened neither quickly nor without bloodshed. However, Protestantism was birthed and growing.

The Roman Catholic Church continued to attack clerical marriage. In 1545, the Council of Trent extended its marriage restriction by declaring that celibacy and virginity were spiritually superior to the state of marriage. The English pastors' wives of 1530 – 1560 were frequently the subjects of attacks and polemic hostility.³¹ Additionally, the British royalty had an on-again-off-again love affair with the legalization of clergy marriage from 1539 – 1604, leaving some clergy couples shifting from legal to illegal status more than once.

There is scholarly debate over whether the Reformation was more positive or negative for women in general. There are varying factors. Women, in general, "over the course of the sixteenth century lost many of the rights and privileges they had enjoyed in

³¹ Peter Sherlock, "Monuments, Reputation and Clerical Marriage in Reformation England: Bishop Barlow's Daughters," *Gender & History* 16, no. 1 (April 2004): 58, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0953-5233.2004.326_1.x.

the fifteenth: the right to work outside the home, to buy and sell property, to own businesses in their own name, and so on.”³² In Christianity specifically, Protestant women did not have the education or platform of the nunneries to produce the spiritual writings of the past in the areas of contemplation and mysticism and “were not encouraged to participate in public conversation, church leadership or theological work.”³³ “Nothing even remotely equivalent in terms of educational opportunities for women replaced the convents in Protestant towns.”³⁴ Katharina Zell, the wife of the Reformer Mathew Zell, did publish several treatises, however, she was the rare exception to the rule.³⁵

As for the specific role of pastor’s wife, there is no doubt that the Reformation had a hugely positive impact on the security and legitimacy of the role. Aside from the Eastern Orthodox Church, not since the early church, had a ministry leader’s wife enjoyed such validity in her role as a woman married to clergy. That is not to say that the role was now without its struggles or drawbacks. Many of the new Reformers’ wives faced the same fates as their husbands, including heresy trials and martyrdom; records reflect that at many trials they “gave their judges a terrific run at any point involving the word of God.”³⁶ Nevertheless, the improvements in the state of the role are undeniable.

³² Steinmetz, “Marriage, Celibacy, and Ordination,” 121.

³³ Kirsi Stjerna, “Women and Theological Writing During the Reformation,” *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 12, no. 2 (March 1, 2012): 4, <https://elca.org/JLE/Articles/160>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁶ Roland H. Bainton, *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub House, 1971), 14.

Although we will later see that “succeeding women have inherited most of the occupational hazards of being a minister’s wife, but without the relative benefits that accrued to the first women in the ministry.”³⁷

Early Reformation Patterns for Women Married to Clergy

The pendulum of human history swung widely, as it is wont to do. In reaction over and against the celibacy of the Roman Catholic Church, “Protestant clergy were thus expected to marry (save in very rare and exceptional cases), and were thought by their parishioners to be more fully integrated into their society by family life than their celibate predecessors had been.”³⁸ Not just clergy marriage, but indeed marriage in general, “became the centerpiece of Protestant society and church” with “the exclusive expectation for women to marry and bring up children as their most important, holiest call.”³⁹ However, it must be duly noted that the Protestants rejected the sacramental view of marriage while still affirming its godly institution.⁴⁰

In this milieu, the first Protestant wives set out to find their way in marriage, ministry, and society. These “pastors’ wives were to become the embodiments of

³⁷ Leonard I. Sweet, *The Minister’s Wife: Her Role in Nineteenth-Century American Evangelicalism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 220.

³⁸ Steinmetz, “Marriage, Celibacy, and Ordination,” 121.

³⁹ Stjerna, “Women and Theological Writing,” 3-4.

⁴⁰ Susan Mobley, “The Reformation and the Reform of Marriage: Historical Views and Background for Today’s Disputes,” Academic: Concordia University of Wisconsin, *Issues in Christian Education*, accessed February 5, 2019, 7, <https://issues.cune.edu/the-lgbt-disputes-teaching-and-practice-in-the-church-2/the-reformation-and-the-reform-of-marriage-historical-views-and-background-for-todays-disputes/>.

women's domestic vocations as their husbands' domestic associates; their vocation often included expanded responsibilities as managers of the first parsonages that became centers of cultural life, as well as gathering places for many a religious (or social) occasion."⁴¹ What spiritual authority they were afforded was based on them excelling in their domestic role: "as mothers for their children and dependents, or as friends for other women."⁴² Many of these first Protestant clergy wives had been nuns; however, their new role centered less on being the bride of Christ and more on being the mothers of the new Protestant faith. Yet, these wives were often held in high esteem and were called upon to exhibit leadership in the church in domestic areas of women and children.⁴³ However, it was no longer the life of the cloister and spiritual formation that was the qualifier; it was the role of wife and mother. This cultural shift to domestic authority still thrives today in many pockets of Protestantism.

Popular Examples in the Reformation Era

By and large, "almost nothing is known about the first generations of women who took clerical husbands."⁴⁴ The examples that were recorded were recorded largely due to the notoriety of the pastor-husband. While all the Reformation women married to clergy

⁴¹ Stjerna, "Women and Theological Writing," 3.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴³ Rosemary Skinner Keller, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Marie Cantlon, eds., *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, vol. 1 (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006): 311, EBSCOhost.

⁴⁴ Sherlock, "Bishop Barlow's Daughters," 59.

were bound to the culture of their time, emphasizing their domestic position, one still finds a spectrum of diversity among historical examples.

In France John Calvin's wife, Idelette de Bure, met his "criteria of piety, modesty, frugality, and the like. However, she was also savvy, sociable, respectable, and 'actually pretty.'"⁴⁵ While Calvin dearly loved her, her place in the home and not in ministry was firm. In their nine-year marriage, her role as a woman dominated her role as a minister's wife. Calvin was clear: "Let the woman be satisfied with her state of subjection, and not take it amiss that she is made inferior to the more distinguished sex."⁴⁶ Her role was in home and hearth.

In Germany Martin Luther's wife, Katherine von Bora, supported home and hearth while also providing ministry influence toward her husband. Among other accomplishments, she cared for his ailments as a doctor, removed his study door so he could eat after three days of uninterrupted work and became the mistress of a forty-room parsonage/hostel/hospital/ seminary.⁴⁷ By Luther's own account, Katherine both corrected and prodded him for his own good, contended that "she could teach an Englishman German better than he ever could," and lovingly called her both preacher and lord of the household.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin's Geneva*, 99.

⁴⁶ John Calvin, *Commentary on Corinthians*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 301.

⁴⁷ Bainton, *Women of the Reformation*, 29-30.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

Also in Germany Matthew Zell's wife, Katherine Zell, engaged in active ministry as a minister's wife. The two were viewed as a ministry team, with Katherine also writing letters and publishing tracts of her own containing apologetic support of the Reformation and advocating for better treatment for the poor and sick. Yet she too managed an active parsonage which served refugees; at one point she "bedded 80 in the parsonage and fed 60 for three weeks, while finding provision elsewhere for the remainder."⁴⁹ Yet there were many who slighted Katherine, accusing her of stepping out of her domestic place.⁵⁰ Katherine served the people of God at each given opportunity, which often came to her because of her role as a pastor's wife. The year she died, 1562, she conducted a funeral for a dear friend at the husband's request. The local pastors refused to conduct the burial without adding that the deceased wife had fallen away from the true faith, for the splinters of the Reformation did not always land smoothly. The husband, Guinter of Andernach, refused to have his wife's faith slandered in such a way, therefore, Katherine braved the reprimand and conducted the funeral at six in the morning, even though she was too weak to walk.

Conclusion

The Reformation was complicated, bloody and lengthy. Yet Protestantism broke forth and brought sweeping changes for clergy and their forthcoming wives. While the Reformation was not always beneficial for women at large, it certainly brought a

⁴⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁰ The irony here will later become apparent in the section covering the nineteenth century, where women functioning like Mrs. Zell dominated the landscape while women functioning like Mrs. Luther were often criticized for not engaging in enough ministry.

formalized dignity to the role of clergy wife. While it was not an easy-won dignity for many women, ending with some of them losing their life, they created a role which remains influential to this day.

The three examples of Reformation women married to ministers presented here provide three varying role examples on a spectrum from not engaging in ministry to full partnership. These women provide a diversity in the role of minister's wife. Therefore, we see from the beginning of Protestantism no normative example for the role of clergy wife. While respecting the cultural boundaries, these women served according to their gifting and agreement of their pastor-husband.

Seventeenth – Nineteenth Century

Overview

Over the three hundred years following the Reformation, women married to clergy found a general broadening of their esteem and responsibilities as well. Cultural markers began to reflect the role's importance to church communities. In the 1570s, some clergy tombs had unmarked statues of wives and children included; yet, by 1629, Frances Matthew was bestowed the first lay-person monument at the eastern end of York Minster, as she was the wife of the Archbishop of York.⁵¹ The epitaph contained both English and Latin, which elevated the importance of the marker.⁵² In 1630 the Puritans founded the

⁵¹ Sherlock, "Bishop Barlow's Daughters," 60.

⁵² "Frances realised their potential to determine the form, content and personalities of future historical narratives." Ibid., 72. Frances paved the way for other clergy wives in this, as she took the lead in

Massachusetts Bay Colony with some protections for women that elevated the status of women and clergy wives: “It was illegal for him [the husband] to strike his wife or command her anything contrary to God’s laws.”⁵³ However, Puritan women still were not allowed to hold property in their name or to sign contracts. By 1885, Yale Professor James M. Hoppin, rightly or wrongly, elevated the role of clergy wife to the point of being a career maker: “A minister’s wife may, indeed, make or mar him.”⁵⁴

The Second Great Awakening in America of the 1790s -1830s often allowed and called for a greater participation from clergy wives. Many wives took the opportunity in camp meetings to assist with prayers, testimonies, and the like. By the 1800s, the denominational explosion of America had begun, diversifying worship and expectations of the role of clergy wife. In the early 1800s, there were some organizations that worked interdenominationally and hoped to overcome the new pluralism with common ministry. Many pastors’ wives played crucial parts in these organizations, such as the American Sunday School Union and the American Bible Society. Additionally, the Seneca Falls meeting of 1848, where women first publicly demanded equal rights, influenced the atmosphere in churches and shaded the role of the clergy wife; as some churches supported the equality movement and others did not.

preparing for her own monument. As a patron for York Minster, she was responsible for providing roughly half of the tombs.

⁵³ Keller et al., *Women and Religion*, 223.

⁵⁴ Boyd, “Presbyterian Ministers’ Wives,” 11.

Emerging Patterns for the Role

As more women engaged in the role of pastor's wife from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries in varying denominations, finding more legitimacy and opportunity, some categorical descriptions of the role may be observed. Leonard Sweet's four models are defined below in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Sweet's four models for the role of minister's wife

Model	Description
Companion	A ministering angel who held up her husband's hands in his sacred calling
Sacrificer	Who clasped her hands in pious resignation, asked little from her husband, financially or emotionally, and "hindered him not in his work" by staying out of his way and raising the family on her own
Assistant	Who became her husband's right-arm, sharing many pastoral responsibilities and functioning as an extension of his ministry
Partner	Who ministered with both her own hands, developed a ministry alongside her husband, and often served as the pastor's pastor

Source: Sweet, *The Minister's Wife*, 3.

However, Sweet notes that "wives of ministers kept inventing new roles as they resisted or modified forms of subordination and adjusted to changing historical realities."⁵⁵ This author affirms Sweet's position but asserts a view of his four models as a spectrum. Differing women land differently on the spectrum, considering influences such as culture and faith tradition. Some women slide along the spectrum based on their season of life, i.e.: childless, young children, advancing education, aging parents, personal health complications, etc.

⁵⁵ Sweet, *The Minister's Wife*, 5.

A classic *companion* example was Katherine von Bora, the wife of Martin Luther. She handled home and hearth, field and plow.⁵⁶ She gave Martin a firm foundation for his ministry. Some *sacrificers*, such as Peggy Dow, asked extremely little of their husbands and basically became martyrs to their husband's ministry. Lydia Finney carried on as an *assistant*; she "lived a life of social, religious, and even political influence," making the role of pastor's wife "an occupation, a profession, a ministerial vocation."⁵⁷ Finally, the classic *partner* was Katherine Zell, "who was recognized as a Reformer in her own right" or Julia Jones Beecher whose ministry "eclipsed that of her husband."⁵⁸ Consequently, one can find books, tracts and advice written in this era from the perspective of these various models. Unfortunately, most of them simply affirmed that the author's version of the role was the quintessential one.⁵⁹

The role expected of, or thrust upon, the minister's wife was heavily influenced by the surrounding environment. Of course, in this era, there were women who specifically sought out a clergy-husband or missionary-husband in order to live a life of ministry in the partner or assistant model.⁶⁰ There were few other options for Protestant women feeling a call. For wives in America's frontier, many of them "established Sunday Schools, evangelized frontier pioneers, participated in revivals and camp meetings,

⁵⁶ Bainton, *Women of the Reformation*, 23-43.

⁵⁷ Sweet, *The Minister's Wife*, 7.

⁵⁸ Ruth Tucker, *First Ladies of the Parish: Historical Portraits of Pastors' Wives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 30; Sweet, *The Minister's Wife*, 10.

⁵⁹ Advice on the role of a minister's wife could be found in Margaret E. Blackburn's 1898 *Things a Pastor's Wife Can Do*, *Ladies' Repository* and *The Christian Register*.

⁶⁰ Keller et al., *Women and Religion*, 377.

served as church sextons, and accompanied their husbands to remote preaching appointments.”⁶¹ By the end of the nineteenth century the standard expectation was that most American wives of clergy functioned in the partner model, engaging in many, if not all, of the following: assist the pastor especially concerning women, children and communion preparations; provide counsel and feedback from the congregation; aid in ministry, lead church’s social events, and call on parishioners; care for the pastorate family and home; nurse the ill, aid in births, and prepare the dead for burial.⁶² This was especially true in the rural churches, where resources were scarcer. Because the minister’s salary was also meager, the wife was often forced to find additional sources of income through such measures as taking in boarders, selling produce, or sewing.⁶³ One Presbyterian church in Alabama in 1848 was searching for a pastor: a “married man, whose lady could take charge of a female school, would be preferred.”⁶⁴ Yet in 1879, the Philadelphia Times notes an uptick in the companion model by reporting that in the more affluent classes of churches “not as much is required of the pastor’s wife as formerly.”⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid., 322.

⁶² Boyd, “Presbyterian Ministers’ Wives,” 7.

⁶³ This trend also ebbed and flowed. While many wives in this period worked outside of the home, that pendulum would swing away to encouraging women to not work in the home; however, the trend of working outside the home would revive in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

⁶⁴ Boyd, “Presbyterian Ministers’ Wives,” 9.

⁶⁵ Sweet, *The Minister’s Wife*, 222.

Twentieth Century – Modern Era

Shifting Expectations of the Clergy Wife Role

In 1928 there was still a largely held sentiment that the role of minister's wife was absolutely crucial to the establishment of churches.⁶⁶ This sentiment continued into the 1950s when self-help books for pastors' wives could still be found setting the expectation that wives would indeed function in a two-person career, as they often lauded the holiness, martyrdom, and sacrifice of these women.⁶⁷ In juxtaposition, in 1954 the more liberal churches could be found stating in publications, such as the *Christian Century*, that the "ancient models" of the minister's wife were dying.⁶⁸ In this milieu, the church progressed into twentieth-century America, and the rampant partner model expectations of nineteenth-century churches began to receive more and more pushback from women married to ministers. Perhaps the women's equality movement was having more impact over church culture than many thought. Wives were empowered to resist the demand of the partner or assistant model, if they felt more compelled to function in a more customized model. The women's equality movement was simultaneously empowering these women to say no to congregational demands while it was influencing congregants to agree...especially those who did not support the equality movement and did not want

⁶⁶ Sandi Brunette-Hill, "A Life of Her Own: Role Change Among Clergy Wives," *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 10 (1999): 79, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_proquest61440428.

⁶⁷ Sandi Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life: A Survey of Pastors' Wives" (master's thesis, Marquette University, 1991), 79, http://www.marquette.edu/library/theses/already_uploaded_to_IR/brune_s_1991.pdf.

⁶⁸ Brunette-Hill, "A Life of Her Own," 82.

to give the impression that their minister's wife was stepping too far out of her domestic role and engaging too much in the ministry of the church.

Nevertheless, wives and their pastor-husbands were beginning the journey of breaking many of the expectations of the nineteenth century. As early as 1960, wives have been documented as seeking to regain the diversity of the Reformation and to actively participate in dictating their role demands and expectations.⁶⁹ However, the momentum was slow; in Norland's 1964 pastor's wife self-help book, she urges wives to not work outside of the home and to seek a ministry call to the role of pastor's wife.⁷⁰ In contrast, a 1960s article in *Time Magazine* noted that "most ministers' wives have never heard a divine call, they have simply married men who have," going on to point out that many ministers' wives were "on the brink of a mental and emotional collapse."⁷¹ (In 1991, 17 percent of wives reported feeling called as a pastor's wife.⁷² By 2005, 39 percent of wives reported that they did *not* personally feel a call to a ministry position as a clergy wife but fulfilled the role to support their husbands.)⁷³

⁶⁹ Ibid., 78; Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 81.

⁷⁰ Norland, *The Unprivate Life of a Pastor's Wife*. The irony here is that virtually from the birth of Protestantism, wives have worked outside the home in many varied forms in order to supplement their minister-husband's income.

⁷¹ The article goes on to reference the Rev. George Anderson, the director of Manhattan's Academy of Religion and Mental Health at the time, as explaining that "the breakdown of a minister's wife is most often caused by pressure to conform." "Mrs. Minister's Troubles," *Time Magazine* 76, no. 14 (October 3, 1960): 52, EBSCOhost.

⁷² Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 51.

⁷³ Global Pastors Wives Network, *Free to Soar* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2005), 11.

Even as women moved into the 1980s, the two-person career of many pastorate families was alive and well.⁷⁴ Eighty-six percent of pastor wives believed congregations placed unique expectations on them because of their role; those expectations could be grouped into the categories of role and behavior.⁷⁵ Additionally, most of the women believed that they played an important role in the success of their husband's career.⁷⁶ However, only 51.4 percent could be defined as *traditionalists*: "women who devoted full time to their families and to their husband's career."⁷⁷ During this period, the advice to wives was beginning to change, as Donna Sinclair's 1981 pastors' wives self-help book encourages wives to take an active role in exploring how they will fulfill the role and to focus on their own personal growth within the role.⁷⁸

By the 1990s, congregational shifts in role expectations for clergy wives can be widely seen. For example, in 1990, 78 percent of wives were employed outside of church either full or part-time, 80 percent by 1997, compared to 29 percent in 1965.⁷⁹ This shift into the marketplace left less time for the wife to serve in the partner or assistant role. (However, in 1991, 19 percent of wives still reported being treated as an assistant pastor,

⁷⁴ ERIC Institute of Education Sciences, s.v. EJ127327, accessed September 27, 2019, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ127327>. A sociologist created the Papahek model in 1973, describing a two-person career, where the wife's contributions are informally (or formally) required by the husband's employment without financial compensation.

⁷⁵ Barbara Seater, "Two Person Career: The Pastor and His Wife," *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology* 10, no. 1 (1982): 77.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁷⁸ Donna Sinclair, *The Pastor's Wife Today* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1981).

⁷⁹ Brunette-Hill, "A Life of Her Own, 85."

with 49 percent teaching Sunday School.⁸⁰ They reported their top three motivational reasons, in descending order, as belief in the church's purpose, call to Christian service, and contributing through useful work.⁸¹) More wives were becoming career professionals in their own right outside of the church, far exceeding the percentage of women with four-year degrees within the general population: 75.7 percent of ministers' wives vs 17 percent of women at large.⁸² Nevertheless, in 1991, 83 percent of wives believed that there were unique expectations of the role of clergy wife. Yet wives continued finding professional careers into the early 2000s: "New millennium preachers' spouses are judges, book authors, dentists, lawyers, medical doctors, pharmacists, administrators and preachers."⁸³ Even with wives branching out more into professional careers and being encouraged to participate in the defining of their roles, in 2010 many wives still reported that often their roles were defined by the church system with no or little thought to their desire or giftings.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 53.

⁸¹ Ibid., 51.

⁸² Brunette-Hill, "A Life of Her Own," 86.

⁸³ Joy Bennett Kinnon, "The New Preachers' Spouses," *Ebony* 56 (August 2001): 48, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_gale_ofa76770617.

⁸⁴ Lorna Dobson, *I'm More Than a Pastor's Wife* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995). Dobson's book emphasizes the importance of a wife serving through her authentic giftings. Debra D Benoit, "The Changing Role of the Pastor's Wife in Today's Evangelical Church" (DMIN diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010): 9, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_proquest864030139.

Denominational/associational doctrines heavily influence the boundaries and expectations for the role of a minister's wife.⁸⁵ The congregation in particular, and the national leaders in general, have a broad expectation that the clergy wife will be a quintessential example of wife and mother based on the teachings of the faith tradition.⁸⁶ This creates a fractured demographic of wives: "There are some women who love their life in the ministry; others are very unhappy with their role, while some are confused and have no idea what is expected of them in this position of 'the pastor's wife.'"⁸⁷ While the 2000s self-help books for clergy wives by-and-large continue to encourage the individualization of the role by the woman, there continues to be push-back from churches to conform to congregational expectations of a prescribed role, which has often been handed down, may be outdated, and may not fit the wife's giftings.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Lenore M. Knight-Johnson, "Models of Clergy Spouse Involvement in Protestant Christian Congregations," *Review of Religious Research* 54, no. 1 (November 20, 2011): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-011-0038-x>.

⁸⁶ "Sixty-six percent of pastors and their families feel pressure to model the ideal family to their congregations and communities." London, Jr. and Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, 78; Wendy Murray Zoba, "What Pastors' Wives Wish Their Churches Knew," *Christianity Today* (April 7, 1997): 23, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/211994050/abstract/16137ADFEDC74083PQ/1>. Zoba quotes a survey from *Leadership* stating that 94 percent of ministers feel pressured to have an ideal family while 77 percent of wives felt pressured to be an ideal role model.

⁸⁷ Benoit, "Changing Role," 2.

⁸⁸ Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall, *Women Leading Women* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishing Group, 2008), 162; Sarah Jane Wessels, "Care for the Pastor's Wife, Too!" *Ministry Health*, last modified 1998, http://www.ministryhealth.info/mh_articles/219_sv_care_pastors_wife.html; Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 19.

Modern Models for Women Married to Ministers

The following models, as depicted in Table 2.2, will be compared and contrasted below. Readers will note a repetition of Sweet's models from Table 2.1, listed here for ease of comparison.

Table 2.2. Models for the role of minister's wife

Author	Model	Description
Sweet	Companion	A ministering angel who held up her husband's hands in his sacred calling
	Sacrificer	Who clasped her hands in pious resignation, asked little from her husband, financially or emotionally, and "hindered him not in his work" by staying out of his way and raising the family on her own
	Assistant	Who became her husband's right-arm, sharing many pastoral responsibilities and functioning as an extension of his ministry
	Partner	Who ministered with both her own hands, developed a ministry alongside her husband, and often served as the pastor's pastor
Johnson	Partnership	Who share the ministry calling with their husbands, bear responsibility for the congregation, and contribute significantly to ministry (even if the contribution is to insulate the pastorate from home responsibilities)
	Layperson	Who participate in the church, but as a member rather than a partner in ministry; do not feel a shared call to ministry
	Independent	Who actively create a role that is even more disconnected compared to church members
Brunette-Hill	Team Worker	The vast majority possess a bachelor's degree; 27% of the sample self-labeled
	Between Models	The educational level was split roughly down the middle between bachelor's degrees and master's degrees or higher; 26% of the sample self-labeled
	Background	The vast majority possess a master's degree or higher; 45% of the sample self-labeled
Modern Trend	Co-Pastoring	Who share equally in responsibility, authority, and generally receive some level of professional compensation

Sources: Sweet, *The Minister's Wife*, 3; Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 21-32; Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 49-51; Leonardo Blair, "Husband and Wife Co-Pastors Are Trending, but

Scholars Dispute Whether It's Biblical," *The Christian Post*, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/husband-and-wife-co-pastors-are-trending-but-scholars-dispute-whether-its-biblical.html> (March 2019): <https://www.christianpost.com/news/husband-and-wife-co-pastors-are-trending-but-scholars-dispute-whether-its-biblical.html>.

In 2011, Lenore Johnson's research led her to categorize three major models of pastor's wife role engagement: *partnership*, *layperson*, *independent*.⁸⁹ Johnson's *partnership* model is almost identical to Sweet's. These wives share the ministry calling with their husbands, bear responsibility for the congregation, and contribute significantly to ministry.⁹⁰ However, Johnson also includes women who may not participate in active ministry but believe it is their place to manage the pastorate home and family in such a way as to free the husband as much as possible. These wives often adapt their occupations to accommodate the husband's. One wife explains:

I feel as for me and my role as a pastor's wife, my priority is to be a support to him and so when the kids were little and stuff like that, I mean my goals were just to manage the house. I still had to work but just kind of manage the house. If I could manage the house and make sure he had a meal when he was supposed to have a meal that I was doing as much for the church, and keeping the kids under control, that I was doing as much for the church as I could.⁹¹

These wives would not have been labeled by Sweet as partner; they function more as a companion or sacrificer in Sweet's models.

Johnson's second model is *layperson*, "where spouses participate in the church, but as a member rather than a partner in ministry" and do not feel a shared call to ministry.⁹² They view themselves as just another parishioner who happens to be married

⁸⁹ Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 21.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, 27.

to the minister; they are often very active in the church, according to their gifts, but they do not feel the same responsibility as a partner model. Sweet's companion model comes the closest to Johnson's layperson.

The most radically different category is Johnson's *independent*; these wives "actively create a role that is even more disconnected compared to church members."⁹³ Often, these wives have membership at churches other than where their husband serves. This degree of separateness would not have been possible in the nineteenth century, the era around which Sweet created his models. Some of these spouses are heavily involved in what they term their "home" churches and maintain their involvement there as their spouse may change pastorates often, according to the recent research.⁹⁴ Some independent spouses attend services and special events occasionally at their pastor-husband's church. The independent model is especially common with wives whose husbands engage in interim ministry.⁹⁵

Brunette-Hill utilizes three general role classifications: *team worker*, *between models*, and *background*. In her study, she correlated educational level with role participation. Almost all wives with Master's degrees or higher served in the *background* model with none of them serving in the *team worker* model.⁹⁶ The wives motivation for church service varied. Only 17% reported their primary motivation to be a specific

⁹³ Ibid., 31.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁹⁶ Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 49.

calling as a pastor's wife.⁹⁷ Fifty-two percent of the sample reported their primary motivation as either their belief in the purpose of the church or the value of Christian service in general.⁹⁸

The most impactful addition of Johnson's research is to stretch the spectrum of clergy wives' roles even farther, with the addition of the independent model. The modern era has increased the level of diversity of pastor-wife involvement. From membership at differing churches to the very modern trend of husbands and wives co-pastoring.⁹⁹ Women married to ministers may land anywhere on this spectrum.

Many modern clergy wives are seeking to fully embrace their authentic selves and see themselves as breaking the "perfect wife and mother" stereotype of the pastor's wife; yet, many wives still feel a need to withhold part of themselves from the congregation.¹⁰⁰ They may have relationships within the congregation but not confidants. They are more willing, in many cases, to generally express that they have doubts and struggles, while still keeping most of those details tucked away.¹⁰¹ In 2018 most wives reported that they still feel "some sort of expectation placed on them to fit into a certain role as a pastor's

⁹⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Leonardo Blair, "Husband and Wife Co-Pastors Are Trending, but Scholars Dispute Whether It's Biblical," *The Christian Post*, March 2019: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/husband-and-wife-co-pastors-are-trending-but-scholars-dispute-whether-its-biblical.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Sarah Whitman, "Pastors' Wives Seek to Break from Stereotypes," *Tampa Bay Times* (May 29, 2013): <https://tampabay.com/news/religion/pastors-wives-seek-to-break-from-stereotypes/2123650/>.

¹⁰¹ Rose Mary Loya, "The Pastor's Wife: An Ordinary Woman in a Not So Ordinary Role," *Christianity Today* (November 2, 2017): 1–3, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/en-espanol/pastors-wife.html>.; Rita Davis, "20 Confessions Of A Minister's Wife," *HuffPost*, December 6, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/20-confessions-of-a-ministers-wife_b_7678740.

wife”; most pressure came from the congregation and some came internally.¹⁰² Over half still describe performing tasks within the church that were “out of their comfort zone and areas of giftedness,” resulting in feelings of exhaustion and a loss of self.¹⁰³ In 2017, evangelical minister wives responded as follows: 14 percent held no responsibilities at church, 19 percent held responsibilities in a paid position, 67 percent held responsibilities in an unpaid position (however, 46 percent of these respondents were age 55 or older).

Modern Influences on the Chosen Role of a Minister’s Wife

With such diversity in how modern women live-out the role of pastor’s wife, it is important to understand some of the major influencing factors for these women. The greatest influencing factors are the church context and faith tradition (denomination, association, etc.).¹⁰⁴ These factors will often automatically place boundaries on the role. Most churches have clergy wife role expectations about the overall appearance of the wife, behaviors exhibited (“always graceful, loving, and kind without having a strong opinion about something”), and the level of participation the woman will have among the congregation in active ministry, service attendance and special event participation.¹⁰⁵ Churches expect the minister’s wife role to be executed with outstanding spirituality,

¹⁰² Luedtke, “The Lived Experience,” 108.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰⁴ Knight-Johnson, “Clergy Spouse Involvement,” 32, 35; Luedtke and Sneed, “Voice of the Clergy Wife,” 70.

¹⁰⁵ Knight-Johnson, “Clergy Spouse Involvement,” 33; Luedtke and Sneed, “Voice of the Clergy Wife,” 70; Drumm et al., “Love Everybody,” 98. Many wives report a congregational expectation that they “keep quiet” about a great many church items.

often create expectations in light of the previous pastor's wife, and expect the wife to be an example to other women.¹⁰⁶ When wives, for whatever reason, choose to step outside of these role expectations, many feel the need to justify their actions.¹⁰⁷ Because a church is such a role influencer, a wife's experience from a previous church will often continue to carry influence into their role response in the next church.¹⁰⁸

The churches themselves are influenced by their faith tradition. For example, evangelical churches have higher role expectations than do mainline traditions.¹⁰⁹ Evangelical churches display more of Johnson's partnership model while generally having more ministry restrictions for the wives, since a faith tradition's view on egalitarianism shades the wife's role.¹¹⁰ Only 23 percent of evangelical pastors' wives believe their role is *not* different from a layperson.¹¹¹ Mainline churches have more examples of Johnson's independent model, with most of them being wives who themselves are pastors of a church separate from their husband; however, there are more rare evangelical examples.¹¹² Other congregational influencers are socioeconomic status and geographic location.

¹⁰⁶ Luedtke and Sneed, "Voice of the Clergy Wife," 70; Drumm et al., "Love Everybody," 98; Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 34.

¹⁰⁷ Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 33.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37, 40.

¹¹¹ Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life," 52.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 37.

On a wife's personal level, internal expectations and stage of life greatly influence the model a woman embraces.¹¹³ A woman may indeed place strong expectations on herself, which the congregation may not drive.¹¹⁴ Since a great many minister's wives grew up in pastoral families, these internal expectations may be generational.¹¹⁵ A woman may also have strong or weak boundaries between church and home; this influences how the woman allocates time between family roles and ministry roles.¹¹⁶ If the woman has young children at home, elderly parents to care for, or is in the prime of her own personal career, this may limit her ministry availability within the role. However, if she is an empty-nester or closer to retirement age, she may desire to commit more time to church affairs.

The way in which a woman's pastor-husband embraces his role as a minister impacts the role for his wife, as both of their coping and time management patterns inform and influence one another.¹¹⁷ For example, if the husband entered ministry as a second career, the wife may lean toward the independent model and choose to remain steady within her home church.¹¹⁸ The same may be true of a pastor who is employed in a series of shorter pastorates in a relatively small geographic area or of a pastor who

¹¹³ Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 34.

¹¹⁴ "...clergy wives are much more likely than clergy husbands to prioritize their spouse's career in ministry over their own career." Ibid., 38.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 34.

¹¹⁶ Luedtke and Sneed, "Voice of the Clergy Wife," 70.

¹¹⁷ Cattich, "Three Models of Clergy Systems," 191.

¹¹⁸ Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 39.

engages in full-time interim work.¹¹⁹ Even in more typical pastorate settings, the pastor's approach to ministry drastically impacts both the wife's role and his family at large. Based on his research, John Cattich has created three primary models of how pastors embrace their role, as seen in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3. Cattich's three models of pastoral role engagement

Model	Description
Living Sacrifice	emphasizes service to the congregation at the expense of personal and familial needs
Faithful Spouse and Parent	focuses on family needs over the congregation and practices several disciplines to maintain such a focus
Peacemaker	seeks as much as possible to satisfy their congregation and their family by intentionally juggling their demands

Source: Cattich, "Three Models of Clergy Systems," 179.

As the pastor-husband navigates his role, the wife responds in kind, particularly in the area of time management; the pastor-husband's time management between church and family may prompt various wifely responses: wives "may be accommodating and helpful, resentful, or they may choose to be defiant and challenge their spouses to be more considerate of their needs and their children's needs."¹²⁰ In light of this interaction, Cattich has created three models of pastor's wives based on their responses and not based on their proactive embodiment of the pastor's wife role. The first, *martyrs*, is very similar to Sweet's sacrificer; Cattich explains that they often feel guilty or selfish for asking too much from their pastor-husband.¹²¹ *Enforcers* seek to help the pastor-husband enforce

¹¹⁹ Luedtke and Sneed, "Voice of the Clergy Wife," 71.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 188.

¹²¹ Ibid.

healthy boundaries between church and family.¹²² *Managers* do resemble Sweet's companion model; they accept a greater responsibility to navigate boundaries through "proactively planning, scheduling and rescheduling their calendars to accommodate congregational demands."¹²³ While no two women may have the same exact approach to fulfilling their role as a clergy wife, each one must address each of the above factors, either consciously or by default.

Language that Minimizes the Diverse History of the Role

This author takes exception to the terms cited above such as "traditionalist" and "ancient models." As was demonstrated earlier in this chapter, a normative role for a woman married to a minister has never been established. It would seem that the widespread demands of the nineteenth-century churches for clergy wives to function in the partner or assistant model now dominate churches' memory. Churches have largely forgotten the diverse history of the role. Many writings since the nineteenth century minimalize that diversity by referring to the combination of the assistant and partner models with terms such as: Barbara Seater's traditionalist, Sandi Brunette-Hill's conventional, Lenore Johnson's traditional; ancient model from the *Christian Century*.¹²⁴ A more accurate term, and one with less implication, would be *the dominate role of the nineteenth century*. In using terms like traditionalist and conventional, it implies that a

¹²² Ibid., 189.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Seater, "Two Person Career," 78; Brunette-Hill, "Life of Her Own," 77; Knight-Johnson, "Clergy Spouse Involvement," 19.

woman not performing in a partner or assistant model is unconventional. Instead, she is simply reaching back to the founding of the Reformation and reclaiming the diverse historical example the first wives created. Indeed, she could be seen as being *more* traditional.

Based on the diversity of minister's wife models from the inception of Protestantism, one might rightly argue that any normative view or stereotyping of the "traditional" or "conventional" pastor's wife is simply bogus. Perhaps congregations have perpetuated this false typecasting, consciously or unconsciously, as it may have served them in getting the most ministry bang for their buck in the two-person career model. Elaine Smith, an attorney and wife of the Rev. Dr. Wallace Smith, sums it up well, "There has been an unfair stereotype of the minister's wife which I don't think has ever really been just as it's portrayed."¹²⁵ In fact, in 1959 the Lilly Endowment began a study to examine the effectiveness of ministry wives and their impact on parish ministry. However, by 1962 the study was terminated. The team concluded that there were too many variables in both individuals and Protestant churches to create a single model of the most effective traits of the role of pastor's wife.¹²⁶

Conclusion

"While many Christian church members and social workers would most likely agree that the role of the pastor's spouse is central to church life, few are able to define

¹²⁵ Kinnon, "The New Preachers' Spouses," 54.

¹²⁶ Benoit, "Changing Role," 18.

exactly what the pastor spouse role entails.”¹²⁷ In this modern era, that state of affairs bears pros and cons. “The lack of a consistent description of the components defining the role itself” can provide freedom and opportunity for the wife to explore and personalize the lived experience of her role.¹²⁸ Researchers themselves “have varied and generalized meanings attached to the notion of ‘clergy spouse role,’” which often leads to broad categories and conflicting sorting of women into those categories.¹²⁹ Researchers have also missed an opportunity to view the role as a spectrum, a sliding scale on which women may fluctuate based on life factors. This cacophony of views from researchers to congregations to the women themselves may generate role ambiguity and role confusion, which is tied to stress, burnout, and decreased life satisfaction.¹³⁰ It is evident that the woman married to a minister does indeed fulfill a role within the church. The wise woman will act proactively, seeking God’s will in the unique role she is to embrace. However, she needs a spiritual formation model to fully navigate and holistically thrive in the role of pastor’s wife, as she will continually need to re-evaluate her role based on the ever-changing circumstances of life.

¹²⁷ Drumm et al., “Love Everybody,” 94.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 95.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE:
BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE
PROPOSED SPIRITUAL FORMATION MODEL

Introduction to Spiritual Formation

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, Paul Bunyan tells the story of two companions who arrive at the heavenly kingdom.¹ In order to enter, they must pass through the gate. In order to access the gate, they must traverse a river. They ask the angels on the bank if the water is the same depth throughout. "No," the angels reply, "however, we can't help you in knowing where to cross. You see, you will each find it deeper or shallower depending on your belief in the King of the kingdom."

The rivers one faces in life may seem deeper or shallower depending on one's belief in the King. How deeply has one been formed by the King? How intentionally has one surrendered and participated in this formative work? That is not to say believers will be spared from wading in the waters of sorrow, but their spiritual formation may deliver them from being taken under. A Christian's relationship to the King matters.

Spiritual formation is about God's grace and one's participation in that grace. God's grace acts in believers' lives to create and enable what they cannot do on their own, but do they must.² Christians are called to intentionally and consistently yield to the

¹ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: Random House, 2004).

² Dallas Willard, "Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation," in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 54; 2 Timothy 2:1.

image of Christ being formed within them. Thus, throughout history the followers of Christ have created various models of spiritual formation, which beckon and guide them in their yielding. Just as there are differing gifts, personalities, callings, and seasons of life, there are differing models of spiritual formation which are more tailored to some individuals.³ While Christlikeness is always the goal, it is expressed differently in different individuals. Christlikeness does not seek to make every believer an introvert or an extrovert, for example. However, the kingdom virtues are the same.⁴

“In dealing with God, we are dealing in mystery, in what we do not know, what we cannot control or deal with on our terms.”⁵ Mystery is at the heart of the life-long process called spiritual formation, the journey of believers surrendering parts of themselves as the Spirit transforms those parts. The Holy Spirit re-creates Christians, for creating “is what the Spirit does.”⁶ This process brings forth within believers the “living water” promised by Christ, which is life itself.⁷ If one is concerned with life itself, living that life fully and abundantly, living into and with the “breath of life,” receiving and sharing God’s grace of life, then one is concerned about spiritual formation.⁸ One’s

³ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 21; Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul’s Path to God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

⁴ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 21.

⁵ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 46.

⁶ Matthew 15:25; Jeffrey P. Greenman, “Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective: Classic Issues, Contemporary Challenges,” in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 24; Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 22.

⁷ John 7:37-38.

⁸ Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 29; John 10:10, 17:3; Revelation 11:11; Acts 20:24.

spiritual formation determines one's usefulness as a servant in God's kingdom. A Christian's relationship with the King matters deeply.

If believers in general, and pastor's wives specifically, are to pursue spiritual formation, then they are called to do so in alignment with Scripture and with sound doctrine. This chapter will explore the theological foundations of Christian spirituality and the progressive nature of sanctification. These two components call us to address spiritual formation with intentionality and reflection, therefore, included here is an overview of the proposed spiritual formation model. Particularly, the example of Jesus is examined to discover his ways of both solitude and small group community.

Spiritual formation, here defined, is the mysterious process of both a believer's progressive surrender to and the action of God's grace transforming them into the image of Christ, through the creative work of the Holy Spirit, individually and in communities of faith, "for the glory of God and for the sake of others."⁹ "Theologically, our spiritual formation is in the context of the Trinity – God's self-revelation and continuing presence with us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, exhibiting unity and diversity."¹⁰ The trinitarian theological foundation is that Father God works by the Spirit and through the Word to form Christ in believers, to equip them as kingdom servants.¹¹ Father God has established

⁹ Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, eds., *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 24; MaryKate Morse, "What Is Spiritual Formation?" (Lecture presented at the Portland Seminary DMIN LSF3 Spring Retreat, Cannon Beach, Oregon, Spring 2018). This definition is primarily a synthesis from Greenman and Morse and includes the plural form of *communities*, since both a worshipping community and a small formative community are required for spiritual formation. Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

¹⁰ Mark Lau Branson and Juan Martinez, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), chap. 2, sec 2, Kindle.

¹¹ Romans 8:4-6.

a new covenant with all believers, bringing them into the kingdom through the atonement of Christ and making them living temples through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As such, the Holy Spirit continually forms them by faith through their union with Christ into Christlikeness, as believers exercise spiritual practices.¹² Spiritual formation is a “spirit-driven process of forming the inner worlds of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.”¹³

As Christians’ inward heart becomes more deeply fashioned into Christ himself, their outward actions follow suit, “as the Spirit reshapes moral character.”¹⁴ As Christians live more fully according to the Spirit, as opposed to the flesh, they produce greater fruit of the Holy Spirit and a deeper moral character.¹⁵ The “flesh is that principle of opposition to the will and ways of God.”¹⁶ The flesh in believers is still acting in opposition to the Spirit.¹⁷ As such, they need spiritual formation models, which provide a framework for spiritual practices, so that they may more deeply and authentically keep in step with the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ The tension of spiritual life in Christ is the paradox of having the Holy Spirit within as well as the flesh. This same tension is felt in all creation, as the

¹² Thomas Oden, *Systematic Theology Volume Three: Life in the Spirit*, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2006), 150; John 15:5-6; Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20; Romans 10:17.

¹³ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 22.

¹⁴ Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology Series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 225.

¹⁵ Romans 8:4-13; Galatians 5:22-26.

¹⁶ Cole, *Gives Life*, 227.

¹⁷ Galatians 5:17.

¹⁸ Galatians 5:16-25.

kingdom of God has been inaugurated and is active but has not yet been consummated.

William Pope explains how the church lives in tension of opposing qualities as we wait for Christ's return.¹⁹

Unity	Diversity
Sanctity	Imperfection
Invisibility	Visibility
Catholicity	Localization
Apostolicity	Confessionalism
Indefectibility	Mutability
Glory	Meekness

Eliminating the church's tension between "sanctity" and "imperfection" will not occur until the consummation of God's kingdom. However, followers of Jesus can be formed by the Holy Spirit to walk more consistently in the sanctity and to more freely confess and forgive in the imperfection.

Spirituality and Spiritual Theology

Spirituality, strictly defined by Oxford, is "the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things."²⁰ It is the concern of what humans do with the heart within them, their inward energies, desires, hopes, pains,

¹⁹ William Burt Pope, *A Compendium of Christian Theology: Being Analytical Outlines of a Course of Theological Study, Biblical, Dogmatic, Historical Volume Three*, 2nd Revised., 3 vols. (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book-Room, 1880), 266.

²⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "spirituality" 1417, accessed November 14, 2019, <https://www-oed-com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/186904?redirectedFrom=spirituality&>.

restlessness, the fire inside, or those things that keep them awake at night.²¹ Spirituality informs people's outlook, choices, and responses, which are always more important than the situations to which they respond.²² Regardless of whether actions are for good or for ill, it is spirituality that shapes them.²³ While limiting the bounds of Oxford's definition to Christianity, with the triune God at its center, a very large umbrella of concern still exists.²⁴ These boundaries simultaneously limit and expand the definition as well. *Christian spirituality* is additionally concerned about the material, inasmuch as one considers the body material: "the mind, the will, the feelings, the soul, and the body."²⁵ Christian spirituality is epistemologically anchored in the Holy Scriptures, led and governed by them, as they reveal God. The concern in Christian spirituality is not about the self-improvement of the "spirit or soul" but about dwelling in communion with the living God deeply, fully, and intimately.²⁶ This communion brings the transformation that leads to the blessed life. Yet it requires commitment and discipline. A life of Christian

²¹ Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 6-11.

²² Willard, *Renovation*, 14

²³ Rolheiser, *Holy Longing*, 7.

²⁴ "Spirituality...anything and everything that men and women designate as they speak or think about the significance of their lives, including God and personal meaning and concern for the world." Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 26.

²⁵ Willard, *Renovation*, 31.

²⁶ Kelly Kopic, "Evangelical Holiness: Assumptions in John Owen's Theology of Christian Spirituality," in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 101; Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 27.

spirituality “is not a quick sprint to a well-marked finish line, but a marathon, an arduous lifelong journey into an ever-widening horizon.”²⁷

“Spirituality is the lived reality, whereas spiritual theology is the systematic reflection and formalization of that reality.”²⁸ Jordan Aumann explains:

Spiritual theology is that part of theology that, proceeding from the truths of divine revelation and the religious experience of individual persons, defines the nature of the supernatural life, formulates directives for its growth and development, and explains the process by which souls advance from the beginning of the spiritual life to its full perfection.²⁹

Spiritual theology stands in the gap between systematic/biblical theology and practical theology.³⁰ For example, without biblical theology, believers do not know they are filled with God’s love. Without practical theology, believers do not know that they in turn are to love. Without spiritual theology, believers never enter into the experiential intimacy of God’s love and lack either the impetus or the power, or both, to share agape love toward others. “Spiritual theology is the attention we give to lived theology.”³¹ Without a balanced emphasis on spiritual theology, one discovers what Richard Lovelace calls a *sanctification gap*:

There seemed to be a sanctification gap among Evangelicals, a peculiar conspiracy somehow to mislay the Protestant tradition of spiritual growth and to concentrate instead on frantic witnessing activity, sermons on John 3:16 and

²⁷ Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing*, 214.

²⁸ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 16.

²⁹ Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1984), 22.

³⁰ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 19.

³¹ Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 5.

theological arguments over eschatological subtleties.³² Evangelism-in-Depth and two-by-two house evangelism can expand the trade routes of the gospel outside our church walls, but unless what we export is more than a two-dimensional caricature of Christian spirituality, we will not overcome the credibility gap among consumers.³³

As we Evangelicals seek to close what continues to be, by-and-large, a sanctification gap, we do well to consider what a “fully orbed, evangelically oriented, contemporary spiritual theology might look like.”³⁴ A sound beginning is Diogenes Allen’s accumulated historical spiritual principles:

1. What is the goal of the spiritual life?
2. What is the path to the goal?
3. What motivates us to begin the spiritual life?
4. What helps us make progress in the spiritual life?
5. What hinders us?
6. How do we measure progress?
7. What are the fruits of the Spirit?³⁵

In systematically reflecting on these principles, Evangelicalism can recapture and re-create anew its history of deep Christian spirituality and work toward the goal of spiritual theology, to possess congruence of belief, action, and method.³⁶

³² Greenman and Kalantzis, *Life in the Spirit*, 33; Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 232. Lovelace does, of course, recognize that there were spiritual depths in some quarters of Evangelicalism, however, asserts that by-and-large contemporary Evangelicalism has lost its deep roots of spiritual depth. Spiritual theologies were developed by the likes of John Owen, John and Charles Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and Charles Simeon.

³³ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 236.

³⁴ Jeffrey P. Greenman, “Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective: Classic Issues, Contemporary Challenges,” in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 33.

³⁵ Diogenes Allen, *Spiritual Theology: The Theology of Yesterday for Spiritual Help Today* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1997), 15-20.

³⁶ Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 333.

Works of the Holy Spirit

Christian spirituality, as previously noted, is theologically a triune God event. “The Son is present by the power of the Spirit, making known the love of the Father.”³⁷ The triune God is love and spirit.³⁸ Nothing Christians can know or accomplish accounts to any good in God’s kingdom without love.³⁹ God pours love into hearts through the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰ The Spirit births believers into God’s kingdom, gives them life, and teaches them all truth during their spiritual journey.⁴¹ Believers are dependent upon the Holy Spirit to unite them with Christ; therefore, the degree to which one manifests Christlikeness, and all the benefits and results attached to Christlikeness, is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, spiritual formation is integrally dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a personal being, indeed one whom can be grieved.⁴² The Spirit accomplishes many works in the economy of God’s kingdom; a few particularly apropos ministries will be discussed here. The Holy Spirit provides assurance, illumination and guidance, fellowship, and transformation. The Holy Spirit assures believers of salvation through a holy seal upon their souls.⁴³ This seal extends certainty of the love and

³⁷ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 207.

³⁸ John 4:24; 1 John 4:8.

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

⁴⁰ Romans 5:5.

⁴¹ John 3:5, 6:63, 14:26, 16:13.

⁴² Ephesians 4:30.

⁴³ Ephesians 4:30; Cole, *Gives Life*, 270.

redemption of Jesus, assuring Christians of their place as adopted children of God and joint heirs with Christ. Indeed the Spirit is the pledge, promise, and down payment (foretaste) of the inheritance to come: a fully consummated kingdom life where the Spirit abounds within and without perfectly.⁴⁴ The Spirit plants this assurance in believers' souls and nourishes it to blossom into "gratitude, delight, hope, and confidence."⁴⁵ This assurance gives believers the necessary security and encouragement to journey into spiritual formation.

The Holy Spirit provides illumination and guidance. First, with the Scriptures, as Kevin J. Vanhoozer explains:

The Scriptures are the Spirit's work from first to last. The Spirit is involved in the very messy historical process of producing Scripture – prompting, appropriating, and coordinating human discourse to present God's Word – as well as in the process of bringing about understanding of Scripture among present-day readers. The traditional names for these modes of participation are inspiration and illumination, respectively.⁴⁶

The spiritual understanding of Scripture that brings about inward transformation is brought by the Spirit, as is affection for the Scriptures.⁴⁷ Indeed, the Holy Spirit is the epistemic bond of the triune God.⁴⁸ Out of and through the Scriptures the Spirit guides believers, individually and corporately, in all discernment and acts of service, including

⁴⁴ Romans 8:15-17; Ephesians 1:5 and 14; 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; Colossians 1:13; James 2:5; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 11:15; Cole, *Gives Life*, 283.

⁴⁵ J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*, 2nd, Revised and Enlarged ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 43.

⁴⁶ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2005), 266.

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; Cole, *Gives Life*, 264.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 283.

evangelism.⁴⁹ St. Augustine explains, “The Spirit wishes to save each person, the whole person, to the uttermost, to show a way through every trial, and to bring the faithful to final blessedness.”⁵⁰

The Spirit ministers fellowship and transformation. As the bond between believers and Christ, the Spirit provides us personal fellowship with Jesus. The Spirit draws one’s “entire being into renewed communion with God.”⁵¹ The personal living connection Christians have with the Spirit brings the living Jesus into their present lives. In this fellowship, the Spirit corporately dissolves the barriers between believers, creating a unified body.⁵² Within the body, the Spirit sanctifies Christians, progressively, searching the depths of believers’ souls, deepening affections for God, and freeing wills to both desire and serve God’s will and ways.⁵³ “It is characteristic of the Holy Spirit to work personally and uniquely in each recipient to do what is proportionally and contextually required and salutary to draw that person closer to God.”⁵⁴ The Holy Spirit thus works all things together to transform Christians’ character into that of Christ’s.⁵⁵ As one church patriarch explains, “Without the Holy Spirit, God is distant, Christ is in the

⁴⁹ Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 702-711.

⁵⁰ Augustine, “Book VII,” in *Confessions*, vol. 1, 14 vols., A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (New York: Christian, 1900), 102-115.

⁵¹ Kopic, “Evangelical Holiness,” 106.

⁵² Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 705.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 705-707; Cole, *Gives Life*, 283; Kopic, “Evangelical Holiness,” 106.

⁵⁴ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 221.

⁵⁵ Packer, *Keep in Step*, 43.

past, the Gospel is a dead letter, the church is simple organization, authority is domination, mission is propaganda, worship is the summoning of spirits, and Christian action is the morality of slaves.”⁵⁶

Indwelling of the Holy Spirit and Union with Christ

Pentecost changed the nature of human existence. After Christ’s complete redemption story, the Holy Spirit was sent to fill the void and continue the work of Jesus in his followers’ hearts and lives.⁵⁷ The adopted children of God became the living temples of God: “Father, Son, and Spirit are all taking up abode in the faithful through the indwelling Spirit.”⁵⁸ The indwelling of the Spirit affords the faithful union with Christ.⁵⁹ Yet, their identity remains. Union with Christ maintains the distinction between God and follower but unites them because the same Holy Spirit resides in both.⁶⁰ The indwelling of the Spirit brings glory to God by equipping and enabling followers of Jesus to live for him and bear witness of him: to serve the kingdom.⁶¹ Pentecost also transformed the nature of human community. The indwelling of Christians binds them together into holy community: the *ἐκκλησία*, the church.⁶² Indwelling, after all, is what

⁵⁶ Cole, *Gives Life*, 283.

⁵⁷ Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33; Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 146.

⁵⁸ John 14:25; Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 60.

⁵⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:17.

⁶⁰ Kapic, “Evangelical Holiness,” 109.

⁶¹ William J. Larkin, *Acts*, vol. 12, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2006), 388.

⁶² Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 24.

humanity was made for: “to be temples of the Holy Spirit, with God’s own Spirit dwelling within them in intimate and redemptive relationship.”⁶³

The indwelling of the Spirit, bringing union with Christ, supplies Christians with the necessary grace for spiritual formation and kingdom service.⁶⁴ This union provides the benefits of the Son, through which the Spirit enables Christians to cry out to God, “Abba! Father!”⁶⁵ Just as the Spirit was integrally involved in Christ’s ministry from conception to resurrection, the Spirit is integrally involved in believers’ entire spiritual journey and service.⁶⁶ Union with Christ is the indispensable core of Christian identity, and without the Spirit, there is no union with Christ.⁶⁷ Progressive sanctification, spiritual formation, is wrought from union with Christ. Cyril of Alexandria explains, “The Holy Spirit works in us by himself, truly sanctifying us and joining us to himself; and by this coalescence and union of ourselves with him he makes us sharers in the divine nature... beautifying human nature with the splendor of the divinity.”⁶⁸ Ultimately, progressive sanctification “flows out of union with Christ, not merely imitation of Christ.”⁶⁹

⁶³ Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: The Common Grace Covenants*, vol. 1 (Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2014), 130.

⁶⁴ Kapic, “Evangelical Holiness,” 106.

⁶⁵ 1 John 4:14-15; Romans 8:15.

⁶⁶ Cole, *Gives Life*, 283.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁶⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus*, vol. 75, 162 vols., *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris: Migne, 1876), 958.

⁶⁹ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 74.

Progressive Sanctification and Holiness

The Lord is patient with creation and does not wish that any perish but wishes that all would repent from the worldly kingdom and become citizens of God's kingdom.⁷⁰ How does that happen? What happens after one becomes a citizen? Soteriology provides the foundation and has systematically been described in the reformed Ordo Salutis: calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification. This order is more descriptive than prescriptive. Some events happen simultaneously, some instantaneously, and some are progressive. Justification and adoption are both the anchor and soil for sanctification. Justification affords believers a state of righteousness being reckoned to them through Christ; adoption welcomes believers into God's kingdom as children and heirs, whatever their condition at the moment of justification. In this state, it may be said that Christ's followers have positional sanctification, with Father God seeing them as a holy people set apart. God views believers through the son, seeing them as saints. A final, or complete, sanctification will occur for all believers upon the consummation of God's kingdom. However, Christians live in the in-between. This is where progressive sanctification is found: the progressive transformative work of the Holy Spirit to bring believers' true selves – soul, character, will – to mirror in reality what God sees in them through the son, the righteousness of Christ.⁷¹ The Spirit deepens followers' affections for the Word and

⁷⁰ 2 Peter 3:9.

⁷¹ 2 Corinthians 3:18; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1983), 875; Cole, *Gives Life*, 228-229.

the Word Made Flesh, so that they long to be progressively formed by the Spirit into Christlikeness through union with Christ to the glory of God, as they seek to serve the kingdom and be used by God to advance the kingdom, both in depth and breadth.⁷² Jesus himself prayed for this sanctification of his followers.⁷³

Justification and sanctification bestow holiness; they are not identical but deeply conjoined.⁷⁴ The state of justification, if fully grasped, calls Christians to the journey of sanctification.⁷⁵ “Holiness by faith is our justification; whereas holiness of life is our sanctification.”⁷⁶ Evangelical holiness is marked by both the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit and the discipline of believers to engage in spiritual practices, from repentance to acts of service to solitude.⁷⁷ Holiness for believers is a matter of learning to be in action what they already are in heart: united with Christ.⁷⁸ Think of newborn children. They are fully human, but not fully mature or developed. Likewise, believers may have the holiness of a saint in their heart but lack the maturity and development to display that holiness in their character and actions.⁷⁹ Another historical example is that of a

⁷² Kopic, “Evangelical Holiness,” 102.

⁷³ John 17:17; William David Spencer and Aida Besancon Spencer, *The Prayer Life of Jesus: Shout of Agony, Revelation of Love, a Commentary* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1990), 201.

⁷⁴ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 98.

⁷⁵ Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium Designed for the Use of Theological Students*, Reprint 1993 (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), 869.

⁷⁶ Kopic, “Evangelical Holiness,” 113.

⁷⁷ 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:3 and 7, 5:23; Ephesians 1:4, 5:25-26, 2:10; Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 222, 235; Kopic, “Evangelical Holiness,” 113.

⁷⁸ Packer, *Keep in Step*, 89.

⁷⁹ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 222.

steamship.⁸⁰ The ship may arrive safe enough to port, but it may not be sound—requiring much repair and development. Justification may make believers safe, but progressive sanctification makes them sound. It is the sanctifying grace of the Spirit and our endeavor to walk in that grace toward intimacy and communion with the triune God that precipitates progressive sanctification, holiness. The importance of progressive sanctification can be seen in how various protestants have sought and named it: the Puritans have godliness, the Methodists have perfection, the Lutherans have pietism, etc.⁸¹ In the end, it can be simply seen as the effort of “living in our own neighborhood, what we know about God.”⁸²

For many Christians, the struggle is not with sincerity of heart, but with direction.⁸³ Progressive sanctification requires an intentional direction. Spiritual formation describes the direction and means for believers. It does not describe the spiritual method, for the mystery of God remains. Yet, Christians have consistently found spiritual growth and maturity through varying biblical and historical means of spiritual formation. As John Cassian, a Christian teacher from the 400s, explains, “There is no arrival unless there is a definite plan to go.”⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 869.

⁸¹ Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 28.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 339.

⁸³ Rolheiser, *Holy Longing*, 40.

⁸⁴ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 18.

Overview of the Proposed Spiritual Formation Model

“Once Christians are committed to holiness as their goal, then a second battle begins, this time concerning the way to achieve holiness in daily life.”⁸⁵ Table 3.2 below depicts an elemental overview of a model designed for women serving in the role of clergy wife. Due to the scope of this paper, not all the individual elements will be discussed. The overarching theme of this model is one of holy tension between surrender and intention: the tension between what God does and what we do.⁸⁶ In surrender believers release themselves to grace where the Spirit forms them. In intention believers exert their will to engage in practices and serve as Jesus did. A version of this model with detailed footnotes, quotations, and comments may be found in Appendix A.

Table 3.2. Spiritual formation model overview of principles and processes

	Orthodoxy	Orthopathy	Orthopraxy
Principles			
	The Gospel of the kingdom	Acceptance and longing in Christ	Solitude and community
	The tension between the already and not yet of God’s kingdom	The tension between full acceptance in the Beloved and a longing to be more Christlike	The tension of creating a rhythm of life between solitary prayer and work in a group

⁸⁵ Packer, *Keep in Step*, 102.

⁸⁶ Philippians 2:12-13.

	Orthodoxy	Orthopathy	Orthopraxy
Processes	Re-orient thinking through biblical study of kingdom values and behaviors	Learn to identify, name, experience and discuss the full range of emotions, secure in Christ's love to accept us amid all that we feel; learn to free others to do the same	Create guarded time alone with the triune God: regularly in a dedicated space, practice such disciplines as silent meditation, contemplative prayer and Lectio Divina, engage inner excavation as led by the Spirit, etc.
	Frame suffering as a shadow of this world that falls on everyone through deep sharing of ourselves and active listening of others' stories	Follow the Spirit's equipping and empowering to differentiate between what emotions come from God versus our brokenness	Humble oneself to others: seek individual, spiritual guidance and feedback from others such as colleagues, mentors, pastors, spiritual directors, counselors, etc.
	Define embodied role by continuously interacting with: God's calling, gifting, season of life, family, church, culture, etc.	Resist the temptation to bury or defend our brokenness, instead submit to Christ's transformative work to be more like him as a lifelong, ongoing process	Engage in Christian community, both worshiping and formative small group, where wives mature spiritually and emotionally: display their growing spiritual attributes, pray, manage themselves and learn to serve others well
		Cultivate gratitude toward God, as an attitude toward living, and as a response to others	Sacrifice for the sake of the community: pray for others, seek Shalom for all, love and forgive their neighbor, empower and care for the poor and disenfranchised

Sources: Gerald Lawson Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007); Chan, *Spiritual Theology*; Willard, "Spiritual Formation"; MaryKate Morse, "Transformation Principles and Processes"; John Jefferson Davis, *Meditation and Communion with God: Contemplating Scripture in an Age of Distraction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012); Kopic, "Evangelical Holiness"; Peterson, *Christ Plays*; Christine Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2012);

Randy Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation : An Indigenous Vision*,. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), Kindle; Fred Van Dyke, *Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007); Christine Valters Paintner, *Lectio Divina the Sacred Art: Transforming Words & Images into Heart-Centered Prayer* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2011), Kindle; Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).

Spiritual formation includes a tension between what we do and what God does, although it is God who grants the very desire to take action. There is a tension throughout all of Scripture between believers' fallenness and redemptive state, as Christians await their own resurrection in a suffering world whose redemption has begun, been secured, but has not yet been completed. With the assurance that God's kingdom will fully come, believers align their thoughts with it, to be a conduit of light breaking through in the present darkness.⁸⁷ In this state of tension, Christians long and strive to live more fully into the kingdom of their adoption. Through regeneration, Christians are new creations with a new disposition and God-given desire to pursue what is holy and to have fellowship with God and God's people.⁸⁸ God's loving justification and acceptance of believers in the Beloved allows them to humbly and courageously seek spiritual transformation with no risk of rejection.⁸⁹ They can freely confess and expose the depths of their true selves to Christ in order to be transformed.⁹⁰ However, transformation requires a rhythm of interaction between solitary spiritual practices and group spiritual practices.

⁸⁷ Acts 26:18.

⁸⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

⁸⁹ "...to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved." Ephesians 1:6 NKJ.

⁹⁰ Romans 8:1.

Imitating Jesus, the Apostolic Example, and Tradition of the Church in Solitude

God's Word calls believers to grow up spiritually into Christ himself; becoming more like Christ.⁹¹ Paul goes on to explain how this is a joint work of God and followers of Jesus. Followers lay aside their old selves and put on the new self.⁹² God renews the spirit of their minds and creates their new self in God's own likeness, "in righteousness and holiness of the truth."⁹³ Paul goes on to paint a picture of what actions precipitate from this combined formative work: falsehood is forsaken and truth is spoken, anger fails to cause hateful actions, stealing stops and fruits of labor are shared, words are used for building up and not tearing down, kindness and tender-hearted forgiveness abound, etc.⁹⁴ In short, Paul sums up, "be imitators of God."⁹⁵

Spiritual formation addresses the life-long work of the *laying aside* and the *putting on; the renewing* and the *new self*. It is in this space that spiritual transformation and character are formed so that the rest of Paul's Ephesians picture may come to fruition; Christians become deep imitators of God.

As imitators of God, believers look to God made flesh: Jesus. How did he model Christian spirituality? For one thing, he practiced solitude. He frequently prayed alone,

⁹¹ Ephesians 4:15.

⁹² Ibid., 4:22, 24.

⁹³ Ibid., 4:23-24.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 4:25-32.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 5:1.

often in a desolate place.⁹⁶ Sometimes he lingered there in solitude, perhaps in meditation, as was the Jewish teaching.⁹⁷ He went off in a boat by himself to mourn and reflect after the death of John the Baptist, perhaps seeking comfort from the Holy Spirit and his Father.⁹⁸ At times he rose early, before sunrise, to pray in the desolate place, occasionally spending the whole night in prayer.⁹⁹

The routine of Jesus' solitary praying and the regularity with which he went to a desolate place to engage it was his practice; no disciple ever seemed surprised by it. In fact, Jesus taught his disciples to pray in individual solitude.¹⁰⁰ As one considers the biblical understanding of discipleship, however, this verbal instruction would not have been necessary. "In the first-century Jewish world of Jesus, being a disciple was all about one key word: *imitation*."¹⁰¹ While biblical knowledge is important, a disciple of a rabbi was not to merely absorb knowledge.¹⁰² A disciple was to mirror the practices and habits of the teacher, as a full apprenticeship in a way of life.

When Paul instructs all disciples of Jesus Christ to be "imitators of God," he uses the Greek noun *μιμητής*: an imitator, one who follows another's example for

⁹⁶ Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16.

⁹⁷ Matthew 14:23; John 6:15; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 77:12; Psalm 119.

⁹⁸ Matthew 14:13; Isaiah 51:12; Isaiah 66:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Acts 9:31.

⁹⁹ Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12.

¹⁰⁰ Matthew 6:6.

¹⁰¹ Edward Sri, "In the Dust of the Rabbi: Clarifying Discipleship for Faith Formation Today," *The Catechetical Review* 4, no. 2 (June 2018): 1, <https://review.catechetics.com/dust-rabbi-clarifying-discipleship-faith-formation-today>.

¹⁰² Romans 10:2-3.

exemplary living.¹⁰³ Paul wants disciples to absorb the practices and habits of God; to continue, through the Holy Spirit, the mirroring of the practices and habits of Jesus. Paul uses the same noun to instruct readers of 1 Corinthians: “be imitators (μιμητής) of me” and “be imitators (μιμητής) of me, just as I also am of Christ.”¹⁰⁴ Paul uses the same noun to note how the church at Thessalonica became imitators (μιμητής) of Paul, his traveling ministry partners, the churches in Judea, and the Lord himself.¹⁰⁵ The author of Hebrews uses the noun to inspire disciples:

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators (μιμητής) of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.¹⁰⁶

In Philippians 3:17 Paul addresses readers as *συμμιμητής* (fellow-imitators), which is often translated as brethren or brothers and sisters. Yet, there is a different Greek word for that, *ἀδελφός*. In Philippians 3:17, Paul is stressing something different. He is encouraging these fellow-imitators to follow the example of himself and other believers who live according to a certain *τύπος* (model). By addressing readers as fellow-imitators, Paul stresses the fact that he too is an imitator of Jesus.

In Hebrews, the author uses the Greek verb form of the above noun, *μιμέομαι*: to imitate one’s way of life, follow as an example.¹⁰⁷ The Hebrews author exhorts readers to

¹⁰³ Ephesians 5:1; F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick William Danker, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., s.v. “4289” (The University of Chicago Press, 1965); Timothy and Barbara Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, s.v. “18554” (BibleWorks 2000).

¹⁰⁴ 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1.

¹⁰⁵ 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 2:14.

¹⁰⁶ Hebrews 6:11-12.

¹⁰⁷ Friberg, s.v. “18552.”

remember those Christians who led them and to “imitate (μιμέομαι) their faith.”¹⁰⁸ John also uses the same verb in 3 John when commending readers to imitate (μιμέομαι) Demetrius as a Christian model.¹⁰⁹ In 2 Thessalonians 3:7 Paul uses the same verb and fully expected readers to understand the discipleship concept of mirroring the practices and habits of the teacher when he writes, “For you yourselves know how necessary it is to imitate (μιμέομαι) us.”¹¹⁰ Paul continues in 3:9 explaining how he and his ministry partners offer themselves as a model (τύπος) for readers to imitate (μιμέομαι). Here Paul links μιμέομαι (*imitate*) with τύπος (*model*): τύπος: model, form designed to be copied, form of character, image.¹¹¹

Paul provides other examples of τύπος. He notes how the church in Thessalonica became a model (τύπος) for “all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.”¹¹² Paul urges both Timothy and Titus to be a model (τύπος) for the followers around them, as Peter urges leaders to be a model (τύπος) to their flock.¹¹³

Paul emphasizes that this imitating form of discipleship is indeed a form of Christian teaching, as it was a form of rabbinic teaching. Paul addresses the Romans, “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the

¹⁰⁸ Hebrews 13:7.

¹⁰⁹ 3 John 1:11.

¹¹⁰ Author’s translation; NAS translates as “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example.”

¹¹¹ Friberg, s.v. “27139”; *The Abridged Liddell-Scott Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “43508,” (Public Domain).

¹¹² 1 Thessalonians 1:7.

¹¹³ 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Peter 5:3.

heart to that form (τύπος) of teaching to which you were committed.”¹¹⁴ This form (τύπος) of teaching and making disciples through an imitation of life, including rhythms of solitude, is the expected and reproducible way of Gospel instruction, of Gospel discipleship and living. It was not just the knowledge of Christ but also the form of “life teaching life,” learner imitating teacher, to which the Romans obediently dedicated their hearts. Frances de Sales, a spiritual writer from the late 1500s, explains it with a familiar example:

We see that little children by hearing their mothers speak and prattling often with them, do come to learn their language, and so we continually conversing with our Savior by meditation, observing and pondering reverently his words, his works and his affections shall soon by the help of his grace, learn to speak, to work and to will and desire as he did.¹¹⁵

Modern research demonstrates the effectiveness of what the biblical disciples knew and taught. In a study including various faith traditions, the researchers separated what they term as *intrinsic religiousness* versus *extrinsic religiousness*. Where the faith itself is the motivation, religion is an end in itself, it is categorized as *intrinsic religiousness*. Where desires such as social inclusion, comfort, or status are the primary motivations, religion is a means to other ends, it is categorized as *extrinsic religiousness*. The impacts on the individuals are very different. Intrinsic religiousness is “associated with well-being and good health”—positive outcomes such as lower risks of depression,

¹¹⁴ Romans 6:17.

¹¹⁵ Francis de Sales, *Introductions to the Devout Life*, 1st ed., Vintage Spiritual Classics (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 2.1.

cardiovascular disease, and early mortality.¹¹⁶ Extrinsic religiousness was not associated with these positive impacts; in fact, in some cases there was an inverse relationship where depression was worsened through such behaviors as “avoiding life difficulties through religious activities.”¹¹⁷ Perhaps legalism found its religious trickery in extrinsic religiousness, where “moral rule keeping without development of character” left adherents empty and wanting.¹¹⁸ There are no shortcuts to the abundant life found in Christ.¹¹⁹ “The holy God is interested in the moral agent, the moral action, and the moral aftermath.”¹²⁰ Eugene Peterson sums it up with pith and charm, “Only when we do the Jesus truth, in the Jesus way, do we get the Jesus life.”¹²¹

The premise of imitation is crucial for discipleship and spiritual formation. Christians cannot produce the actions Paul describes in Ephesians 4:25-32 without the work of Ephesians 4:22-24, which is the same work of Philippians 2:12-13: “work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”¹²² It is a work of both Savior and saved. Therefore, how are Christians instructed to do their part of this work? Through knowledge of the

¹¹⁶ Kevin D. Jordan et al., “An Interpersonal Approach to Religiousness and Spirituality: Implications for Health and Well-Being,” *Journal of Personality* 82, no. 5 (October 2014): 418-419, <https://doi-org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/jopy.12072>.

¹¹⁷ Jordan et al., “Religious Spirituality,” 419.

¹¹⁸ Cole, *Gives Life*, 246.

¹¹⁹ John 10:10.

¹²⁰ Cole, *Gives Life*, 246.

¹²¹ Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 334.

¹²² Philippians 2:12-13.

Word, yes, but also through example. They imitate. They imitate Jesus. They imitate Paul and Peter who imitated Jesus. They imitate Titus and Timothy and Priscilla and Aquila and Phoebe, who imitated the founding apostles. They imitate the ways and means of the early church fathers and mothers: Antony of Egypt in the late 200s and the desert saints of the 4th and 5th centuries.¹²³ Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross from the 1500s. Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Woolman and the Puritans from the Reformation and following.¹²⁴ Marva Dawn, Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, and Sue Monk Kidd are just a tiny fraction from our contemporary times; and on, and on it goes. The Apostolic tradition continues through church history, urging believers to imitate their practices of spiritual formation.¹²⁵

They all practiced solitude—the same practices that the original disciples watched and absorbed from Jesus—the ways he would withdraw in solitude regularly and predictably. He would read Scripture, pray, meditate, fast, grieve, etc. From church history, Christians could add to the solitude such practices as *Lectio Divina*, memorizing Scripture, self-examination, wordless prayer, centering prayer, etc.¹²⁶ One Puritan

¹²³ Sittser, *Deep Well*, 76, 87.

¹²⁴ “Calvin devoted a whole chapter in his *Institutes* to the theme of meditation on the heavenly life. Puritans in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries developed it into a full-fledged art.” Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 167-168; Phillips P. Moulton, ed., *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*, 8th ed. (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2007).

¹²⁵ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998), 384, Kindle.

¹²⁶ Greenman and Kalantzis, *Life in the Spirit*, 16; James C. Wilhoit, “Centering Prayer,” in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 180-197; Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 149, 153-154, 171; Christine Valters Paintner, *Lectio Divina-The Sacred Art: Transforming Words & Images into Heart-Centered Prayer* (Woodstock, VY: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2011), Kindle.

spiritual writer conveys it like this, “to read and not to meditate is unfruitful; to meditate and not to read is dangerous; to read and meditate without prayer is hurtful.”¹²⁷

Imitating Jesus in Spiritual Small Group Community

How else did Jesus model Christian spirituality? He frequently met with a small, intimate group of spiritual companions. In the case of Christ, these were additionally his disciples. While Jesus had the communion of God in his divine nature on earth, he also had a human nature which desired human companionship. As much as they could, Peter, John, and James offered spiritual friendship and small group community to Jesus.

Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, was, is, and always shall be in a loving harmonious relationship with the first and third persons of the Trinity. Jesus’ very nature is in a constant small group...of sorts. This community is complete, lacking nothing – needing nothing, of the same substance but performing differently in the economy of God. Out of this communal substance, humanity was created in the image of God, created to be in relationship with God and with each other.¹²⁸ Indeed, even in our solitude with the triune God, we might consider ourselves in a small group...of sorts.

In Jesus’ earthly ministry, it is possible to categorize his interactions into varying levels of outward contact and depth of relationship, as depicted in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3. Community categories of Jesus earthly ministry

¹²⁷ Richard Greenham, *Works* (1612): 41, quoted in Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 158.

¹²⁸ Genesis 1:26-27, 28, 31, 2:24-25, 3:8.

Category	Numbers	Interaction	Biblical Reference
Multitudes	Large, varied	Teaching, healing, often these people stayed in this category without moving into discipleship.	Matthew 13:36, 14:14, 23:1; Mark 6:34, 8:34, 10:46; Luke 7:11, 12:1.
Worshipping Community	Varied	Those with whom Jesus worshipped, taught and healed in the synagogues.	Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 13:54; Luke 4:15, 6:6, 13:10
Seeker Groups	Small numbers	Sought out Jesus for healing or teaching, many were the unclean tax collectors and/or sinners.	Matthew 9:10; Mark 2:15; Luke 20:45.
Extended Disciple Group	Ranges in number from beyond the 12, with notations of 70, 120, and a multitude	These disciples believed in and served Jesus fulfilling various roles, yet many fell away.	Matthew 23:1; Mark 8:34, 10:46, 16:1; Luke 7:11, 8:2, 10:1, 12:1, 19:37, 20:45, 24:10; John 6:66.
Familiar Disciple Group	Small number	This group loved and served Jesus in a closer context (Examples: Mary the mother of Jesus, Lazarus, Martha, Mary, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, etc.) Several witnessed the resurrected Jesus.	Matthew 20:21, 27:56; Mark 15:40, 16:1 and 9; Luke 8:3, 24:10; John 11:1-45, 12:1-8, 19:25, 20:16-18.
Personal Disciple Group	12	The apostles who attached themselves to Jesus ministry and witnessed his resurrected self. Those Jesus spoke with privately and shared great lengths of time.	Matthew 9:10, 10:2-4, 13:9-7 and 36, 20:17, 24:3, 26:20-21 and 36-39, 28:16-17; Mark 2:15, 4:34, 6:31; Luke 6:12-16, 9:18, 22:39-45; John 2:12, 3:22, 18:1, 21:2-3
Intimate Disciple Group	3	Peter, John, James. These men offered close companionship and accompanied Jesus during emotional times. Jesus shared deep emotions with them.	Matthew 17:1-6, 20:20-24, 26:36; Mark 9:2-9, 10:35-41, 14:33-37; Luke 9:28-37, 22:8-11, 24:34; John 19:26-27, 21:15-17

Source: Created by the author, Elisa Ashley, for use in this dissertation.

The main category of concern for this paper is the intimate disciple group with whom Jesus spent time. As the chart above denotes, Jesus fellowshiped in concentric circles of groups with the twelve at the center and the three at the heart.

In exploring the few examples the Bible provides, the first is of the transfiguration of Jesus. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all convey the story.¹²⁹ Jesus takes Simon Peter, John the disciple he loved, and James the son of Zebedee (also the brother of John) up to a high mountain to pray with him.¹³⁰ One might suspect that this had already become a practice for Jesus and his companions, as there is no record of any indignation among the other disciples. However, ten members of the personal disciple group do become indignant shortly thereafter. Soon after the transfiguration, Matthew and Mark record an event where John and James ask to sit on Jesus' right and left in glory.¹³¹ The other ten disciples are offended that John and James would ask to be placed above them in honor. Perhaps the transfiguration had gone to their heads a bit. Interestingly, the personal disciple group do not seem to be offended by the alone time Jesus spends with his three close companions, yet they were angered by the request of a more prestigious place in glory. It seems rather antithetical to long for a place of prestige more than intimate time with Jesus on a mountain.

Upon Jesus' request, the companions kept the transfiguration event confidential, but it was no secret that Jesus was away praying with these three men, as a large group of people met them upon their descent. It certainly stands to reason that Jesus had already begun to form a closer bond with these men, since he chose them to accompany him to his transfiguration. The preparation of the event required lengthy prayer on the mountain, so lengthy that the men fell asleep. After the event, the companions stayed on the

¹²⁹ Matthew 17:1-6; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-37.

¹³⁰ Matthew 4:18; John 13:23; Matthew 4:21.

¹³¹ Matthew 20:20-24; Mark 10:35-41.

mountain for the night, no doubt spending some time together in awe and celebration and thanksgiving. These disciples, after all, did just witness Moses and Elijah. These companions, while not present at Jesus' baptism in order to hear God speak, did hear God speak on that mountain. Jesus' intimate small group witnessed the triune event that mirrored his baptism: the Spirit was manifest, Father God spoke and bore witness to the son, and children of God witnessed the event. This event was holy, personal, emotional, and one Jesus wanted to share with his spiritual companions.

Luke tells us of the preparations of another holy, personal, and emotional event in Jesus' life: the institution of the Lord's Supper.¹³² For this task of preparation, Jesus chose two of his spiritual companions, Peter and John. While the two men had no idea that a new sacrament was about to be instituted, they did understand the importance of Passover. Jesus had asked them to handle the preparations, perhaps in part for sentimental reasons. This Passover would be deeply meaningful and perhaps he wanted two trusted companions from his intimate disciple group to handle the arrangements. There is indeed every reason to believe that the small group continued to pull away and pray together. (While Peter and John are not named specifically in Luke 19 as they are in Luke 22, in the preparation for Jesus' triumphal entry, the author believes a good argument could be made that these two companions served him in a similar fashion.¹³³)

Matthew and Mark describe the time after Passover, when Jesus, as was his practice, took the personal disciple group to a garden to pray with him.¹³⁴ Then, he pulled

¹³² Luke 22:8-13.

¹³³ Luke 19:29-31.

¹³⁴ Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42.

Peter, John, and James aside. As Jesus knew the cross was at hand, he shared the depths of his soul with them. He shared his pain, distress, sweat, tears, emotions. He tells them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.”¹³⁵ While his companions fall asleep, as they did on the mountain, Jesus still wanted them close to him. Even in the midst of his struggling prayer with his Father, Jesus was still concerned for his intimate disciple group. He desired them to watch and pray so that they would resist temptation.

On the cross, Jesus loves and trusts John enough to summon him to care for his mother as her own son.¹³⁶ In John’s Gospel, he tells the story of the restoration of his dear friend and intimate disciple group member, Peter.¹³⁷ John takes care to convey Peter’s love of Jesus and Jesus’ desire for Peter to continue to both love and serve him. John and James witnessed the restoration, as they continued to spend time together in what we can only assume was a sustained deep spiritual companionship. After Jesus restores Peter and conveys the sacrificial death Peter will offer, Peter is concerned for the fate of his friend John. Peter questions Jesus about John’s death in much the same caring but boundary-breaking way he asked of Jesus’ fate.¹³⁸ He was rebuked for each—not for the caring, but for the meddling.

In Jesus’ intimate disciple group, he models for us the importance of deep spiritual companions. While it may not be said that Jesus, in his divinity, needed these

¹³⁵ Matthew 26:37.

¹³⁶ John 19:26-27.

¹³⁷ John 21:15-17.

¹³⁸ John 21:21; Matthew 16:22-23; Mark 8:32-33.

companions, it can certainly be argued that, in his social humanity, he wanted them. These men certainly needed and wanted Jesus' companionship. He created this intimate group where he could find safety, confidentiality, deep intimacy, loyalty, prayer, companionship, etc. As best they could, these men offered spiritual friendship through interpersonal relationships.¹³⁹ Of course, the relationships fail the strict definition of friendship where mutuality and spiritual qualities are shared, since no one can be an equal with the Christ.¹⁴⁰ Yet, it does appear that the intimate disciple group did exhibit some of the qualities of spiritual friendship as described by Aelred of Rievaulx:

Furthermore, a friend is called the guardian of love, or, as some prefer, the guardian of the soul itself. Why? Because it is proper for my friend to be the guardian of mutual love or of my very soul, that he may in loyal silence protect all the secrets of my spirit and may bear and endure according to his ability anything wicked he sees in my soul. For the friend will rejoice with my soul rejoicing, grieve with it grieving, and feel that everything that belongs to a friend belongs to himself.¹⁴¹

While the formative small groups of Christians today will have different economies than the intimate disciple group of Jesus, his example has been set. And we are called to imitate.

¹³⁹ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 172.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁴¹ Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship*, ed. Marsha J. Dutton, trans. Lawrence C. Braceland, 5 vols., Cistercian Fathers Series (Colleeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), Book One, verse 20, Kindle.

CHAPTER FOUR:
EFFECTIVE SMALL SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMUNITIES AND
THEIR POSITIVE IMPACT FOR CLERGY WIVES

Introduction

“Have you ever felt alone in a crowd?”¹ Do you long to “abandon the superficial conversations and share your authentic self and your feelings without fear of being judged?”² According to the research, many Americans have experienced these feelings. “We want to be open and vulnerable, but who can we rely on to have our best interest at heart and maintain our confidentiality?”³ To address these desires, many organizations have created more opportunities for small group community, from Harvard Business School to churches across the U.S. and the world.⁴ These small groups positively affect several areas of human health and growth.

As described in the previous chapter, Jesus himself modeled intimate small group community. He also demonstrated spiritual practices of solitude, about which an abundance of materials exist. This paper’s proposed spiritual formation model (SFM) includes creating guarded time alone with the triune God, through such practices as meditation, contemplative prayer, Lectio Divina, self-examination, etc. These tools and

¹ Bill George and Doug Baker, *True North Groups: A Powerful Path to Personal and Leadership Development* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2011), 1, Kindle.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 6, 27.

this time are critical to spiritual formation. However, because of the generous amount of material on this topic and due to the scope of this paper, they will not be here addressed. An abbreviated list of resources in this area may be found in Appendix B.

This chapter will, instead, focus on one of the other necessary tools of spirituality which Jesus modeled and desires for us: intimate small group community.⁵ When it comes to the health and growth of the human soul, small group community is essential for continued and holistic spiritual development. This includes the needs of women married to pastors. However, these women often fail to find such authentic and intimate communities within their congregations due to the complications of the role of pastor's wife. This precipitates the need for these women to develop what this author has termed *cross-affinity groups* (role affinity, cross-denominational diversity) outside of their churches in order to complete a healthy SFM and create an environment for holistic spiritual well-being.

The Struggle for Indispensable Spiritual Formation Small Groups

While Jesus certainly spent time in solitude with his Father, just as we are called to do, complications arise when believers become myopically focused on themselves as individuals apart from their Christian community.⁶ While solitude allows the Holy Spirit to accomplish much through spiritual practices, there are areas of spirituality and

⁵ Alice Fryling, *Seeking God Together: An Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction*, Kindle (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 16.

⁶ Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 21.

expressions of the fruit of the Spirit that can only be accessed in a small group: “spiritual growth is best nurtured and promoted in small groups” where “authentic, Christian community” may be lived.⁷ Small groups consultant Maureen Swan explains: “The notion that you can develop yourself alone is false. We need the intimacy of a small group and the feedback to create a mirror to reflect where we’re at.”⁸ A larger worship community provides many spiritual assets such as corporate worship, a pool of resources for personal help and for serving the community, and helping worshippers learn to live with differences and conflict. However, there is an intimate knowing and authentic transparency, a seal of confidentiality and limbic resonance that can only occur within a small group.⁹

For small spiritual groups to foster optimum formation, they are to be intentionally focused on the spiritual formation of each of their members. While social functions, such as book clubs, and faithful functions, such as Bible studies, have their rightful places, they usually do not offer the opportunity to share one’s deep spiritual journey and to have others listen lovingly.¹⁰ These other social and faithful activities “do not lead to deep, trusting relationships.”¹¹ Small spiritual communities allow members to

⁷ Ibid., 12, 9.

⁸ Bill George and Doug Baker, *True North Groups: A Powerful Path to Personal and Leadership Development* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2011), 12, Kindle.

⁹ Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon, *A General Theory of Love*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), Kindle.

¹⁰ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 11.

¹¹ Mark R. McMinn et al., “Care For Pastors: Learning From Clergy and Their Spouses,” *Pastoral Psychology* 53, no. 6 (July 2005): 563–581, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-005-4821-y>.

discover and reflect on what is deep within them, especially if they undertake Dr. Dallas Willard's good counsel of intentionally developing a process of thinking deeply about their own and one another's spiritual formation and human souls.¹² Alice Fryling explains that authenticity must be included in the process: "Authenticity is required for spiritually formative groups, a space where members look at the truth of their current experiences and ask, 'What is happening in my life?' Instead of asking, 'What should be?'"¹³

The first and greatest commandment addresses our relationship with the triune God. The second, our relationships with everyone else: "love your neighbor as yourself."¹⁴ All other commandments flow out of these two. God places the importance of our relationships with each other second only to our relationship with God.¹⁵ This priority is true of our spiritual formation. It is to be conducted firstly with God himself and secondly in loving, intimate relationship with others. Dr. Eugene Peterson explains:

I didn't come to the conviction easily, but finally there was no getting around it: there can be no maturity in the spiritual life, no obedience and following Jesus, no wholeness in the Christian life apart from an immersion and embrace of community. I am not myself by myself. Community, not the highly vaunted individualism of our culture, is the setting in which Christ is at play.¹⁶

¹² George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 12; Dallas Willard, "Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Formation and the Restoration of the Soul," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 26, no. 1 (1998): 101.

¹³ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 21.

¹⁴ Matthew 22:37-40.

¹⁵ Sarah Pierson Kerrick, "Positive Coping Practices Among Wives of Male Christian Clergy: Translating Qualitative Findings for a Lay Audience" (PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2010), 22, ProQuest.

¹⁶ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 226.

Most of the fruits of the Spirit are qualities which may only be displayed, enjoyed, tested, and refined in small community.¹⁷ For we cannot express patience, until our patience is tested. Kindness is not pressed into sacrificial growth until we are spiritually formed to extend kindness in the midst of frustration, misunderstanding, or offense.¹⁸ The fruit of joy for and over another cannot be experienced without authentic vulnerability as fostered in an intimate small spiritual group.¹⁹ The examples could continue, yet these will suffice. Jesus, knowing his followers would need these intimate spiritual relationships, modeled this small community so that his followers would imitate his ways.

Unable to Form Intimate Community in Congregations

The role of pastor's wife creates a unique position for women. Yes, nearly every pastor's wife recounts the joys of being used by God. Many relate stories of how the congregation lovingly supported them through medical problems and significant losses, through such tangible means as paid time off, the delivery of meals, or free babysitting.²⁰ However, while showing support and appreciation is an admirable display of Christian values, it is not soul care and does not cultivate intimate spiritual friendships. Many clergy wives have a limited to nonexistent social support network – intimate spiritual

¹⁷ Galatians 5:22-23.

¹⁸ Luke 6:32-35.

¹⁹ Romans 12:15.

²⁰ Kerrick, "Coping Practices," 42.

friendships – leaving them at considerable risk for interpersonal loneliness, stress, and lower life satisfaction.²¹

Most wives express interpersonal loneliness. They rarely find a single friend, much less a small group of friends within their own congregations. As noted in Table 1.1, 80 percent of women married to pastors struggle to some degree with finding confidants. Many times, these women feel they have no one to talk to who will understand their challenges; one woman describes her role as being in the “lonely fires of ministry.”²²

At first glance, it may seem counterintuitive to see women married to clergy as isolated, as they are often “in the thick of community life,” yet they often function as an “outsider” within the church community.²³ This outsider status may be driven by the need to be constantly guarded in speech and actions, as pastors’ wives often function as the “community conscience” and because they must hold a great deal of confidential information.²⁴ “This separates the clergy wife from people because she is not able to

²¹ Sandi Brunette-Hill, “His Job, Her Life: A Survey of Pastors’ Wives” (master’s thesis, Marquette University, 1991), 35, http://www.marquette.edu/library/theses/already_uploaded_to_IR/brune_s_1991.pdf; Shirey, Jr., “Support Systems,” 57; Morris and Blanton, “Predictors,” 38.

²² Nan Jones, *The Perils of a Pastor’s Wife*, Kindle. (Raleigh, NC: Straight Street Books, 2015), 157.

²³ Tegan Blackbird and Paul H. Wright, “Pastors’ Friendships, Part 1: Project Overview and an Exploration of the Pedestal Effect,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 13, no. 4 (February 8, 2018): 274–283; Cameron Lee and Jack O. Balswick, *Life in a Glass House: The Minister’s Family In Its Unique Social Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1989); Michael Lane Morris and Priscilla White Blanton, *The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives*, April 1994, ProQuest

²⁴ Amy Luedtke, “The Lived Experience of Being a Wesleyan Clergy Wife: A Phenomenological Study” (Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, Capella University, 2011): 124, 37-38, ProQuest.

easily share personal information, needs, details about her situation, or just be herself.²⁵ This level of separation drives the emotions of isolation and interpersonal loneliness.

While women married to pastors are most often involved in ministry and church activities, that relationship is usually one-sided. While clergy wives frequently engage in church activities, much of that communication is *Level 1 or 2* (surface talk or exchanging factual information).²⁶ Infrequently, the woman may engage in *Level 3* (the giving of opinions). However, rarely does she engage in *Level 4* (the sharing of feelings), especially the sharing of deep feelings concerning her own faith and marriage. This contributes to the emotional distance between the wife and the congregation. Randy Fujishin explains the importance of Level 4 conversing: “It provides others with information about our hearts - our joy, our fear, our anger, and our love. Without this information, we are merely two-dimensional stick figures who never reveal the deeper dimensions of who we are.”²⁷

Yet, finding a confidant in a congregation with whom a pastor’s wife can share her emotions is rare, as she is always cautious about the degree of self-disclosure and of others judging her as being partial to certain congregants.²⁸ A pastor’s wife is rarely fully transparent with a congregant, even if they have managed to establish a friendship where they share children’s activities, taking walks, or perhaps playing music. There are always

²⁵ Ibid., 36.

²⁶ For a detailed description of communication levels 1-4, see: Randy Fujishin, *Creating Effective Groups: The Art of Small Group Communication*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013), 43-44, Kindle.

²⁷ Ibid., 44.

²⁸ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 40.

layers to guard; the relationship is never completely interpersonally equitable. Therefore, clergy wives rarely find mutually authentically vulnerable congregational small groups. The congregants are not prepared to listen or discuss any of the wife's doubts of faith, crisis of marriage, or struggle of a dark night of the soul. One wife explains:

And that's very rare in a church, to find a person who is on an emotional level that can accept you for who you are and realize that as a pastor and his wife you have flaws and so that doesn't make you less of a pastor and his wife and all of that.²⁹

Most pastors' wives struggle to develop one spiritual friend and confidant, much less a small group of three to five women.³⁰ Therefore, many of them struggle to find wholeness in their spiritual formation and in finding what they report needing the most: "intimate and trusting relationships".³¹

Cross-Affinity Spiritual Formation Groups Outside of the Congregation

Since women married to clergy are rarely able to develop a spiritual formation group within their congregation, they will need to look outside of their home churches for a solution. Due to their unique role which brings unique stressors, finding understanding and safe spiritual space is difficult. To account for this, these wives are able to turn to other clergy wives to find affinity. Unfortunately, only 14 percent of women married to ministers participate in a "ministers' spouse support group (online, in person, etc.)" and 20 percent report counting on other clergy wives "very much" or "a great deal," with 53

²⁹ Ibid., 40.

³⁰ Group size will be addressed in more detail later; suffice it to say that this is a workable number for a group.

³¹ Kerrick, "Coping Practices," 10.

percent reporting counting on them only “slightly” or “not at all.”³² (Only 36 percent report engagement in a Bible study or small group with their spouse, and only 34 percent report the same engagement without their spouse.)³³ Most wives are missing out on a valuable source of social support from fellow wives, which is a psycho-emotional disadvantage since research has shown social support to be important in “countering stress and improving life satisfaction.”³⁴ Additionally, social support can work to increase compassion satisfaction and mitigate compassion fatigue.³⁵

Some research studies and surveys focusing on clergy wives have been conducted; some studies focus on a particular Protestant tradition, while others are cross-denominational. One thing remains consistent across these studies and across the various faith traditions: to varying degrees, these women struggle with finding intimacy, confidentiality, and spiritual friendships. By intentionally seeking out small groups of other clergy wives, women can discover spiritual friendship and experience its love and grace.³⁶ Women who have participated in an affinity-type support group with other clergy wives report feeling “a sense of cohesion with other women who are going through similar issues” and describe how the groups “also created an environment of mutual

³² *Survey of American Pastors’ Spouses Quantitative Long Report*, Research Survey (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Research: Biblical Solutions for Life, September 2017): 47, 19, <http://lifewayresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pastor-Spouse-Quantitative-Long-Report-2017.pdf>.

³³ *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*, 47.

³⁴ Brunette-Hill, “His Job, Her Life,” 35.

³⁵ Eric M. Hansen et al., “Does Feeling Empathy Lead to Compassion Fatigue or Compassion Satisfaction? The Role of Time Perspective,” *The Journal of Psychology* 152, no. 8 (November 17, 2018): 630–645, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00223980.2018.1495170>.

³⁶ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 17, 74.

encouragement that was helpful.”³⁷ Through the groups, they created relationships with “shared peer mentoring, emotional support, useful information, and creative solutions” specific to the role of pastor’s wife and they reported another surprising benefit—greater marriage satisfaction.³⁸ Research has shown that people are more likely to interact with others who are similar to them in psychological state and for those whom they feel an affinity, especially in groups of twenty or less.³⁹ So the affinity of the role of clergy wife is a foundational component for small group spiritual community.

The other important element for creating fruitful spiritual small groups is an element of diversity. There is evidence that some clergy have reservations about making their denomination aware of any failings, shortcomings, or areas of vulnerability.⁴⁰ Because the role of pastor and pastor’s wife are so closely conjoined, many wives are also leery to share faith struggles or marriage struggles within an affinity group from the same denomination. Some women fear that their sharing may negatively influence their husband’s career in respect to which churches may hire him or what denominational positions he may hold. “Clergy and spouses need anonymity to feel safe in sharing their concerns and will do so more readily across denominations than within denominations because of political/hierarchy issues.”⁴¹ Thus, a cross-denominational group, where

³⁷ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 43.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁹ Rosapia Lauro Grotto, Andrea Guazzini, and Franco Bagnoli, “Metastable Structures and Size Effects in Small Group Dynamics,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (July 10, 2014): 5, 7, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00699>.

⁴⁰ Lee, “Patterns of Stress and Support,” 769; Staley, “Strategies,” 11.

⁴¹ Darling et al., “Understanding Stress,” 275.

women are gathered from varying faith traditions, is advantageous in building trust and encouraging confidentiality. Dr. David Baker's 1989 research, which focused on peer intervention for ministers' wives, specifically recommends this type of small group.

Baker explains:

Peer social support across denominations seems to make a significant contribution to the well-being of ministers' wives. It is hoped that this pilot study will encourage church administrative leaders, pastoral counseling centers, and other helping agencies to develop similar cross-denominational support programs for the wives of parish ministers in their communities.⁴²

Unfortunately, dramatically few organizations have answered Baker's clarion call to facilitate cross-affinity groups for clergy wives, even though these groups serve women best by providing affinity within their role but diversity with the cross-faith tradition composition. One woman shares her testimony:

Well fortunately I belong to a pastors' wives —I guess you would call it a support group. Everyone involved is a pastor's wife and we meet once a week and just share our concerns, our praise, our trials, whatever is on our mind from that week, we share that with one another. It is totally a confidential group where we can trust each other — that it's not going to go outside that room. And since we are all going through the same basic issues, you know, it's a common thing (even though it's non-denominational, we don't even know which denomination or church the other ladies are in) which is great.⁴³

Many wives experience similar struggles and stressors through their role and “can offer great support to each other.”⁴⁴ As women listen to the experiences of other wives and

⁴² David C Baker, “Peer Support: An Intervention Program for Ministers' Wives,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 43, no. 1 (1989): 24, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_sage_s10_1177_002234098904300103

⁴³ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 44.

⁴⁴ Leschenne Darmé Rebuli, “The Biblical Role of the Pastor's Wife in the Local Church: A Case Study of Churches in Somerset West, Western Cape” (master's thesis, South African Theological Seminary, 2008): 73, <https://www.sats.edu.za/userfiles/Rebuli%20L%20Full%20Thesis%20FINAL%2021%20Oct%2008.pdf>.

understand the similarity of the struggles, not only are they able to share the individual load they carry but they are also able to see their experiences as normalized across the role.⁴⁵ This normalization can provide comradery, security, and encouragement. Drs. Cloud and Townsend explain this dynamic as follows: “A dynamic occurs in a group that is absent in one-on-one relationships. Members realize the universality of ‘pain and suffering,’ and they are not as tempted to condemn themselves.”⁴⁶ Through the dynamics of cross-affinity groups, members will develop in ways that will bolster their lived experience in the role of clergy wife. These groups strengthen “emotional intelligence which includes the set of competencies that drives leadership formants such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.”⁴⁷

This author is discovering an interesting phenomenon among women married to ministers, a trend observed through bibliographic material and field research for this paper.⁴⁸ Many women married to pastors view themselves as being different from other pastors’ wives. They often labor under the view that the *other* clergy wives somehow fit the quintessential mold of a clergy wife better than they do. Yet the view is often a false

⁴⁵ Young Jin Kum, “An Assessment of Bibliotherapy Centered Growth Group: A Ministry to Korean Pastors’ Wives” (DMin. diss., Talbott School of Theology, Biola University, 2015): 157, ProQuest.

⁴⁶ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Safe People: How to Find Relationships That Are Good for You and Avoid Those That Aren’t* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 167.

⁴⁷ George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 32.

⁴⁸ Donna Bordelon Alder, *When the Pastor Is Your Husband: The Joy and Pain of Ministry Wives*, (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2011), Kindle; Jones, *The Perils of a Pastor’s Wife*; Tamara Lowe, “When Perfect Pastors Divorce,” *Charisma Magazine*, accessed March 22, 2018, <https://www.charismamag.com/life/women/9429-when-perfect-pastors-divorce>; Gloria Lindsey Trotman, *What No One Tells the Pastor’s Wife* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 2009): <https://www.ministerialassociation.org/assets/spouses/resources/What%20no%20one%20tells%20the%20pastor's%20wife.pdf>.

one. Some wives engage in a mild facade during denominational gatherings, each trying to fit in with the other by somehow displaying the qualities they believe will be broadly deemed and accepted as appropriate for a pastor's wife. This leaves many wives feeling that the others' mild facades are true, when they are only a shadow of the truth. The wives often feel they are, deep down, different from the other wives. This can leave them feeling even more isolated.

However, this paper, per chapter two, asserts that there is no *quintessential* mold of the clergy wife. The common ideal is a false one that has usually been perpetuated by the common role of wives from the nineteenth century. When wives have bravely ventured into cross-affinity groups, they discover this truth: although unique, each wife is more similar to the other women than she is different. Indeed, the majority of women married to ministers suffer from many of the same systemic stressors and spiritual binds. This commonality, this affinity, is reported as a strong bond by women who have experienced the healing and support of small spiritual cross-affinity groups.

Cross-affinity groups work to combat the above-mentioned phenomenon and cultivate social support for these women. Social support "is often defined in psychology as the perception or experience that one is esteemed, valued, loved, and cared for by others, that one is a part of a network of people who are mutually obligated to help one another, and that one can count on others if needed."⁴⁹ The psychological research has

⁴⁹ Kerrick, "Coping Practices," 24; R. J. Turner, "Social Support and Coping," in *A Handbook for The Study of Mental Health: Social Contexts, Theories, and Systems*, ed. A. V. Horwitz and T. L. Scheid (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 198–210, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.466.9749&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

demonstrated the importance of social support, noting that it improves both physical and emotional health, a sense of well-being, life satisfaction and even helps us cope with chronic stress.⁵⁰ For pastors' wives, a higher sense of well-being is vitally important. Wives with higher well-being scores, and better outside activities and support, reported the pastor-husband's work as having less negative impact on their family; wives with lower well-being scores, and less outside activity and support, reported greater pastorate demands on the family with more loneliness and depression.⁵¹ Additionally, research has shown that for pastors' wives, social support has the strongest influence over positive well-being scores – physiological, emotional, and spiritual – and fosters a positive attitude toward the stresses of pastorate life.⁵² Therefore, without a vital source of social support, women married to pastors are in a weakened position to lead a healthy psycho-emotional life.

Cross-affinity groups support a solution by broadening the wife's network of social support for her emotional, social, psychological, and spiritual needs.⁵³ One psychological study demonstrated that women have greater well-being and “benefit more

⁵⁰ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 25; Shelley E. Taylor, “Social Support: A Review,” ed. Howard Friedman, *The Oxford Handbook of Health Psychology* (August 26, 2011), <http://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195342819.013.0009>; Kira S. Birditt and Toni C. Antonucci, “Relationship Quality Profiles and Well-Being among Married Adults,” *Journal of Family Psychology* 21, no. 4 (December 2007): 595–604; Peggy A. Thoits, “Stress, Coping, and Social Support Processes: Where Are We? What Next?,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior; Washington* (1995): 53–79, ProQuest.

⁵¹ Luedtke, “The Lived Experience,” 21.

⁵² Lee, “Patterns Of Stress and Support,” 787; Morris and Blanton, “Predictors,” 38; Darling et al., “Understanding Stress,” 275.

⁵³ Carter, “Understanding Small Group Dynamics,” 67.

when they receive support, particularly emotional support, from multiple sources as opposed to just one source.”⁵⁴

Effective Cross-Affinity Spiritual Formation Groups

Some of the most common stressors reported by clergy wives include “an acute sense of loneliness,” “lack of social support,” “a loss of personal identity,” pressure to fulfill an “idealized role,” “lack of spiritual care,” “lack of parallel growth between husband and wife,” and “adjustment to frequent moves.”⁵⁵ The most recurrent and significant felt need of pastors’ wives is “for friendship and community.”⁵⁶ These specific stressors can be mitigated through effective cross-affinity spiritual formation small group community. There are three components of focus for effective groups: environment, structure, and practices.

Environment

To be effective, groups must hold a welcoming space marked by hospitality with a primary goal of being present to one another as members build relationships with one another and the Lord.⁵⁷ The entire ethos of the group must be one of love and trust; it will simply take some emotional risk to invest in a spiritual formation group and trustworthy

⁵⁴ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 35.

⁵⁵ R. Oswald, “Why Do Clergy Wives Burn Out?,” *Action Information* (1984) quoted in Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 6.

⁵⁶ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 8.

⁵⁷ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 20, 76.

individuals will be required to work towards creating a trustworthy environment.⁵⁸ “After all, trustworthy, supportive relationships are essential to everyone’s growth and development as healthy human beings.”⁵⁹ Additionally, trust that God will indeed use the group to speak to individual members through the Holy Spirit is important. However, the group is a necessary component of the members’ ability to perceive the Holy Spirit’s direction; the members can help provide perspective and clarity, increasing awareness, through their faithful listening and asking of clarifying questions.⁶⁰ Most people yearn for trusting friendships where they can safely “discuss their issues, their hopes, and their dreams”; “they hunger for that kind of intimacy but don’t know where to find it.”⁶¹ Many pastors’ wives express a desire for space where they can step out of their role and express authentic vulnerability. One woman explains:

Even though we had social events to attend at the church on a constant basis, I felt lonely and isolated. During some church events I felt that my autonomy and identity melted away as soon as I walked through the church doors. While I tried to find myself in the midst of the new pressures, I desperately needed a friend who would allow me to be myself.⁶²

Another woman describes how having “real relationships” with other clergy wives increased her “ability to be more authentic in other relationships.”⁶³

⁵⁸ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 13.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁰ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 10; George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 50.

⁶¹ George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 12.

⁶² Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2.

Effective groups dismiss condemnation, judgment, blaming, or fixing.⁶⁴ “A useful assumption to make is that people can eventually reach a resolution to their situation with the assistance of gentle, supportive listening and open-ended and clarifying questions.”⁶⁵ These questions help the group member hear the Spirit and reflect on a response. When group members, spiritual friends, listen and empathize, it offers others “a chance to explore feelings, and legitimizes those feelings – these are forms of emotional support.”⁶⁶ These listening experiences and understanding relationships create emotional intimacy which is at the heart of social support networks, which most clergy wives lack.⁶⁷ Women who have cultivated confidential social support refer to its benefits more than any other form of coping.⁶⁸ Healthy and effective groups lead to healthy and effective social support, leading to “less anxiety and depressive symptoms,” “more positive emotions and greater life satisfaction,” and “less strain between the demands of various roles,” such as the congregational pastor’s wife, professional, daughter, mother, wife, etc.⁶⁹ “This point regarding the importance of having a confidant can’t be emphasized strongly enough. Despite the need for privacy and the desire for image management, pastors’ wives need a secure relationship in which they can disclose their concerns.”

⁶⁴ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 20-21.

⁶⁵ George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 139.

⁶⁶ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 27.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 19, 29.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

Without a social support network, women married to ministers report leaning more heavily upon their marriage to fulfill their emotional needs and to find spiritual support.⁷⁰ The woman may only have her husband as an outlet for expressing and processing deep emotions, which places undue stress on the marriage; compounding the stress is the fact that the demands of the pastorate often inhibit a devotion of time to the marriage relationship.⁷¹ If the pastor-husband is virtually the sole source of emotional support, this may leave the wife with no source of interpersonal support during troubling times of marital conflict or times when the pastor-husband is inaccessible.⁷² With pastor-husbands reporting that their wives are often their sole confidant, this can create fertile ground for a flailing marriage.⁷³ This insular support leaves little margin for the marriage, and the framework can be readily overloaded. For example, if one partner experiences any type of emotional, psychological or physical struggle, then the other partner's position is less tenable because their primary source of social and emotional support has been weakened.⁷⁴ The healthy dependence upon relationships outside of the marriage are critical for a healthy marriage, healthy individuals, and a healthy pastorate. Indeed, psychological studies suggest that when women maintain varied and multiple sources of

⁷⁰ McMinn et al., "Care For Pastors," 570.

⁷¹ Ibid., 578; Janelle Warner and John D. Carter, "Loneliness, Marital Adjustment and Burnout in Pastoral and Lay Persons," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 12, no. 2 (June 1984): 125–131.

⁷² McMinn et al., "Care For Pastors," 578.

⁷³ Ibid., 573.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 578.

social support, they experience a stronger insulation from stress and higher well-being scores, recommending at least “two high-quality relationships” outside of marriage.⁷⁵

Structure

As noted earlier, the cross-affinity group consists of women married to pastors from varying Protestant faith traditions. This provides commonality in the shared role and yet enough diversity to encourage safety. A strict definition of a group consists of two or more people who are connected in some way through social relationships.⁷⁶ The target size for a therapeutic group is eight to twelve people.⁷⁷ The most effective number for a small group is lower than a therapeutic group, requiring a minimum of three with a target of five to seven or six to eight, depending on the source.⁷⁸ The time allotment the group assigns its gatherings will drive the number in the group. For example, for a group of five or six women, each gathering would take much longer than one hour to fully engage each of the group practices, while a gathering for a group of three may conclude in sixty to seventy-five minutes.

Optimally, groups meet twice a month or every three weeks for approximately seventy-five minutes. According to one source, it takes about four or more hours per month to develop a deep social support network, regardless of the frequency and time

⁷⁵ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 35; Frame, “Relocation and Well-Being,” 419.

⁷⁶ Carter, “Understanding Small Group Dynamics,” 66.

⁷⁷ Grotto et al., “Structures and Size Effects,” 2.

⁷⁸ Fujishin, *Creating Effective Groups*, 3; George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 113.

agreement of the group.⁷⁹ However, some groups have reported deep relationships with less than four hours a month over a three-year period.⁸⁰ Whatever the frequency, consistency is foundational for effectiveness.

In the Baker study cited above, the wives in the cross-affinity group reported a lower risk of burnout and higher marital satisfaction after four weeks of group interaction.⁸¹ This data was collected immediately after the final group gathering of the study; these scores were statistically significant in comparison to the control group of wives who elected to join a group but were told they were on a waiting list.⁸² However, when the group participants were evaluated three months later in a follow-up study, there was no statistical significance between the responses of the participating group and those of the control group.⁸³ The positive benefits of the cross-affinity group interaction did not work like an inoculation. It proved to function more like a vitamin supplement; if one does not take it, one does not receive the benefit. Indeed, the women were so cognizant of the benefits of the small group that on the last official gathering of the study the women expressed desire to continue the group meetings. Unfortunately, the author could find no longitudinal study on this group. However, since the three-month follow up indicated overall higher well-being scores for the participant group but no longer indicated a statistically significant difference between the participant and control group in the areas

⁷⁹ George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 57.

⁸⁰ Kum, "An Assessment of Bibliotherapy," 173.

⁸¹ Baker, "Peer Support," 16.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 21.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

of burnout and marriage satisfaction, one may deduce that the women ceased their small group activity.⁸⁴ Perhaps this can be explained by a lack of an organizing principle or group; the women no longer had the researchers influencing them and creating some level of accountability. This may indicate the need for a non-profit ministry to provide structure for cross-affinity groups. Nevertheless, at the end of the study, the group members “rated the program as a ‘very positive’ experience and indicated that they would recommend the support group to another minister’s wife.”⁸⁵

The location of group gatherings should be private, allowing open discussions and expressions of emotions without anyone interrupting, hearing, or watching.⁸⁶ Venues such as restaurants or coffee shops are great for fellowship outings but not for spiritual formation. Cross-affinity group members, as they reveal deep movements within themselves, may need to cry or have silence or have their hand held. None of these actions are comfortable in a public setting. Even on video conferencing calls, it is important that no one else surrounding a member can overhear the conversations. Privacy and confidentiality are crucial.

Since effective cross-affinity spiritual formation groups must provide safety, confidentiality, and accountability, creating a group covenant is foundational to promoting these group traits.⁸⁷ Group covenants are most effective when reviewed,

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁸⁶ George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 56.

⁸⁷ Carter, “Understanding Small Group Dynamics,” 66.

updated, and renewed at least annually.⁸⁸ Additionally, the covenant may be employed as a tool for addressing conflict or for disruptions in the group's environment, because the covenant describes the promised behaviors and boundaries of the group. Covenanting, or promise making/keeping, is one of Christine Pohl's four essential practices that sustain community: making and keeping promises, embracing gratitude, living truthfully, and practicing hospitality.⁸⁹

Each time the cross-affinity group meets and abides by the covenant, they are keeping a promise to themselves and to each other. This promise keeping is "at the root of our ability to trust one another, and without some measure of trust, it is difficult to do much of anything."⁹⁰ Each time the covenant is renewed, either every six or twelve months, it is an opportunity for a celebration bearing witness to the trust and fidelity of the group.⁹¹ This is also a celebration and recognition of the members' own frailty and dependence upon God to maintain such a covenant.⁹² In this way, the promise and the mutual accountability are seated in the larger narrative of God's people as the body of Christ.⁹³

⁸⁸ George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 134.

⁸⁹ Christine Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2012), intro., sec. 2, Kindle.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, sec. 2.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, sec. 4.

⁹² *Ibid.*, chap. 5, sec. 6.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, sec. 2.

Confidentiality and trust are crucial for group members to feel safe enough to share their personal selves: “Feeling safe in a group invites being known, and being known creates a safe place – the mysterious reciprocity of community that only God’s Spirit can achieve.”⁹⁴ However, sin does occur. In the event that an aspect of the covenant is broken, it is important that the Christian practices of confession and forgiveness be implemented.⁹⁵ It is possible that a breach of covenant, such as a breach of confidentiality, may be painful and disruptive enough that a member may be asked to leave the group – at which point it is important that confession and forgiveness be embraced.⁹⁶ Members may be tempted to avoid, escape, shut down, or shut out, but it is important for the group members to stay engaged with the relationships in order to seek understanding.⁹⁷ Even if there is not enough of a release of the incident to allow the erring member to remain without jeopardizing the cohesion of the whole group, it is important for the group to walk the road of confession and forgiveness to promote the future health of both the member and the group.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Gail Seidel, “Life Story and Spiritual Formation,” in *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*, ed. Paul Pettit (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 235.

⁹⁵ Pohl, *Living Into Community*, chap. 6, sec. 1.

⁹⁶ Kum, “An Assessment of Bibliotherapy,” 159.

⁹⁷ Pohl, *Living Into Community*, chap. 6, sec. 5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, sec. 1.

Practices

There are three practices that occur again and again in effective spiritual formation groups: transformational Scripture engagement, sincere prayer, and the sharing and receiving of members' personal selves.

Transformational Scripture Engagement. A transformational instead of an informational engagement with Scripture is a cornerstone, utilizing such avenues as *Lectio Divina*.⁹⁹ The transformational methods emphasize the Word's transformation of the heart and soul as opposed to emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge. It is the subtle difference between readers seeking to master the text and readers allowing the text to master them.¹⁰⁰ In this posture, readers view the text with the power in itself to not only connect readers to God but to invite readers into the activity of God; in God's activity readers' self-understanding is mediated, formed, and transformed toward the intention of God's text.¹⁰¹ When readers make the world of the text their world, through their spiritual imaginations, the text can transform the readers' moral reality.¹⁰² Dr. Viljoen explains the process as follows:

In this way a fusion between the world of the text and the world of the reader is initiated and the reader is invited to inhabit this symbolic-textual world as his or her own world. When this world is inhabited as his or her own world, that is, when the text is appropriated by the reader, the reader comes to a new self-

⁹⁹ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 66, 69.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁰¹ Anneke Viljoen, "Spiritual Formation and the Nurturing of Creative Spirituality: A Case Study in Proverbs," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, no. 1 (2016): 4, ProQuest.

¹⁰² W. David Hall, "The Economy of the Gift: Paul Ricoeur's Poetic Redescription of Reality," *Literature and Theology* 20, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 189, <http://academic.oup.com/litthe/article/20/2/189/926344/The-Economy-of-the-Gift-Paul-Ricoeurs-Poetic>.

understanding through the text and the text succeeds in its aim of forming and transforming the self of the reader.¹⁰³

When conducted in the group community, the members engage and experience transformation together, creating synergy, providing witness to the growth, and deepening intimacy among the members.

Prayer. The second practice, prayer, is the cornerstone of a Christian life both in solitude and in community. The Bible directs Christians to pray for other believers and to ask other believers to pray for them. Prayers are offered for other believers by the biblical writers, and Paul explains how the Holy Spirit prays for Christians. Jesus instructs his disciples to both pray for themselves and to pray collectively as a community. Table 4.1 below provides the biblical texts.

Table 4.1. Examples of biblical teachings concerning prayer

Type of Prayer	Specific Prayer Source	Biblical Reference
Christians pray for other believers	Paul	Ephesians 6:18
	James	James 5:13-16
Christians ask believers to pray for them	Paul	Romans 15:31; Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1
	Hebrews' Author	Hebrews 13:18-19
Prayers offered for other believers	Jesus	John 17:20-21
	Paul	2 Corinthians 13:7, 9; Ephesians 1:17, 3:16; Philippians 1:4, 9; Colossians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; Philemon 1:6;
	John	3 John 1:2

¹⁰³ Viljoen, "Spiritual Formation and the Nurturing of Creative Spirituality," 4.

Holy Spirit prays for believers	Paul	Romans 8:26
Christians to pray collectively as community	Jesus	Luke 11:1-4; Matthew 6:9-13
Christians to pray for themselves individually	Jesus (who prayed for himself)	Matthew 26:38, 41-42, 44; Mark 14:35-36, 38-39; Luke 22:40-42, 44, 46
Prayer of watchful presence and emotional empathy	Jesus (who called disciples into watchful presence and who himself wept)	Matthew 26:38; Mark 14:34; John 11:35

Source: Created by the author, Elisa Ashley, for use in this dissertation.

Additionally, in Acts 2:42, it is noted that the Christian community is marked by a dedication to prayer. Indeed, it is prayer that sustains community, including cross-affinity spiritual formation groups. Dr. Eugene Peterson explains:

If the Holy Spirit – God’s way of being with us, working through us, and speaking to us – is the way in which continuity is maintained between the life of Jesus and the life of Jesus’ community, prayer is the primary way in which the community actively receives and participates in that presence and working and speaking. Prayer is our way of being attentively present to God who is present to us in the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁴

No spiritual community can be effective, regardless of the size, without a foundation of consistent prayer.

Prayer additionally serves to moderate the distribution of power within a group. All members are welcome at prayer’s table; all are equally heard by God. Therefore, all members have equal footing before God and each other.¹⁰⁵ Giving space for each member to voice prayers reinforces this equal footing. That being said, any exalted language of

¹⁰⁴ Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 272-273.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 277.

the prayer gives no special status to the prayer. “Quite the opposite: prayer is the natural, unselfconscious language of the community.”¹⁰⁶

With God’s emphasis on prayer combined with God’s desire for believers to have good lives, it is no surprise that research has, once again, demonstrated the effectiveness of biblical teachings as also noted in chapter three. Research has shown that those with positive prayer lives demonstrate higher levels of human functioning by having lower levels of compassion fatigue, “lower levels of emotional exhaustion, lower levels of depersonalization, and higher levels of personal accomplishment.”¹⁰⁷

Sharing and Receiving of Members’ Personal Selves. The third practice of effective spiritual formation groups is the sharing and receiving of members’ personal selves. “It is the small group community where healthy relationships grow, where life stories are shared, and where spiritual growth influences the journey through future life experiences.”¹⁰⁸ Sharing life stories is not only how members build relationship with others, it is how members build relationship with themselves; the shared story is a platform for the exploration of the great questions about one’s self and about life.¹⁰⁹ When members share the story of their past and the unfolding story of their present day-to-day, they are encouraged by the community to ask, “What is happening in my life?” or

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 281.

¹⁰⁷ Robin John Snelgar, Michelle Renard, and Stacy Shelton, “Preventing Compassion Fatigue amongst Pastors: The Influence of Spiritual Intelligence and Intrinsic Motivation,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology; La Mirada* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 250, ProQuest; Lewis et al., “Clergy Work-Related,” 5.

¹⁰⁸ Diana Bennett, “A Brief History of Small Groups (Part 1),” *Small Groups*, accessed November 12, 2019, <https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2011/brief-history-of-small-groups-part-1.html>.

¹⁰⁹ George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 10.

“Where is God moving in all of this?”¹¹⁰ In cross-affinity groups, women married to ministers find a safe place to admit bitterness, acknowledge terror, confess their longing for God when God feels far away, and have spiritual friends comfort them and help them seek the Holy Spirit’s guidance.¹¹¹ The experience of members sharing their personal stories of pain, rejection, or trauma from congregational experiences can work to heal them and build resilience for the future.¹¹²

When members share deeply about all areas of their life, it combats loneliness in all areas of their life.¹¹³ One pastor’s wife explains some of her past loneliness: “When the children were home, my husband didn’t have enough time for us and I couldn’t share serious problems about our children with anyone.”¹¹⁴ While many women cannot share in their congregations, they can share in a cross-affinity group which can “provide a means of developing, enhancing and confirming a person’s sense of identity and self-esteem.”¹¹⁵

Sharing stories, both within and without of Christian communities, is at the heart of the gospel. Jesus left no fingerprints but those on his followers’ souls. He left no manuscript but that written by his followers as they were carried by the Holy Spirit. The reason any contemporary Christian is a Christian is because of personal life stories. We

¹¹⁰ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 21.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹¹² Pascal Scoles, *Faith, Spirituality, and Resilience in Recovery* (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2013).

¹¹³ George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 8.

¹¹⁴ Luedtke, “The Lived Experience,” 36.

¹¹⁵ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 10; Luedtke, “The Lived Experience,” 124; Carter, “Understanding Small Group Dynamics,” 67.

also receive stories of entire Christian communities, both through the Scriptures and as handed down through church history. Paul used stories of one community to influence another, helping them to “build a community where everyone tells and enacts the story of Christ in his/her own life and ministry and can become a representation of Christ-likeness to each other in one way or another.”¹¹⁶ We become part of the story of God’s people by finding our lives in God’s metanarrative; we become part of God’s community by sharing that story with others.¹¹⁷ Dr. Gail Seidel explains:

God in his incredible mercy gives grace for the journey, comfort for the pain, and the Spirit’s motivation for the future to embrace my story, which is really his story in me. Offering my story to the community contributes to the spiritual formation of the community and to my spiritual formation. Knowing and being known is a rich by-product of the vulnerability it takes to tell my story and promotes an awareness that contributes to corporate formation.¹¹⁸

In group members being present to one another, sharing their story is only one side of the coin; the other is receiving shared stories through active listening. Effective groups offer wives an opportunity to be “carefully and deeply” heard through “loving listening.”¹¹⁹ This social support can sustain her in moments of feeling isolated or lonely, mitigating those stressors. In a spiritual formation group, members are continually in a posture of listening to others and to the Holy Spirit. Active listening encourages the listener to focus on connecting for understanding and not on what to say in response.

¹¹⁶ Jin K. Hwang, “Storytelling and Spiritual Formation According to the Apostle Paul,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 50, EBSCOhost.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹¹⁸ Seidel, “Life Story,” 243.

¹¹⁹ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 11, 20; George and Baker, *True North Groups*, 50.

Because in the American culture “talking is valued much more than listening,” members may need some instruction and encouragement in the area of active listening.¹²⁰ For example, being present in the moment shows respect for the person and the story. Allowing time and opportunity for the speaker to complete the story is vital; listeners must find peace in being silent.¹²¹ If the listener suspends judgment, is patient, and exercises empathy, this will encourage both deeper understanding for the listener and deeper revelation by the speaker.¹²² *Suspending judgment* is another way of saying acceptance; *acceptance*, “receiving what is,” is a requirement of active listening.¹²³ *Active listening* is an entire process “of receiving, attending, understanding, responding, and remembering.”¹²⁴

Once the story is complete, the listener may ask questions. Table 4.2 provides some suggestions.

Table 4.2. Examples of active listening questions

Open-Ended	Clarifying	Probing
What are your thoughts on...?	Let me see if I’m clear. Are you talking about?	More specifically, what are some of the things you have tried?
What led you to draw this conclusion?	I am not sure that I got that. Can you explain it again another way?	How direct have you been...?

¹²⁰ Fujishin, *Creating Effective Groups*, 58.

¹²¹ Michael H. Hoppe, *Active Listening: Improve Your Ability to Listen and Lead* (Greensboro, North Carolina: Center for Creative Leadership, 2007): 8, ProQuest.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 9.

¹²³ Fujishin, *Creating Effective Groups*, 61.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

What would happen next?	Do I understand you to say...?	How have you contributed to the situation?
What makes you smile when you talk about that?	Are you feeling...?	Where do you see God moving in this?

Sources: Hoppe, *Active Listening*, 11; Fujishin, *Creating Effective Groups*, 66.

“The primary goal of listening for understanding is to discover how the speaker thinks and feels.”¹²⁵ This may require some questions on the part of the listener. Active listening by the group members will create a safe space for members to share their stories; “it isn’t very often individuals are given the opportunity to share what’s really on their mind or deep in their heart without being attacked, rejected, or rescued. This is the most important reward of listening for understanding. The speaker trusts you.”¹²⁶ Trust, active listening, authentic vulnerability in sharing – all these are crucial for a cross-affinity group to be effective in combating the loneliness experienced by so many women married to ministers. The quality of relationships matters deeply in reducing loneliness; research shows that the “quality of the social context matters more than the mere presence of another person.”¹²⁷ For women married to ministers, “having friends who listen well, understand them, and at the right time provide loving feedback, seems to be at the heart of the emotional support and the intimacy that they appreciate most.”¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Fujishin, *Creating Effective Groups*, 63.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹²⁷ Tara L. Queen et al., “Loneliness in a Day: Activity Engagement, Time Alone, and Experienced Emotions,” *Psychology and Aging* 29, no. 2 (2014): 11, <http://doi.apa.org/getdoi.cfm?doi=10.1037/a0036889>.

¹²⁸ Kerrick, “Coping Practices,” 29.

Conclusion

Women married to pastors, just as all women in general, need a small spiritual formation group wherein they may authentically and honestly share their emotions and spiritual journey. It is a crucial aspect of continuing spiritual growth and formation. However, most clergy wives are unable to find an intimate group within their own congregations, due to the restrictions of their role. This leads pastors' wives to look outside their church to form cross-affinity groups, consisting of a cross-section of women from varying Protestant faith traditions. These groups create spiritual friendships that offer social support, mitigating such chronic role issues as isolation, loneliness, and marital strain. For these groups to be effective, they must cultivate an environment of hospitality, offering loving listening, grace, and confidentiality where women may be authentically vulnerable. Effective groups create and abide by a group covenant and engage in three basic practices: transformational Scripture engagement, sincere prayer, and the sharing and receiving of members' personal selves. In the next chapter, an example will be provided as to how cross-affinity groups may be implemented by a para-church ministry within the framework of the SFM provided in chapter three.

CHAPTER FIVE:
APPLICATION OF THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION MODEL IN THE PARA-
CHURCH MINISTRY CONTEXT OF JOURNEY PARTNER MINISTRIES

Introduction

Chapter three noted, “There is no arrival unless there is a definite plan to go.”¹ Yet, once there is a plan to go, the ways and means of the journey matter deeply, less we arrive limping or not at all. Michael Christensen explains further:

Just as we wouldn’t set out on a long physical journey without planning for periods of rest and refreshment and checking our maps and directions, we can’t expect to be formed in faith without committing to living a spiritual life with regular spiritual disciplines or practices.²

Spiritual formation models (SFM) serve as our maps as we journey through our spiritual formation. Deep thought and intention encourage well-rounded “practices of the heart,” which lead to deeper spiritual enlightenment and liberation – spiritual formation.³

Chapter three also unpacked biblical and theological foundations for this SFM. With so much biblical teaching concerning spiritual formation, it should come as no surprise that research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Scripture, as also noted in chapters three and four. Research shows spiritual resources to have the greatest total impact on the quality of lives for clergy wives who generally face “greater psychological

¹ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 18.

² Henri J. M. Nouwen, Michael J. Christensen, and Rebecca J. Laird, *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit* (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2010), intro., sec. 4, Kindle.

³ *Ibid.*, preface, sec. 1.

and physiological stress than clergy.”⁴ More specifically, clergy wives who had greater spiritual resources had lower compassion fatigue and “lower psychological and physiological stress along with a greater sense of being able to manage their lives.”⁵ Additionally, spiritual resources foster compassion satisfaction, which works to mitigate compassion fatigue as discussed in chapter one.⁶ Yet even with research denoting the powerful positive impact of spiritual resources – SFMs, resourcing of spiritual practices, and small group spiritual community – there is still a great unmet “desperate need” among women married to ministers for spiritual resourcing.⁷

This application chapter explores some of the ways and means that a ministry focused on serving women married to clergy could support them in embracing and implementing the proposed SFM. In fact, this author is the founder and current executive director of such a ministry, Journey Partner Ministries (JPM).⁸ This application chapter, based on the included research, has been created to serve as a roadmap for JPM in an effort to fruitfully meet the spiritual needs of pastors’ wives.

⁴ Carol Anderson Darling, W. Wayne Hill, and Lenore M. McWey, “Understanding Stress and Quality of Life for Clergy and Clergy Spouses,” *Stress and Health* 20, no. 5 (2004): 261, https://alliprimo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_wos000226075400005.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 271, 269; Christopher G. Ellison et al., “Sanctification, Stress, and Marital Quality,” *Family Relations* 60, no. 4 (October 2011): 415-416, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00658.x>.

⁶ Robin John Snelgar, Michelle Renard, and Stacy Shelton, “Preventing Compassion Fatigue Amongst Pastors: The Influence of Spiritual Intelligence and Intrinsic Motivation,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 254, ProQuest.

⁷ Linda Hileman, “The Unique Needs of Protestant Clergy Families: Implications for Marriage and Family Counseling,” *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 10, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 140, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349630802081152>.

⁸ JourneyPartnerMinistries.org.

Current at-large resources for clergy wives include conferences, self-help or autobiographical books, and the rare support group. While there are conferences clergy wives could attend, only 24 percent do attend, and many of these conferences are advertised as being for women in ministry and not specifically geared for clergy wives.⁹ Many of the conferences are “one-off” events with little follow-up structure, aside from returning for next year’s conference. Other resources include autobiographies written by pastors’ wives, some having famous husbands and some not; these books offer commiseration and some guidance. With the financial success of many of these books, it would seem to underscore the women’s needs. Fifty-nine percent of wives report carving out regular time for themselves; perhaps some of that time is spent reading these types of books.¹⁰ Still, due to the isolated nature of most clergy wives, the working-out of any guidance from the books would be done alone. Only 14 percent of wives report participating in a ministers’ wives support group, either online or in person.¹¹ However, based on this author's general and field research, this paper asserts that the low percent of participation is due to the rare availability of safe groups. Based on the research here reported women are positively impacted by cross-affinity groups, testify to the positive impacts, note their willingness to recommend such groups to others, and have requested

⁹ *Survey of American Pastors’ Spouses Quantitative Long Report, Research Survey* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Research: Biblical Solutions for Life, September 2017), 47, <http://lifewayresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pastor-Spouse-Quantitative-Long-Report-2017.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Pastor Spouse Quantitative*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

such groups.¹² Therefore, this author interprets the low group participation percentage as a lack of opportunity and not as a lack of interest or desire.

The current ministry application offers some of the above-mentioned resourcing with the added prominent anchor of facilitating cross-affinity groups. As JPM supports women in each process of the proposed SFM, the ministry tasks may be divided into two general categories: resourcing and facilitating.

Resourcing

JPM resources wives in both passive and active ways. Passively, JPM provides information on topics such as spiritual practices in solitude, biblical study, self-exploration, and spiritual formation. Additionally, JPM provides a vetted database of spiritual directors and Christian counselors. Interactively, JPM provides training, both live and pre-recorded, in the areas of spiritual formation and role exploration. As explicated in chapter two, navigating the embodied role of pastor's wife that a woman feels led to live can be daunting and full of conflicting information. Regardless of whether a woman feels God leading her to some degree of ministry involvement or if she feels God is leading her to focus her talents in other areas (or perhaps even a different church from her pastor-husband), she is better served by intentionally and proactively seeking God's will for her in the role. There is simply no way around the current social construct of church which does indeed create the role of pastor's wife as being more

¹² Sandi Brunette-Hill, "His Job, Her Life: A Survey of Pastors' Wives" (master's thesis, Marquette University, 1991), 87, http://www.marquette.edu/library/theses/already_uploaded_to_IR/brune_s_1991.pdf.

prominent than the singular role of congregant.¹³ However, it is the woman filling that role who is to discern how God is leading her to live-out that embodied role. Women are well-served through interactive training and guided exploration as they examine and reexamine how they will embody the role, especially as situations and seasons of life shift.

Facilitating

JPM facilitates the creating and sustaining of cross-affinity spiritual formation groups. First, JPM offers structure, organization, and accountability for the groups. Second, JPM aids in connecting women for the creation of groups. This includes supporting women in their local search and outreach to other pastors' wives, if they seek to create a group bound geographically. This also includes connecting women virtually, if they seek to meet via video conferencing, and supporting them with technological training and a virtual room if needed. Third, JPM provides ongoing training to both promote health and foster the development of depth within the groups.

Due to the scope of this paper, the only JPM resourcing addressed in this chapter is that of role exploration. Healthy group facilitation will also be addressed in greater detail later in this chapter.

¹³ Lorna Dobson, *I'm More Than a Pastor's Wife* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 25.

Resourcing Women's Exploration of their Embodied Role as Pastor's Wife

As noted in chapter two, “There are some women [pastors’ wives] who love their life in the ministry; others are very unhappy with their role, while some are confused and have no idea what is expected of them in this position of ‘the pastor’s wife.’”¹⁴ In order to support these women, some faith traditions have tried to provide a one-size-fits-all framework as a starting point. Some pastors’ wives’ have authored self-help books which depict personal practices for fulfilling the role, based on how the author has fulfilled her role.¹⁵ Many resources are filled with dos and don’ts, tips and tricks. Some of these may indeed be helpful. However, this proposed SFM includes resourcing that educates and guides clergy wives instead of directing or dictating to them. The education and guidance include aspects of the *what* and *how* of the role itself. The *what* includes: the common stressors, the systems the role impacts, the critical components of these systems, the lived history of the role...much of the information included in this paper. The *how* includes facilitating a woman’s self-exploration of the unique role she wishes to construct and embody for herself in her context, especially through the lens of positive psychology and

¹⁴ Debra D. Benoit, “The Changing Role of the Pastor’s Wife in Today’s Evangelical Church” (DMIN diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010): 2, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_proquest864030139.

¹⁵ Leschenne Darmé Rebuli, “The Biblical Role of the Pastor’s Wife in the Local Church: A Case Study of Churches in Somerset West, Western Cape” (master’s thesis, South African Theological Seminary, 2008): 113, <https://www.sats.edu.za/userfiles/Rebuli%20L%20Full%20Thesis%20FINAL%2021%20Oct%202008.pdf>.

Scripture. (“Positive psychology has been defined as ‘the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions.’”)¹⁶

The “What” of the Role

Focusing on the *what*, chapter one discusses the three systems impacted by the role of pastor’s wife: self, family, and the church. Within each of these three systems, a woman is invited to intentionally reflect, through guidance, on three critical components. In the self system, the components are boundaries, expectations, and self and soul care. In both the family and church systems, the components are boundaries, expectations, and communication. Some sample areas of exploration are listed below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Areas of pastors’ wives’ self-exploration categorized by system and component

	Boundaries	Expectations	Self and Soul Care
Self	Emotional energy to be expended; Meaning and maintenance of private life; Training needed to fulfill role	Personal expectations; Dealing with criticism from within and without; What is God calling me to in this role; Releasing other wives to embody the role differently	Developing and maintaining a support network; Practice of seeking outside help; Dealing with pain of congregants leaving; What makes life and role meaningful; Identity outside ministry

¹⁶ Cathy W. Hall et al., “The Role of Self-Compassion in Physical and Psychological Well-Being,” *The Journal of Psychology* 147, no. 4 (July 2013): 312, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00223980.2012.693138>.

			Communication
Family	Creating rhythm of life and ministry; Needs of family; Sabbath keeping	Support expected by pastor-husband; Harmonizing within the family the roles of pastor and wife; Making peace with financial situation	How and when does the family communicate; Effective scheduling of ministry and family events; Discussion of needs, joys, disappointments in ministry; What further skill development or training is needed
Church	How relational or to what degree will you connect with congregants; To what degree will you be involved in ministry and in what areas; What are your giftings; How does this season of life impact your participation	How do you see yourself as being the same or different from congregants; What are the expectations of the congregation or faith tradition; Dealing with expectations of access and the previous pastor's wife	How do you and the church communicate needs and expectations to each other; How will you address conflict and conflict resolution; How do you communicate to search committees and leadership teams

Through this guided role exploration, the woman has the opportunity to seek God and discern with intentionality the unique role God has equipped her for in the particular season of life in which she finds herself. With this, she will have conviction of her approach and actions, which becomes critical as she lives week-to-week. Just as in golf or tennis where an off-handed comment can take a player out of her game, the same is true for a minister's wife. Preparation of the woman's identity and the embodied role she is called to and desires to fulfill creates an anchor for her in times of stress.

The "How" of the Role

Focusing on the *how*, pastors' wives are invited to recognize and develop their psychological capital while recognizing and enhancing their subjective well-being or

happiness.¹⁷ (Happiness is here defined by Shawn Achor as “the joy we feel striving after our potential” as opposed to pleasure, which is very short-lived.¹⁸ Some positive psychologists use the term *happiness* interchangeably with *well-being*, a term previously used throughout this paper.¹⁹) Psychological capital currently has four components, defined below in Table 5.2. They are often “referred to as the HERO within,” as the components create that acronym.²⁰

Table 5.2. Four components of psychological capital

Component	Description
Hope	A positive state with a feeling of ensuing success in both the areas of will and way in respect to a goal
Efficacy	Confidence; belief about one’s ability to gather both the motivation and mental ability to determine the best course and to take action in a given context
Resiliency	Developed capacity to not only rebound from adversity, or a great achievement, but to grow as a result
Optimism	Positive outlook; positive expectancy; rational optimism which takes into account the realities of a current situation but affirms that action taken can positively impact the current reality

Source: Luthans et al., *Psychological Capital*, 28-29.

As women explore their role, they are guided and invited to reflect on how these elements impact their role and may be developed to enhance not only their fruitfulness within the role but their happiness in fulfilling the role.

¹⁷ Fred Luthans, Carolyn M. Youssef-Morgan, and Bruce J. Avolio, *Psychological Capital and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), Kindle.

¹⁸ Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage: How a Positive Brain Fuels Success in Work and Life* (New York: Currency Books, 2010), 39, Kindle.

¹⁹ Veljko Jovanovic, “Personality and Subjective Well-Being: One Neglected Model of Personality and Two Forgotten Aspects of Subjective Well-Being,” *Personality and Individual Differences* 50, no. 5 (April 2011): 631, <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0191886910005921>.

²⁰ Luthans et al., *Psychological Capital*, 28.

Subjective well-being, happiness, includes three basic components: higher life satisfaction, positive feelings, and reduced negative feelings.²¹ There are three primary enhancers of well-being: self-compassion, social relationships, and the development of positivity habits and practices. Clergy wives are invited to cultivate these three primary enhancers. Self-compassion improves both psychological and physical well-being, such as: happiness, optimism, decreased anxiety, resilience, depression, cancer, stress response, immune function, cardiac reactivity, social functioning, cortisol regulation, longevity, and obesity.²² Self-compassion is “the ability to treat oneself with kindness, recognizing one’s shared humanity, and being mindful when considering one’s negative aspects” – the ability to accept oneself “in light of a realistic understanding of one’s inadequacies.”²³

The second primary enhancer is healthy social relationships, healthy support networks, which has a vast array of positive psycho-emotional impacts as noted in chapter four, such as “aiding in effective coping mechanisms when faced with and recovery from stress.”²⁴ Additionally, the success people have in their careers and roles, such as the role of pastor’s wife, is mostly influenced by four factors: level of optimism, belief that behavior can influence change, social networks, and the way one perceives stress. These four factors account for 75 percent of one’s success, while intelligence and

²¹ Hansika Singhal and Renu Rastogi, “Psychological Capital and Career Commitment: The Mediating Effect of Subjective Well-Being,” *Management Decision*, 56, no. 2 (2018): 458, ProQuest.

²² Hall et al., “The Role of Self-Compassion,” 311.

²³ *Ibid.*, 312.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 318.

skill account for only 25 percent.²⁵ In fact, the greatest predictor of long-term happiness is one's social connections: the breadth, depth, and meaning of one's social relationships.²⁶ Social connections have such a profound influence over the holistic nature of a person that social connection, obesity, high blood pressure, and smoking can all equally predict the longevity of one's life.²⁷

The third primary enhancer is developing positivity habits and practices. Positive practices create a buffer from stress and buoy life satisfaction levels.²⁸ Positivity, similar to the rational optimism of psychological capital noted above in Table 5.2, is not blind to pain or problems; however, positivity affirms that the pain or the problem is not the end of the story. Positivity affirms that one's behavior can make a positive difference. Positivity habits take seriously the teachings of Scripture and put them into active use, with psychological research results to demonstrate the effectiveness. As stated in chapter four, it should come as no surprise that science has proven the observable positive impact of what Scripture has been offering to Christians for centuries. For example, take the teaching of 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Research has demonstrated that if individuals record on paper the

²⁵ Shawn Achor, "The Happiness Advantage: Better Habits for Better Outcomes" (General Session Presentation presented at the National Council for Behavioral Health National Conference 2017, Seattle, WA, April 5, 2017), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1x0zAN2YAJA>.

²⁶ Achor, *The Happiness Advantage*, 198.

²⁷ James S. House, Karl Richard Landis, and Debra Umberson, "Social Relationships and Health," *Science* 241, no. 4865 (1988): 543, ProQuest.

²⁸ Shawn Achor, "Shawn Achor at The UP Experience 2010: The Science of Positive Psychology," The UP Experience, YouTube video, 16:01, September 19, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNsZM94vrP0>.

what and *why* of three things they are grateful for that have happened within the past twenty-four hours, for twenty-one consecutive days, their positivity and well-being levels rise.²⁹ Another example is the teaching of Philippians 4:8, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things.” Research has demonstrated that if for twenty-one consecutive days individuals think of one positive experience they have had within the last twenty-four hours and record that experience on paper, including where they were, what they were thinking about, and what they said, the brain basically relives the positive experience.³⁰ The brain barely distinguishes between actual events and visualized events; thus the thinking of the event produces the same effect of reliving the event. Therefore, the positive benefits are doubled. The examples could continue, but these will suffice. There is deep power in Christians actually practicing, in intentional consistent ways, what Scripture actually teaches us.

As clergy wives are invited by this SFM to examine and re-examine their embodied role, they are encouraged to discern one to three areas of focus. These areas may include a boundary shift, the gaining of a communication skill, or implementing a positivity practice. Wherever the Spirit leads them to focus, the invitation is to continue to examine and develop within their embodied role.

²⁹ Robert A. Emmons and Michael E. McCullough, “Counting Blessings Versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 2 (February 2003): 377–389, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.377>.

³⁰ Richard B. Slatcher and James W. Pennebaker, “How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Words: The Social Effects of Expressive Writing,” *Psychological Science* 17, no. 8 (August 2006): 660–664, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01762.x>.

Facilitating Cross-Affinity Spiritual Formation Groups

Introduction

“We travel in our own fast tracks, and though we may want close relationships, we are too weary to take the initiative.”³¹ Clergy wives often find themselves in this conundrum. They are very busy and have limited time, yet they are hungry for interpersonal relationships where they can freely discuss aspects of their spiritual journey, personal state, and complications of their role. In which case, an outside ministry, like JPM, can foster the creation of close relationships through facilitating cross-affinity groups. In Brunette-Hill’s study, “support groups were requested by 44 percent of the respondents.”³² Yet she confesses, “After careful consideration, this researcher could not discern many reasonable strategies for increasing the likelihood of forming friendships for pastors’ wives.”³³ This paper affirms that by assisting clergy wives in creating and sustaining cross-affinity groups, JPM can indeed present a reasonable strategy for not only forming friendships among clergy wives but also facilitating the meeting of other needs while positively impacting the women’s overall spiritual health and well-being.

Brunette-Hill’s paper also notes that a single breach of confidence can cause the disbandment of a group. Certainly, there is some risk involved in any endeavor where authentic vulnerability is key; however, without risking authentic vulnerability we cannot

³¹ Marilyn Brown Oden, “Stress and Purpose: Clergy Spouses Today,” *The Christian Century* 105, no. 13 (April 20, 1988): 402–404, EBSCOhost.

³² Sandi Brunette-Hill, “His Job, Her Life: A Survey of Pastors’ Wives” (master’s thesis, Marquette University, 1991), 87, http://www.marquette.edu/library/theses/already_uploaded_to_IR/brune_s_1991.pdf.

³³ *Ibid.*

form deep, lasting spiritual relationships. Group covenants and JPM's assistance in times of conflict can help solidify confidentiality and mitigate negative impacts. Brunette-Hill also notes "competition between clergy and/or clergy wives" as an obstacle to group formation. This can be especially true within faith traditions, which is why several studies call for more pastorate family support from outside denominational confines.³⁴ One study explains:

Some type of group supervision/parish assistance program could be created that involves clergy meeting on a regular basis across denominations. Clergy and their spouses need anonymity to feel safe in sharing their concerns and struggles and will do so more readily across denominations than within denominations because of political/hierarchy issues. Interview experiences with these clergy and clergy spouses from different denominations revealed a genuine openness and eagerness in sharing with each other.³⁵

The cross-denominational composition of the proposed groups works to relieve feelings of competition within the groups. However, it is true that in geographical areas there may be feelings of competition even cross-denominationally. JPM can work to disarm feelings of competition through the publication of positive testimonials and offer non-geographic virtual groups through video conferencing to women who feel less safe with local clergy wives.

A para-church ministry such as JPM, outside of denominations but working in conjunction with denominations to support pastorate families, can facilitate the gathering and maintaining of cross-affinity groups. Many women married to ministers are struggling to find adequate authentic emotional connections. Because women who work

³⁴ Carol Anderson Darling, W. Wayne Hill, and Lenore M. McWey, "Understanding Stress and Quality of Life for Clergy and Clergy Spouses," *Stress and Health* 20, no. 5 (2004): 275, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_wos000226075400005.

³⁵ Darling and Hill, "Understanding Boundary-Related Stress in Clergy Families," 164.

outside the home have a greater opportunity to create a wider support network, they tend to fare better than wives who do not work outside the home. There are, however, still the issues of priority and subject matter for these wives. Only 28 percent of wives report spending “regular time with friends.”³⁶ In addition, the vast majority of those friends are not married to ministers.³⁷ Therefore, even for the minority of clergy wives who are regularly spending time with friends, there are still many issues that the woman may feel her non-ministry friends simply do not understand. Thus, she may withhold parts of herself or choose not to discuss certain topics during their interactions, limiting the depth of the relationships and strength of that support network.

Clergy wives “need increased and on-going support networks.”³⁸ If JPM facilitates and trains wives to engage in healthy and spiritually developing cross-affinity groups, then on-going and deepening support networks may be created. Combating loneliness and developing friendships are the two primary roles of a support network, which cross-affinity groups serve to widen and strengthen; “where closeness exists, burn-out has a hard time staking out a claim.”³⁹

There are six specific processes of the proposed SFM which are supported by cross-affinity spiritual formation groups. (An overview of the entire proposed SFM may

³⁶ *Survey of American Pastors’ Spouses Research Study Report*, 136.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁸ Darling and Hill, “Understanding Boundary-Related Stress in Clergy Families,” 164.

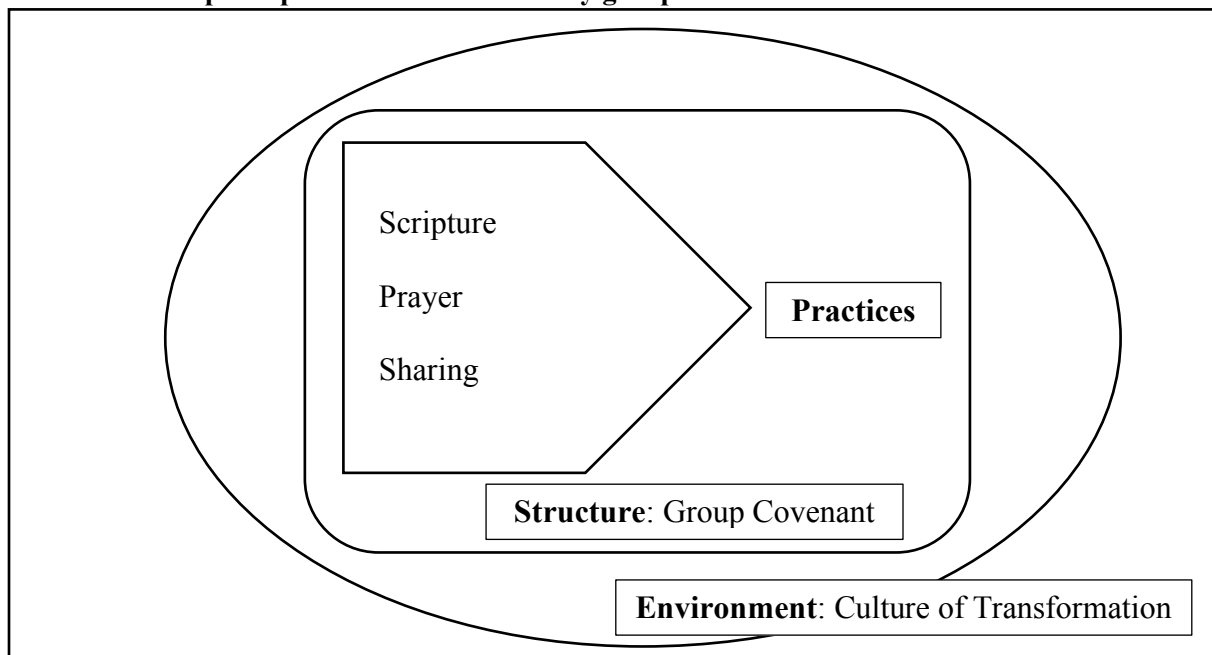
³⁹ Ervin L. Shirey, Jr., “The Use of Support Systems by Pastors of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church as a Means of Maintaining Spiritual Well-Being and Coping with Burnout” (DMin. diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2001): 63, <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/ecommonsats/dissertations/435/>.

be found in Table 3.2, chapter three.) Table 5.3 below highlights the processes supported by cross-affinity groups.

Table 5.3. SFM processes supported by cross-affinity groups

Orthodoxy	Orthopathy	Orthopraxy
Frame suffering as a shadow of this world that falls on everyone through deep sharing of ourselves and active listening of others' stories	Learn to identify, name, experience and discuss the full range of emotions, secure in Christ's love to accept us amid all that we feel; learn to free others to do the same	Engage in Christian community, both worshipping and formative small group, where wives mature spiritually and emotionally: display their growing spiritual attributes, pray, manage themselves and learn to serve others well
Define embodied role by continuously interacting with: God's calling, gifting, season of life, family, church, culture, etc.	Resist the temptation to bury or defend our brokenness, instead submit to Christ's transformative work to be more like him as a lifelong, ongoing process Cultivate gratitude toward God, as an attitude toward living, and as a response to others	Sacrifice for the sake of the community: pray for others, seek Shalom for all, love and forgive their neighbor, empower and care for the poor and disenfranchised

In order to facilitate healthy cross-affinity groups, which support the SFM, JPM must focus on three specific group components (which were also discussed in chapter four): environment, structure, and practices. These group components may be visualized as depicted in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4. Group components for cross-affinity groups

Each of the three components from Table 5.4 will be discussed below.

Environment: Culture of Transformation

In order for JPM to effectively support clergy wives in the recommended SFM, three environmental ministry principles are to be espoused and implemented. These principles support adaptive change, as JPM seeks to support the continued spiritual transformation of women married to ministers. There is an environmental principle impacting each of the three general areas of human development and engagement: thoughts (*orthodoxy*), feelings (*orthopathy*), actions (*orthopraxy*). It is reminiscent of the longstanding VBS categories of head, heart, and hands. The SFM itself has each of these three categories, as is noted in chapter three, Table 3.2. To intentionally address all three areas is to attempt to care and provide for the woman as a whole being, to care for her soul or heart. Henri Nouwen describes the human psyche – soul, heart – as follows:

...a person's core self or spiritual center, where one's physical, mental, and emotional lives come together as one in relation to God. ...when the human heart is open and responsive to the movements of the Spirit, healthy spiritual formation inevitably occurs.⁴⁰

Below, Table 5.5 presents an overview of each of the environmental ministry principles for the following discussion.

Table 5.5. Environmental principles and processes for ministry supporting the proposed spiritual formation model

	Orthodoxy	Orthopathy	Orthopraxy
Principle	Identity as a child of God	Accepted in the Beloved	Unity and equity in Christ
Scriptures	John 1:12-13; Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:4-8; 1 John 3:1-3	Psalms 6, 22, 42, 74; Romans 8:30-39, 14:3-4; Ephesians 1:6 (NKJ); Colossians 1:21-22	Romans 15:5-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-27; Galatians 6:2-5
Processes	Orient women's core identity in Christ as opposed to another source	Validate the loss and pain of change while still challenging the change	Protect equal access to power
	Focus women on wrestling with issues through examination of their own thought processes	Promise a community for intimate and formative relationships	Connect women with healthy group approaches and methods that focus on the work of transformation
		Regulate the process for the authentic expression of strong emotion	Enquire and observe to identify the adaptive challenges and needs of the community for development and growth

⁴⁰ Nouwen et al., *Spiritual Formation*, preface, sec. 1.

Orthodoxy	Orthopathy	Orthopraxy
	Empower groups to seek out and address fears which are causing anxiety	

Orthodoxy Ministry Principle: Identity as a Child of God. John 1:12-13

assures us that all who believe in God have been given the right, or power, to become children of God. 1 John 3:1a goes on to explain that because of God’s love believers have been adopted as God’s children, through the person and sacrifice of Jesus the Christ.⁴¹ God presents us as “holy and unblemished in his sight in love” and lavishes on us grace and forgiveness.⁴²

This new identity of love and adoption reorients us and our thinking. “From birth to death, love is not just the focus of human experience but also the life force of the mind, determining our moods, stabilizing our bodily rhythms, and changing the structure of our brains... Love makes us who we are, and who we can become.”⁴³ When we live into this identity, individually and together, God’s love can transform who we are both directly and through others as we engage in community.⁴⁴

The first orthodoxy process is to orient women’s core identity in Christ as opposed to another source. “We will never have the easy, unhesitating love of God that

⁴¹ Ephesians 1:5; 2:13.

⁴² Ephesians 1:4-6; Hebrews 9:14; Ephesians 1:7-8.

⁴³ Lewis et al., *General Theory*, preface.

⁴⁴ The transformation of us through others occurs via “loves three neural faces – limbic resonance, regulation, and revision.” Ibid., chap 8, sec 2.

makes obedience to Jesus our natural response unless we are absolutely sure that *it is good for us to be, and to be who we are.*”⁴⁵ Willard’s encouragement reflects the idea of gratitude for who God has made us to be and in turn allows us to extend gratitude for who God has made others to be. Many pastors’ wives, as many Christians, have heard a gospel that makes them question this “good” identity, as their identity shifts based on their perception of their sin management.⁴⁶ Dr. Lovelace explains shifting from a sin management legalism to spiritual transformation:

Christians must be removed from the training devices of legalism and allowed to walk as those liberated by the work of the cross, freed from human regulations and entrusted to the communion of the Holy Spirit who guides believers through the application of biblical principles and precepts.⁴⁷

If clergy wives function in the legalism of sin management, their personal perception of being good or bad may be influenced by others’ words, denominational expectations of a pastor’s wife, judgments of congregants, or family traditions. However, “whatever our position in life, if our lives and works are to be of the kingdom of God, we must not have human approval as a primary or even major aim. We must lovingly allow people to think whatever they will.”⁴⁸ For women who feel as if they live in a fishbowl, this is a daunting task. However, as these women shift their identity and audience to Christ, their lives and

⁴⁵ Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 369.

⁴⁶ “If gospels of sin management are preached, they are what Christians will believe.” *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁷ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 236.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 223.

labors will have integrity and joy, “for the labor itself brings honor to God,” regardless of outcomes or judgments.⁴⁹

Orienting is fostered through the repetition of teachings of love, grace, and forgiveness as being embedded in Christians’ new birthright and not rewards to be earned or lost. We express these three aspects of a Christocentric identity – love, grace, and forgiveness – towards ourselves and others, not expecting perfection but expecting the need for grace. Chris Rice explains: “Grace assumes sin. When we ask you to accept each other, we aren’t asking you to ignore hurts between you. People of grace speak the truth. But in an atmosphere of grace, truth seems less offensive and more important.”⁵⁰

The second process is to lead women to examine their own thought processes and to wrestle with issues themselves instead of what Ronald Heifetz calls “stress-reducing distractions,” such as “denial, scapegoating, externalizing the enemy, pretending the problem is technical [as opposed to adaptive], or attacking individuals rather than issues.”⁵¹ Accepting our identity from Christ as being good allows us to accept how God designed our brains to work: with two primary modalities.⁵² The power of *System 1* (*hot*

⁴⁹ James Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 247, Kindle.

⁵⁰ Chris Rice, *Grace Matters: A Memoir of Faith, Friendship and Hope in the Heart of the South* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, 2002), 259-260.

⁵¹ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), 128.

⁵² “Our brains are comprised of two characters, one that thinks fast, System 1, and one that thinks slow, System 2. System 1 operates automatically, intuitively, involuntary, and effortlessly... System 2 requires slowing down, deliberating, solving problems, reasoning, computing, focusing, concentrating, considering other data, and not jumping to quick conclusions...” Erik Johnson, “Book Summary: Thinking Fast and Slow” (April 2014) 1: <https://erikreads.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/thinking-fast-and-slow-book-summary.pdf>.

system or amygdala) thinking is that it helps us survive and is influenced by “subconscious values, drives, beliefs...”⁵³ To that end, the Holy Spirit’s formation of us can transform these three currents – values, drives, beliefs – to reflect kingdom heuristics and display fewer faulty heuristics.⁵⁴ The power of *System 2* (*cool system* or prefrontal cortex) thinking is that “it helps us thrive, rather than just survive.”⁵⁵

Focusing is fostered by groups intentionally engaging cool system thinking together, naming it, and using the cool/hot language in common. Centering prayer, the Examen, Lectio Divina, and the imaginative reading of Scripture inform and activate the cool system. Monitoring the feedback of the physical sensations during these activities provides a control against which to compare the physical sensations when the hot system is activated: increased heartrate, shallow breathing, rise in anxiety or fear. When their hot system is activated, they can then engage in cool system thinking by engaging their prefrontal cortex and short-circuiting their amygdala.⁵⁶ Such cool system activities could be practices from the group engagement such as recalling/ reciting a memory verse or thinking/expressing gratitude through spontaneous prayer or Psalm recitation. Later,

⁵³ Ibid., 16; *hot system*: when “we no longer process information in a cool, calm, and collected way.” “It’s wired for quick, emotional processing that, when activated, triggers reflexive responses including fight and flight.” Joseph Greeny et al., *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2013), 136-137, Kindle.

⁵⁴ A heuristic is when “we assume certain things automatically without having thought through them.” Johnson, “Book Summary: Thinking Fast and Slow,” 1.

⁵⁵ Greeny et al., 36, 136; *cool system*: “emotionally neutral, runs off frontal lobe and is designed for higher-level cognitive processing,” and “is slow and contemplative.”

⁵⁶ “10 Exercises for Your Prefrontal Cortex,” Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education, *Heart-Mind Online*, accessed December 3, 2018, <https://heartmindonline.org/resources/10-exercises-for-your-prefrontal-cortex>.

through sharing stories with the group or through the Examen, the women can begin to wrestle with why their hot system was activated and observe any patterns of activation, while they seek God in and through that activation.

Orthopathy Ministry Principle: Accepted in the Beloved. God has made us accepted and loved in his Beloved, Jesus, through his redemption of us.⁵⁷ In this acceptance, we are presented “holy, without blemish, and blameless before him.”⁵⁸ Therefore, since God has accepted us, we are not to “despise” or “judge” others for their Christian traditions and practices.⁵⁹ Even when we pray to God in our fear, frailty, tears, exhaustion, abandonment, depression, impatience or frustration, the Lord hears and accepts our prayers and, in turn, us.⁶⁰ Indeed, God himself has justified us, is ever for us, and loves us with an attachment that is unbreakable and never failing.⁶¹ It is out of this profound acceptance from God that we may, in turn, accept and love ourselves and others. “The truth is you cannot love yourself unless you have been loved and are loved.”⁶² Which is exactly why “we love because He first loved us.”⁶³ Acceptance and belonging precede change or transformation.

⁵⁷ Ephesians 1:6 (NKJ).

⁵⁸ Colossians 1:21-22.

⁵⁹ Romans 14:3-4.

⁶⁰ Psalm 6, Psalm 22, Psalm 42, Psalm 74.

⁶¹ Romans 8:30-39.

⁶² Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog and Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook : What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love, and Healing* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 262, Kindle.

⁶³ 1 John 4:19.

The first orthopathy process, validating the loss and pain of change while still challenging the change, keeps the community honest but still moving forward. “Growing into the likeness of Christ and into the church as it’s supposed to be cannot be separated from the messiness and disappointments that are part of human relationship.”⁶⁴ As these women bump up against congregants, and others, and then seek to process those feelings in a cross-affinity group, things will simply not stay pretty. As souls are formed and relationships forged, pain will need to be processed. The groups should embrace this fact and heed the advice of Pastors Ken and Deb Lloyd: “We all have to process pain, and most people are unwilling to do it.” In *Spiritual Formation*, Nouwen et al. provide insight:

You can never get to the joy if you dare not cry, if you do not have the courage to weep, if you don’t take the opportunity to experience the pain. The world says, “Just ignore it, be strong, don’t cry, get over it, move on.” But if you don’t mourn you can become bitter. All your grief can go right into your deepest self and sit there for the rest of your life. Better to mourn your losses than to deny them. Dare to feel your losses. Dare to grieve them. Name the pain and say, “Yes, I feel real pain, real fear, real loss; and I am going to embrace it. I will take up the cross of my life and accept it.” To grieve is to experience the pain of your life and face the dark abyss where nothing is clear or settled, where everything is shifting and changing.⁶⁵

Cross-affinity groups provide a safe harbor for mourning pain in loving community.

The second process, promising a community for intimate and formative relationships anchored in sharing and steadfastness, builds acceptance and trust.

“Commitments and promises that have been tested and proven are at the root of our

⁶⁴ Christine Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2012), 80.

⁶⁵ Nouwen et al., *Spiritual Formation*, chap. 3, sec. 3.

ability to trust one another, and without some measure of trust, it is difficult to do much of anything.”⁶⁶ Each time these women come together as a group and share their stories, they are keeping a promise, building trust, generating “wordless strength,” “restoring balance,” and fostering feelings of being “centered and whole.”⁶⁷ As they repeatedly honor each other’s time and presence by attending, they activate the “healing force of communal connection.”⁶⁸ Moving as a dependent vector, the sharing and vulnerability will deepen as relationships are “nurtured through time and attentiveness to the subtleties of need, memory, joy and hurt.”⁶⁹ Promise making and keeping is fostered through the women making a covenantal agreement every six or twelve months, accompanied by a time “to celebrate the event and to mark its importance.”⁷⁰ Through this covenanting ritual, “relationships are extended and deepened.”⁷¹

The third process is regulating the process for the authentic expression of strong emotions through language, acceptance, pacing, and a holding environment.⁷² Regulating language includes providing a symbolic language inherent in the structure of the groups and the groups’ gatherings. The structure employs orchestral language; for example, a group is an *orchestra*, a group leader is a *conductor*, and the three practices of group

⁶⁶ Pohl, *Living Into Community*, 1503.

⁶⁷ “Gathering like people together to share their stories imbues a wordless strength... The limbic regulation in a group can restore balance to its members, allowing them to feel centered and whole.” Lewis et al., *A General Theory of Love*, chap. 9, sec. 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, preface.

⁶⁹ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 210.

⁷⁰ Pohl, *Living Into Community*, chap. 5, sec. 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, sec. 2.

⁷² *Ibid.*, chap. 1, sec. 2; Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 104-124.

gatherings form a *sonata*. To give the women handles for expressing emotions, the language is extended for expression, “I feel like my cymbals are crashing.”

Confusion	My cymbals are crashing
Anger	My whistle is blowing
Anxiety	My drums are pounding
Instability	My tuba is flat
Sadness	My cello is moaning
Pain	My strings are bending

The language communicates the expectancy of a full range of emotions and the acceptance of all emotions as part of the sonata.

Regulating pacing is fostered by both silence and the structure of the gatherings. Every symphony has rests: accepted and planned times of silence. With silence being part of the ethos, it is always acceptable to activate it in order to allow for processing, reflection, and to slow the group down. As these women share their lives with each other, a variety of emotions will be triggered. In pacing their sharing, leaders must pay “attention to the three essential elements of the resilience-building and healing pattern of stress activation. These are predictability, controllability, and moderation.”⁷³ Having the same basic structure for each gathering and allowing the women to control the depth of their personal sharing fosters regulation.

The final orthopathy process is empowering groups to seek out and address fears which are causing anxiety. This acknowledges both fear and anxiety and accepts them while simultaneously seeking to release them. “Anxiety, our most core emotion, breaks

⁷³ Perry and Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*, 312.

attachment. Tells us there's a place inside where Christ doesn't reign."⁷⁴ As women share space in groups, fear and anxiety are bound to rise at some point. If they are not named, processed, and released, they will damage the group (rendering it ineffective) or destroy it (leading to disbandment). Fostering symbolic language may be helpful here as well. If the orchestra (the group as a whole) feels *out of tune* or feels incomplete because a member is missing or holding back, then these acknowledgements can provide a soft entry for discussion. Often when fears, such as fear of judgment, are verbalized, groups find the fear is shared. The shared fear can be processed and may actually serve as a point of deeper relational connection.

Orthopraxy Ministry Principle: Unity and Equity in Christ. Both Paul and Jesus himself prayed for the unity of all believers; Paul wanted our unity to glorify God, and Jesus wanted it to demonstrate both his place as the Son and God's love for believers.⁷⁵ They clearly affirm that unity is a gift from God; a sign of his grace. To foster this unity, believers are all given the same Spirit, for the benefit of creation.⁷⁶ This indwelling of the Holy Spirit unites believers into one body.⁷⁷ Within this body, regardless of the believer's function, equity under Christ is granted, so that "the members may have mutual concern for one another."⁷⁸ So that "if one member suffers, everyone

⁷⁴ MaryKate Morse, "Transformation Principles and Processes" (presented at the Portland Seminary DMIN LSF3 Fall Retreat, Cannon Beach, Oregon, Fall 2018).

⁷⁵ Romans 15:5-6; John 17:20-23.

⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:1-7.

⁷⁷ Ibid., v13-14.

⁷⁸ Ibid., v22-25.

suffers with it. If a member is honored, all rejoice with it.”⁷⁹ The unity of the body teaches us to “carry one another’s burdens” and to “not compare [ourselves] with someone else.”⁸⁰ The equity of the body teaches us that “each one will carry his own load.”⁸¹

The first orthopraxy process is to protect equal access to power and opportunities for others to lead. “Power is God’s gift,” and should be held in unity and equity.⁸² “Power is exercised any time a person in a group attempts to influence, perhaps through an opinion, suggestion, passionate plea, rational presentation or the use of his or her body to take up space.”⁸³ All group members must be provided the access to engage in these behaviors, as the structure of cross-affinity groups provide opportunity. By encouraging all the women to share their insights from Scripture reading and to rotate who leads the Scripture portion, power is shared. By allowing all the women to pray and share their stories, equity is expressed. As the group shares power with each other, they demonstrate God’s kingdom which “manifests the power to bless, unburden, serve, heal, mend, restore, and liberate.”⁸⁴

The second orthopraxy process is to connect women with healthy group approaches and methods that focus on the work of transformation. There are three

⁷⁹ Ibid., v26.

⁸⁰ Galatians 6:2-4.

⁸¹ Ibid., v5.

⁸² MaryKate Morse, *Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space and Influence* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 58.

⁸³ Ibid., 147.

⁸⁴ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 193.

approaches to community life of great importance to the health of cross-affinity groups. The first is the willingness of the wives to be authentically vulnerable. The more deeply and authentically women share, the more formative the group. Deep sharing occurs in progression with a receptive audience who listens without judgment and confrontation. The method is: Share openly; receive lovingly. The second approach expounds on what it means to receive lovingly. In order for women to both grow personally and develop relationships socially, boundaries must be set. The method is: Practice ARK (Ask open-ended or clarifying questions. Reflect before speaking. Keep advice unless directly requested.). The third approach is one of humility. Humility fosters the group's connection to the power of the Spirit and reminds them it is God who is doing the heavy lifting of transformation as they present themselves in unity and equity before him. The method is prayer. When the group anchors each gathering in prayer, through unity and equity, a posture of humility is maintained.

The final process is to enquire and observe to identify the adaptive challenges and needs of the community for development and growth. Adaptive change requires a feedback loop of evaluation and adaptation. In unity and equity, each person's view and feedback are valuable. Pastors Ken and Deb Lloyd emphasize this focus on enquiry by asking people an ongoing simple question, "What do you need?"⁸⁵ They noted that through both answers to that question and personal observations, people will "tell us who we need to be for them."⁸⁶ Well-rounded enquiry requires open curiosity; even so, getting

⁸⁵ Ken Lloyd and Deb Lloyd, "Transformational Change" (presented at the Portland Seminary DMIN LSF3 Fall Retreat 2018, Cannon Beach, Oregon, October 2018).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

to the needed questions is no easy task. Bernie Roth tells a story about a woman who asks, “How can I find a spouse?” Bernie replies, “How do you benefit if you get a spouse?” The woman goes on to explain that she would then have companionship. Bernie then reframes the question to be, “How might you find companionship?” The answers to this question were wide-ranging for the woman. She now had multiple avenues for finding companionship instead of the one quest for a spouse: meet friends online, take classes, get a pet, join a club, etc. Yet it took Bernie reframing the situation and asking a different question to open the woman’s horizons. Fruitful enquiry is necessary and not as easy as it might appear on the surface.

An old riddle depicts how questions can limit one’s thinking, when presented with a vast array of information.

As I was going to St. Ives
 I met a man with seven wives
 Every wife had seven sacks
 Every sack had seven cats
 Every cat had seven kits
 Kits, cats, sacks, and wives,
 How many were going to St. Ives?

The puzzle is fashioned to conceal the gap in the listener’s knowledge. How many were going to St. Ives? yields an answer only by sweeping past the question crouching behind it – Where is everyone going? That question is unanswerable – and so it is rendered unthinkable.⁸⁷

(The answer, by the way, is one. Only the narrator of the riddle is known to be bound for St. Ives.) When enquiring about needs of a community, of any size, there is a basic truth at play: “The questions we ask change the world we see.”⁸⁸ A ministry’s questions, as

⁸⁷ Lewis et al., *General Theory*, chap. 2, sec. 1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

well, may conceal its knowledge gap and fail to get at the heart of what people are really looking for. Yet questions are crucial for cross-affinity group health. These questions help leaders discern what is not working and where there is conflict. Enquiry into the groups may be made every six or twelve months when they re-covenant or disband. The survey would focus on behaviors and be returned directly to JPM staff. Survey questions may include, but not be limited to:

How often did you engage in telling a personal story or sharing your feelings?

How often was silence kept in the group? How did you feel about it?

Did the silence feel like enough, too much, too little?

How often did an orchestra member pray for you? How did you feel afterwards?

If the conductor had to bring a member back on track during a gathering, how did you feel about that?

Could the conductor have done something more helpful? What?

How could you work to make your orchestra healthier?

JPM leaders could then review the surveys with the conductor to provide “deliberate practice with clear feedback.”⁸⁹ Additionally, the surveys may be used to grow or enhance JPM practices.

Structure: Group Covenant

A group’s individualized covenant provides for and binds the structure and language of the group. The covenant supports the following structural components:

⁸⁹ Grenny et al., *Influencer*, 129.

demographics, size, frequency and duration, location, leadership, group traits and practices, group stage, reconciliation process, and renewal procedures.

Cross-affinity groups are open to women married to ministers of all Protestant faith traditions. There is no required fee for participation, which allows participation of clergy wives from all socio-economic levels and churches of all sizes and stages of development. (Of course, JPM welcomes and appreciates those members whom God leads to give.) All races, ethnicities, cultures, and geographic locations are welcome. This diverse composition of the social support network of a cross-affinity group creates greater resiliency for each member.⁹⁰ Groups must have at least three members but no more than six. If a group of five or six finds that the gathering duration is too long with that number, the group is encouraged to form a second group. Group size is steady, since the groups are closed, in that wives do not bring visitors to group gatherings. If a woman feels the Spirit leading her to invite another woman, she must discuss it with the group. If the group is open to adding another member, then the group begins the process of adding another member (discussed below).

Groups will gather every two to three weeks for one to two hours, or any determination in between. The groups agree to what meets their needs and includes that in their covenant. The time should be set in the covenant and kept consistently, with formal adjustments being made if necessary. The pace of the gathering must be maintained to employ all three group practices. If the group is unable to complete all

⁹⁰ Shawn Achor, *Big Potential: How Transforming the Pursuit of Success Raises Our Achievement, Happiness, and Well-Being* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2018), 75, Kindle. If a woman cannot find comfort and security within a certain group, for whatever reason, JPM encourages her to seek/create a group elsewhere with other women.

three practices within the covenanted time, then either the pace must be more disciplined or the duration must be formally extended. Gatherings must always occur within private, safe places where confidentiality may be kept and all emotions may be expressed.

A group leader is called a conductor; in orchestral terms, a *conductor* is “one who directs a group of performers. The conductor indicates the tempo, phrasing, dynamics, and style by gestures and facial expressions.”⁹¹ In this case, the performers are group members, and the conductor additionally utilizes words. The conductor, as is each JPM leader at every level, is encouraged and equipped to function as a servant leader who models herself after Jesus. These servant leaders lead from, through, and to Jesus by the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit in surrender to and cooperation with God’s kingdom plan of redemption and reconciliation.⁹² They embody the servant attitude of Jesus by placing emphasis on humility and caring service, not grasping for selfish desires or prestige.⁹³ They are instruments of ethical adaptive change for those they serve, seeking all to be built up in love towards the ideal of Christ.⁹⁴ Additionally, the conductor is serving in a peer-to-peer situation in unity and equity, seeking transformative change herself. Conductors are called to leadership as here defined as “a relationship process” among Christ, the Spirit, the servant-leader, and those being served as they continually

⁹¹ *Glossary of Musical Terms*, <http://www.classicalworks.com/html/glossary.html>.

⁹² Romans 11:36, 12:2; Ephesians 1:13-17, 3:15; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:13; 2 Timothy 1:7. For more on God’s kingdom see Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 86-87.

⁹³ Philippians 2:5-8.

⁹⁴ Ephesians 4:15; Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005), 52.

grow into God's kingdom purposes for all creation where leaders model themselves after Jesus.⁹⁵ Servant leaders seek to model Jesus specifically in the following ways:

1. Embody "God's word of love" through a non-anxious, faithful presence.⁹⁶
2. Prioritize integrity of self, accountability with others, and prayer.⁹⁷
3. Model and encourage others in Christocentric soul and self-care.⁹⁸

By modeling Jesus, the leader has already begun the transformation of adaptive change. "By the nature of bringing Christ, we necessarily bring change. More Christ equals more change."⁹⁹

Group traits are named in and supported by the covenant. Hospitality and fidelity are crucial for a healthy cross-affinity group. Hospitality is not just about welcoming strangers outside of a community, it is about welcoming each other within community as internal relationships are strengthened.¹⁰⁰ It is not just about coffee and donuts; it taps "into deep human longings to belong, find a place to share one's gifts, and be valued."¹⁰¹ Women married to ministers find a deep place of belonging in these groups. They share their gifts as the conductor leads, as members rotate leading practices, and as women share spiritual insights. However, cross-affinity hospitality recognizes the woman's very

⁹⁵ MaryKate Morse, "Servant Leadership" (presented at the Portland Seminary Sprint Retreat 2018, Cannon Beach, Oregon, February 2018).

⁹⁶ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 241; Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 252.

⁹⁷ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2015), 268.

⁹⁸ Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 271; Agosto, *Servant Leadership*, 202.

⁹⁹ Morse, "Transformation Principles and Processes."

¹⁰⁰ 1 Peter 4:8-11; Pohl, *Living Into Community*, chap. 11, sec. 1.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

self as a gift to be received, respected, and treasured. As she shares stories of her life, the revelation of herself is a gift received by the group, with gratitude being shown through deep knowing of each other. Christine Pohl explains some necessary components of enduring hospitality:

To sustain hospitality over the long term, our gratitude needs to be cultivated in response to the love and grace of God. Fidelity, truthfulness, and gratitude make space for the practice of hospitality. Communities of hospitality also learn how important it is to set aside time for rest and renewal.

Fidelity is a foundational group trait, as women need to feel that all the members in the group have their best interest at heart. As such, confidentiality will be kept, gatherings attended, and criticism will have no place. However, groups understand that time away is sometimes necessary. Groups may schedule times when gatherings are temporarily suspended, such as in the summer, after childbirth, during a child's wedding preparations, etc. The group may still keep in touch via text or email, but the gatherings themselves would be suspended. All of these temporary shifts would be noted with dates in an updated covenant, so that the promise-keeping of returning to regular meetings will have accountability and can be celebrated. As part of the general accountability, the three group practices are described in the covenant and will be discussed in detail in the next section of this chapter.

The stage of a group is noted in the covenant, including any shifts in the group's stage. Groups are described as orchestras; when a group is first formed, it is considered a *chamber orchestra*. In chamber phase, the group takes six to eight meetings of exploration. The chamber phase is covenanted, includes the three practices in each gathering, and includes: an introductory meeting where the covenant is discussed and general introductions are made, meetings where each member individually shares her

life-story (starting with the conductor), and then two or three meetings of the regular rhythm of the three practices. Thus, the number of meetings in the chamber phase depends on the total number of members. After the chamber phase, members decide whether they want to extend their covenant to six or twelve months, creating a *symphony orchestra*, or if they want to disband and try again with a different mix of women. Either option is absolutely acceptable, as the chemistry and dynamics of the groups must provide for each woman's comfort. If a group decides to expand their symphony orchestra to include a new member, the group shifts back to a chamber orchestra with an adjusted covenant. The entire chamber process begins anew with the new member.

Reconciliation is part of the covenant. Reconciliation may need to be explored through truthfulness, confession, and forgiveness for any breach of covenant. Perhaps a member begins to repeatedly miss gatherings or is struggling with hospitality by dominating conversations or giving unsolicited advice; these would be covenant breaches which would need to be brought to the erring member's attention. Otherwise, the group risks unhealthy dysfunction or disbandment. The reconciliation process can actually lead to deeper conversations and relationship strengthening, regardless of how difficult it may seem in the beginning. Grace dominates the reconciliation process, and all members agree to the process when they agree to the orchestra covenant. There may be times when a breach is painful enough that, while reconciliation occurs, a member may still want to move on to another group. The transition to a new group is completely understandable, particularly in cases of a breach of confidentiality. However, the healthy practice is for reconciliation to be sought even if membership is to be transferred.

Renewal occurs every six to twelve months, depending upon the orchestra's agreed length of time. (JPM generally recommends a twelve-month covenant for symphony orchestras.) At renewal time, the group may renew its current covenant, adjust the covenant, or disband. Covenant adjustments may include extending the covenant time from six to twelve months, shifting to chamber stage to welcome a new member, changing the gathering schedule or location, etc. Covenant disbandment may be due to relocations, the need for an orchestra to split and form two new orchestras, or perhaps the desire to create additional relationships in other new orchestras, etc. During renewal, five events occur:

1. Promise-keeping for the previous covenant is celebrated (as discussed in chapter four), perhaps with a social gathering, retreat, community service project etc.
2. Covenant is reviewed, adjusted if necessary, renewed, or disbanded (the orchestra communicates the outcome to JPM)
3. Feedback is provided to JPM in respect to the previous year (reflections of the flow and progress of the group are communicated to provide a beneficial feedback loop for the health of the group, questions vary based on the longevity of the group with an eye toward gauging growth and development)
4. Life-stories are told annually (with the hope of sharing more deeply and broadly with each renewal)
5. Embodied role of pastor's wife is reviewed and shared annually

With each renewal comes an opportunity for members to share, once again, their life-stories. The hope is that women will use some of these renewal events as an opportunity to engage in solitude practices focused on her life-story. There are several spiritual formation techniques, which are resourced by JPM, to aid the women in delving into their life-stories as a means of self-exploration/development and spiritual exploration/transformation. The hope is that the women will get to know themselves,

each other, and God more intimately through these life-story events. Additionally, women are encouraged to use some of these renewal events as opportunities to re-evaluate their embodied role as a clergy wife, as was discussed earlier in this chapter. The insights gained during these two methods of solitude may be shared with the orchestra. The sharing, especially of the embodied role, serves to give voice to members' internal processing. The orchestra is there, not to judge or compare, but to receive, bear witness, and encourage. Perhaps members may even receive insights or be inspired by each other. This deep, intimate unity within diversity is what Jesus prayed for in John 17:23 and what bears such a profound witness to the love of God.

Practices: Scripture, Prayer, Sharing

Orchestras, both chamber and symphony, engage in three main practices (*play a sonata*) at each gathering. The *sonata movements* are Scripture, prayer, and sharing. The movements may be played in varying order, as the Spirit directs. Yet the sonata for a gathering is not complete until all three movements have been played.

Transformational Scripture engagement is led by members in rotation, as they engage with unity and equity. This Scripture movement is not didactic or informational. It is a time when members gather around the living word of God and invite the Spirit to move through the Scripture in transforming them individually and binding them communally. It is the love, grace, and power of God's word that equips and empowers members to walk in the orchestra traits of hospitality and fidelity. The Word reminds members of the holy task at hand and the call to be Christ centered. It is the Spirit through the Word that softens hearts to be authentically vulnerable and prepares members to be receptive and to hold the safe space. The leading member chooses the Scripture and

method. However, all members share their personal insights. This allows members to learn and be inspired by each other, as the Spirit moves. Because of Scripture's power to set the tone and anchor the orchestra, JPM generally recommends that it be the first movement of the sonata, with the exception of adding a centering prayer to begin the gathering.

Prayer is another sonata movement. It may be played multiple times by an orchestra in a single gathering. For example, the gathering may open in centering prayer, a member may want to offer or receive specific prayer immediately after a sharing movement, and the gathering may end in communal prayer where members and communities alike receive prayer. This movement is a fluid one, but it still must be held in hospitality. With differing denominations present, it is important that members discuss what types of prayer they are comfortable with. As Paul instructs believers in the area of food in 1 Corinthians 8:8-13, we may apply that teaching to an orchestra's prayer. If a group is not edified by praying in tongues, then the member who does pray in tongues may refrain during orchestra gatherings. Not that God does not commend it but for the sake of hospitality to the other members. Likewise, if members pray with beads or prayer books, save for one member, then perhaps the orchestra agrees to a compromise of usage that does not create an obstacle for the single member. Truthfulness and hospitality are group traits that must be fully expressed while discussing prayer. Truthfulness is also to be expressed during prayer, so that members may feel free to pray in a safe, conversational posture without adding any overly religious language or overtones. Silence and emotional expression are invited and welcomed during prayer. Since a sonata

is not complete without prayer, the conductor must pace the orchestra to ensure that the movement of prayer is played.

Sharing completes the sonata movements. The sharing movement is played by each orchestra member at each gathering. During the chamber orchestra stage, members may engage in very brief sharing in order to appropriate the largest amount of sharing time to the member offering her life-story for that gathering. During the symphony orchestra stage, each member should be appropriated generally equal amounts of time to share from their lives as the Spirit leads. This may be current life events or struggles, church or faith issues, family or personal conflicts, disturbing dreams, recurring pain of the past, etc. In response to this sharing, members engage in loving reception, grace, acceptance, silence, cool system thinking and ARK (as discussed earlier in the Environment section). Orchestras are not a place to be “fixed,” they are a place to share and receive in a spiritual formation community. Members may certainly ask other members for their perspectives; responses may include words of experience or encouragement, Scripture references, or the invitation for a member to consider seeking deeper mentoring through a spiritual director or counselor.

In sharing, women married to ministers may choose to reveal their husband’s church or not. Especially in the early life of an orchestra, a woman may not feel safe enough yet to disclose that information. All levels of sharing are acceptable. Some pastor’s wives’ groups, as noted earlier in chapter four, do not even feel the need to divulge their faith tradition. After all, the point is not to have theological discussions over doctrine. Nevertheless, denominations have differing marks which may become apparent; therefore, humility, sensitivity, and hospitality are to be graced among all with the goal of

openly addressing any conflict that may arise. As women gather into orchestras, either in person or via video conferencing, they may choose to divulge their home churches as the level of trust rises and relationships deepen. However, it is not necessary in the beginning. Some women desire a geographic, personal connection where their home churches may even unite to engage in community ministry together. However, some women have a desire to remain anonymous and interact with a group that is more geographically diverse through video conferencing. The women are encouraged to seek what is fulfilling and meets their desires and needs at the time.

The sharing movement is a way for clergy wives to unburden themselves in a safe community that, through their role affinity, can empathize with their complex situation.

Hileman helps to explain their situation:

...an ordained pastor and pastoral counselor in Siler City, North Carolina, says that clergy wives are the angriest people he sees. They cannot talk to members of the congregation or others in the community because what they say may get back to the congregation. They cannot talk to denominational officials because they fear it will affect their spouse's chances for advancement. Pastor's spouses may also not feel free to communicate their feelings to the pastor. They may be reluctant to burden an already overburdened pastor, and the pastor may be reluctant to acknowledge the spouses' dissatisfaction. ...pastors often have a difficult time relating to their spouses' struggles because they themselves feel a sense of satisfaction from the ministry and may not understand the spouses' negative feelings. The author's [Hileman's] husband, a United Methodist pastor and marriage and family therapist, believes that a larger, more hidden issue may be that the pastor does not want to admit the spouse is suffering because of the pastor's job. He or she may fear being pressured to leave the ministry.¹⁰²

When pastors' wives face issues of doubt, crisis of faith, marriage conflict, extended family conflict, congregational conflict, stress in managing role expectations, financial distress, depression, burn-out, etc., they have few outlets to process such life events. In

¹⁰² Hileman, "Unique Needs," 124-125.

some situations, the orchestra member may be vocalizing issues for the first time, having previously only circled the thoughts around in her head. With all this in mind, the environment of the gathering is important to allow clergy wives to process their life and faith journeys and to create enough space and safety to allow authentic vulnerability. The majority of clergy wives express a dynamic paradox of the clergy wife role: blessing and woe. Most wives are open about how God has used the role to bless them. However, they are not provided a safe space to express the woes as well. Orchestra members understand this paradox; they understand that a pastor's wife needs to unburden stresses about the role while still desiring to be in the role. In fact, as the research cited in this paper has indicated, when wives are able to express the woes of the role, they thrive evermore deeply in the blessings of the role. Kay Warren explains how important she believes sharing is for pastors' wives:

Friendship is crucial. Because I think the only thing that keeps us from trying to walk on water, from trying to live as a perfectionist, and from trying to please everyone is to know and be known, and the only way you can know and be known is in relationships. Is in friendships.¹⁰³

In cross-affinity groups pastors' wives can know and be fully known across all the roles and subject matter of their lives without reservation.

When the orchestra shares, relationships develop, social support networks are created, and interpersonal isolation diminishes, along with its negative impacts, which were noted in chapter one. Because members have created mutually satisfying relationships, their loneliness is diminished and well-being rises, along with all the vital

¹⁰³ Kay Warren, "Pastors' Wives Q&A," Facebook Live, Kay Warren YouTube Channel, April 4, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTXuWmtM2Z8>, Pastor's Wives Q&A, Facebook Live.

benefits of well-being noted in chapter four. These relationships are what Shawn Achor describes as reciprocal bonds, which are more fruitful and have greater impacts on our happiness, engagement, and creativity.¹⁰⁴ Reciprocal bonds foster psychological safety, which is defined by Amy Edmondson as a shared belief that the community is “safe for interpersonal risk-taking” and that the community will not “embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up.”¹⁰⁵ Psychological safety is crucial for a healthy cross-affinity group to create healthy and lasting social connections. When that occurs, levels of well-being and psychological capital each rise.

Conclusion

As chapter two demonstrates, the role of pastor’s wife is indeed an actual role in churches in the United States. The question women must answer is, how do I believe God is inviting me to live this embodied role? The answer to that question may fall anywhere on an involvement spectrum from a partnership model to an independent model. Regardless of how a woman embodies her role, the majority of pastors’ wives face the stressors of interpersonal loneliness, a struggle to find confidants, and challenges creating spiritual community wherein they can be authentically vulnerable. Chapter one certainly unpacks the various obstacles these women face in embracing their embodied role, such as isolation, emotional pain, and stress and anxiety that negatively impact their spirituality and overall quality of life. These negative impacts may be categorized and seen across three systems: self, family, and church. Amid the many rewards of the role,

¹⁰⁴ Achor, *Big Potential*, 80-81.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

women must find ways to cope with these negative impacts or endure ongoing suffering from them.

Remember Eve, from chapter one's introduction? In her love of the Lord, her husband, family, and church, she still wrestled with the many stressors of the role and struggled to find answers to these questions: Whom could she talk to? Who would understand?

Indeed, how can women like Eve, pastors' wives everywhere, deepen their spirituality and thrive as they navigate the challenges of their role? An SFM is one solution. Chapter three unpacks the theological and biblical foundations for this solution geared toward the needs of pastors' wives – a model that creates an optimal environment for spiritual growth and leads to an increased quality of life. Necessary to this SFM are individual spiritual practices, cross-affinity spiritual formation small groups, and the continued exploration of a woman's embodied role as a pastor's wife. Chapter four details some of research's best practices concerning such small groups.

Here in chapter five, specific application is developed for the use by JPM in serving women married to ministers – from resourcing to facilitating. Specifically, a framework for the facilitation of cross-affinity spiritual formation community has been developed based on the three major components of environment, structure, and practices. Clergy wives who engage in this model, as facilitated by JPM, develop a deeper spirituality, a strong social support system, better psycho-emotional well-being, and build immunity to stress.

Ministry Challenges

Certainly, JPM faces some ministry challenges. Asking women, most of whom are already overburdened and overscheduled, to carve out time to engage in an SFM can seem daunting. However, the proven fruitfulness of cross-affinity groups may help women believe it is worth the endeavor. Still, just communicating that alone can be difficult, since accessing pastors' wives can be problematic. It is often difficult to communicate with them via their pastor-husband's church and, unless faith traditions are advocates, it can be difficult to provide them with JPM's resources. Fortunately for JPM, we are ministry co-workers with Barnabas Ministries, Inc. who facilitate John 17:23 pastoral support groups for both men and women. Through their male pastor group members, JPM can communicate ministry offerings to the wives. This co-working of ministry will be sought from other organizations as well.

There is a need for JPM to help women overcome the fear of a cross-affinity group or perhaps even of terms such as spiritual formation. We hope that personal testimonies and the ethos of the ministry as a whole will provide some level of comfort. At the end of the day, there is simply a level of risk involved where women must trust God and each other, which JPM presents with honesty. Also, JPM employs alternative phrases such as soul care in lieu of spiritual formation, which is a softer entry for some traditions and geographical areas.

Garnering the support of denominations, seminaries, Bible colleges, and congregations will greatly impact JPM's ability to serve a larger number of women. This paper asserts that these leadership bodies hold some responsibility for the state of the pastorate family, and JPM will seek to support them as they serve those families. These

leadership bodies hold influence and can do much to encourage and direct women toward resources such as JPM.

Area Needs and Suggested Further Research

A deep need exists for greater dialogue and cooperation between Protestant faith traditions in serving pastorate families, including pastors' wives. Denominations could encourage and train women for cross-affinity groups and share resources for individual spiritual practices, perhaps co-hosting events. Additionally, there is a need for a greater number of professionally trained ministry personnel and ministries serving and equipping pastor's wives. They are a vital part of the pastorate and church; they both deserve and require skilled and competent resourcing directed to their unique needs. Finally, there is a need for earlier and broader role preparation for pastor's wives via seminaries and Bible colleges in the areas of individual spiritual practices, cross-affinity spiritual formation small groups, and exploration of a woman's embodied role as a pastor's wife, which are the three anchors of this SFM. These institutions would serve women well by offering them workshops and extended clinics in these areas. Additionally, these institutions would serve the pastorate family well by preparing pastor-husbands with a foundational understanding of the stressors and challenges of the role of pastor's wife.

Further research of clergy wives in all areas is needed, especially as the contemporary culture and church landscape continue to quickly change. Some specific recommendations follow. Research data targeted to younger wives in the first five years of ministry is greatly needed in order to help tailor resources to meet their needs. Especially needed is a longitudinal study of younger wives as they move through the seasons of ministry life. Vital to a longitudinal study would be the examination of coping

mechanisms utilized by women and the efficacy of such methods. Along these lines, an in-depth cross-denominational ethnography study of clergy wives in the various seasons of life – pre-children, young children, teenagers, empty nest – is needed to adequately assess the needs of these seasons, in order to provide supportive ministry. The ethnography type study, as opposed to a survey questionnaire, may reveal currently unrecognized trends in both need and effective coping methods. Finally, as difficult as it may be to do so, a wealth of information would be gained by surveying women whose pastor-husbands have left the ministry or who have divorced their pastor-husbands. Denominational “exit interviews” could provide an avenue for collecting this data. This data would provide a better understanding of the breakdown of the ministry and or marriage relationships, aiding not only denominations and seminaries in assessing needs to address with training but also support workers to engage in more effective preventative and restorative care.

Closing Remarks Towards Hope, Advocacy, and the Witness of the Body

Seen-
 that knowledge will bring Naming,
 Understood-
 that connection will bring Vision,
 Appreciated-
 that caring will bring Generosity,
 Valued-
 that action will bring Transformation.

The words of this poem express the hopes of this paper for all the women striving to follow Jesus in their embodied role as pastor’s wife. I hope this work serves as a tool to help wives better understand the dynamics of their role, encourage them to dispel isolation through action and time spent in intimacy with one another, and be deeply

formed by the power of the Holy Spirit. I hope pastor-husbands and family members gain a clearer more informed perspective on the struggles of the role and how to better support their wives/family members.

May this paper advocate for pastors' wives and prompt leaders of ministry bodies such as denominations, seminaries, and Bible colleges to recognize their responsibility to these women as part of the pastorate family and to take steps to prepare and support them – understanding that a supported healthy pastorate family fosters a healthy church and provides both stability and longevity within the ministry. May congregations support these women in the spirit of Hebrews 13:17, that both the wives and congregants may find joy in their church work. May counselors, mentors, life coaches, and others serving pastors' wives have resources to better understand and support these women. May this work inspire new ministries to be created and current ministries to broaden and deepen their service to clergy wives.

May the witness of the body of Christ be strengthened as women engaging in this SFM set an example to their churches in the areas of self and soul care, that others would carry on the apostolic tradition of imitating them. As these women bear the spiritual fruit of this SFM, may nonbelievers be drawn to their presence and meet Jesus through them. That in the authentic holistic thriving of these women, their witness for Christ may be strong and life in him seen as beautiful with a light yoke, in the face of a heavily burdened fallen world. The final aim of this work is that lives may be continually transformed by and for the sake of the gospel, that God's kingdom be advanced and deepened, and that we workers of the Word would continue to build up the body of Christ until his blessed return.

APPENDIX A:
SPIRITUAL FORMATION MODEL OVERVIEW OF PRINCIPLES AND
PROCESSES

Table A.1 Spiritual formation model overview of principles and processes

	Orthodoxy ¹	Orthopathy	Orthopraxy
Principles			
	The Gospel of the kingdom	Acceptance and longing in Christ	Solitude and community
	The tension between the already and not yet of God's kingdom	The tension between full acceptance in the Beloved and a longing to be more Christlike	The tension of creating a rhythm of life between solitary prayer and work in a group ²
Processes			
Surrender: We release ourselves to grace where the Spirit forms us ³	Re-orient thinking through biblical study of kingdom values and behaviors ⁴	Learn to identify, name, experience and discuss the full range of emotions, secure in Christ's love to accept us amid all that we feel; learn to	Create guarded time alone with the triune God: regularly in a dedicated space, practice such disciplines as silent meditation, contemplative prayer and Lectio Divina, Sabbath, engage inner

¹ Including orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxy principles allows one to focus on development holistically, without reducing a model to legalism. The goal of the *what we do* is about *who we become*, not how many boxes we can check on a spiritual list.

² Sittser, *Deep Well*, chap. 4. The two primary duties of monastic life, prayer and work, can be seen as focusing on the two foundational relationships. Prayer strengthens our relationship with Christ. Work strengthens our relationship with community. "The rhythm that a good rule establishes helps us maintain our spiritual focus." Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 91. A rhythm of life may also be called a rule of life.

³ Dallas Willard, "Spiritual Formation," 54.

⁴ Romans 12:1-2; "Biblical fidelity..." Biblical knowledge is necessary but not sufficient, "for the goal of the Christian life is not knowledge *about* God but the knowledge *of* God and union *with* God. Thus mystics remind us that true knowledge of God is not like any other kind of knowledge." Sittser, *Deep Well*, 20, 55.

		free others to do the same ⁵	excavation as led by the Spirit, etc. ⁶
Intention: We exert our will to engage in practices and serve as Jesus did ⁷	Frame suffering as a shadow of this world that falls on everyone through deep sharing of ourselves and active listening of others' stories ⁸	Follow the Spirit's equipping and empowering to differentiate between what emotions come from God versus our brokenness ⁹	Humble oneself to others: seek individual, spiritual guidance and feedback from others such as colleagues, mentors, pastors, spiritual directors, counselors, etc. ¹⁰
	Define embodied role by continuously interacting with: God's calling, gifting, season of	Resist the temptation to bury or defend our brokenness, instead submit to Christ's transformative	Engage in Christian community, both worshiping and formative small group, where wives mature spiritually and emotionally: display their growing spiritual

⁵ MaryKate Morse, "Transformation Principles and Processes" (presented at the Portland Seminary DMIN LSF3 Fall Retreat, Cannon Beach, Oregon, Fall 2018); 1 Peter 5:14.

⁶ Psalm 62:1-2. Lectio Divina aides in avoiding an aspect of *gnosticism*, a heresy stating godly knowledge is kept secret and not available to everyone; intimacy with God aides in avoiding an aspect of *legalism*, a heresy where rule keeping overrides relationship. "Protestantism is sometimes guilty of confining life with God to cerebral operations: preaching and hearing the Word, analytical Bible study and so on. But life in the Word can be enriched considerably through visual (postures, gestures and dance), or factory (incense and candles) and tactile (beads and anointing oil) routes." Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 59. Contemplative prayer is "a discipline we practice; it is a gift we receive. Such prayers – wordless, silent, patient, confident, secured – will empty us and fill us, break us and restore us, plunge us into the darkness and then draw us into the light, separate us from God as we know him through creation so that we can be united with God as we know him in Christ, and experience the union with him for which our souls truly long." Sittser, *Deep Well*, 185. In meditation we seek "communion and friendship with God for its own sake and for the sake of our souls." Davis, *Meditation and Communion with God*, 24; Christine Valters Paintner, *Lectio Divina-The Sacred Art: Transforming Words & Images into Heart-Centered Prayer* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2011), Kindle; Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).

⁷ "We are called not merely to imitate Jesus, nor simply to believe in him: we are called to follow Jesus, and that includes fully embracing by faith the reality of who he is and patterning our lives after him." Kapic, "Evangelical Holiness," 110.

⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:11. Reframing suffering aides in avoiding an aspect of *moralism* where one thinks all will be well if one is good and that when one is not good, bad things happen.

⁹ Morse, "Transformation Principles and Processes," slide 48.

¹⁰ Proverbs 15:22. Seeking counsel aides in avoiding an aspect of *gnosticism* called *escapism*, a heresy where one escapes from God and the world into self.

life, family, church, culture, etc.	work to be more like him as a lifelong, ongoing process	attributes, pray, manage themselves and learn to serve others well ¹¹
	Cultivate gratitude toward God, as an attitude toward living, and as a response to others ¹²	Sacrifice for the sake of the community: pray for others, seek Shalom for all, love and forgive their neighbor, empower and care for the poor and disenfranchised ¹³

¹¹ Peterson, *Christ Plays*, 226. Allowing and encouraging all small group members to pray aides in avoiding an aspect of *gnosticism* called *elitism*, a heresy where only a few are knowledgeable and able to engage. Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:29.

¹² Pohl, *Living Into Community*, chap. 2, sec. 1.

¹³ Randy Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 165, Kindle. Our community includes creation: "Today in our world the Scriptures continue to provide abundant evidence that the God of the Bible still desires that humans care for the earth. The pervasiveness of environmental degradation in our day bears witness to the need for this care. Two basic statements summarize this Christian viewpoint: (1) God is the Creator and sustainer of our world and (2) God has given human beings the privilege and responsibility of carefully managing it." Fred Van Dyke, *Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 15.

APPENDIX B:

ABBREVIATED LIST OF RESOURCES FOR PRACTICES OF SOLITUDE AND ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

Written Resources

John Jefferson Davis, *Meditation and Communion with God: Contemplating Scripture in an Age of Distraction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012).

Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).

Richard J Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009).

Richard J Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

Richard J Foster and James Bryan Smith, eds., *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*, Revised. (New York: HarperOne, 2005).

MaryKate Morse, *A Guidebook to Prayer: Twenty-Four Ways to Walk with God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013).

Henri J. M. Nouwen, Michael J. Christensen, and Rebecca J. Laird, *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit* (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2010), Kindle.

Christine Valters Paintner, *Lectio Divina the Sacred Art: Transforming Words & Images into Heart-Centered Prayer* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2011), Kindle.

Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson, *The Wisdom of the Enneagram: The Complete Guide to Psychological and Spiritual Growth for the Nine Personality Types* (New York: Bantam Books, 1999).

David Robinson, *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010).

Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006).

Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).

Erin M. Swenson-Reinhold, "The Dance of Formation: Engaging Faith Practices as a Way to Shape Clergy Spouse Life in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America"

(Doctor of Ministry Dissertation, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Paper 144, 2016):
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/144>.

Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

www.SacredSpace.ie

One-On-One Support

JourneyPartnerMinistries.org

CompanioningCenter.org

SacredSpaceVida.com

Cornerstone Counseling Center, CounselingMaryland.org (distance phone counseling available)

PastorCare.org (list of counselors offering price adjustments for clergy and families)

AbbeyOfTheArts.com

APPENDIX C:

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA SAMPLE COVENANT

JourneyPartnerMinistries.org
Chamber Orchestra Covenant

Name: “L.I.F.E” Orchestra

Members: Lydia, Isabella, Fran, Elizabeth

Promise

We, the members of this orchestra, commit ourselves to the following principles, practices, and standards. We ask the Lord’s help in keeping them, in confronting our sister if she beaks them, and for a receiving heart if we are confronted. We will ask for grace and forgiveness from God and our sisters if we break them. We invite our sisters to hold us accountable for the sake of this community and all that God will do through it.

Begin date: January 7, 2020 **Re-Covenant date:** April 21, 2020

Location: Lydia’s house **Re-Covenant celebration:** Amelie’s

Bakery

Time: 7:00pm – 8:15pm

Schedule: 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month

Conductor: Isabella, 555-444-1212, isabellac@somehwere.com

Culture of Transformation

Principles:

- We acknowledge the tension of our faith journey between God’s part of transforming us and our part of intentionally engaging in spiritual practices.
- We acknowledge our identity as children of God.
- We confess that we are accepted in the Beloved, even as we long to be more like Jesus.
- We commit to the practices of unity and equity, releasing competition and sharing group tasks.
- We commit to humility, hospitality, and fidelity.
- We commit to confidentiality. We seek to create a safe place where all that we share is kept strictly within the group, including from our husbands. We commit to asking permission to share something, if we feel the Holy Spirit leading us to do so.

Actions:

- We commit to speaking the truth in love and gentleness if our sister somehow hurts our feelings or we disagree; we commit to understanding and reconciliation through grace and forgiveness. We commit to being honest if the orchestra ever feels out of tune to us.
- We commit to authentic emotional expression of all we're feeling and to doing cool system practices and thinking. We understand we can use the instrument language at any time.
- We commit to silence as part of our practice. We understand it is not "dead air" that must be filled-up with words. We may ask for silence any time we need it.
- We commit to sharing openly and receiving lovingly. We seek to allow space for the Holy Spirit to work and lead each other individually, to allow the spiritual invitations of others to be valid, and to support them in exploring Jesus' invitations.
- We commit to ARK (Ask open-ended or clarifying questions. Reflect before speaking. Keep advice unless directly requested – refrain from "fixing" people.)
- We commit to creating space for everyone to be heard and known by giving each other the gift of presence, actively listening to receive and understand (rather than thinking of what to say in response) and allowing all to participate by giving others the time to think and process statements (rather than dominating the conversation ourselves).
- We commit to keeping our phones on vibrate and looking at/answering them only when absolutely necessary.

Structure

- We understand our group is closed. We will not bring visitors without discussing it with the entire orchestra.
- We commit to consistency in our attendance and to extending grace when someone is occasionally absent. We commit to notify our conductor when we are unable to attend.
- Chamber format:
 - Meeting 1: Introductions and Covenant Review
 - Meeting 2: Full Sonata for each meeting from now on (Conductor shares life-story during the sharing movement, she may also lead the Scripture movement or ask another member)
 - Middle Meetings: At each of the next meetings, each member takes a turn sharing her life-story during the sharing movement, after a brief update from each member.
 - Last 2-3 Meetings: Regular rhythm of sonata movements
- We commit to completing each sonata movement at each gathering.
- At the re-covenanting celebration, we commit to either disband or create a new symphony orchestra covenant.

Sonata Movements: Scripture, Prayer, Sharing

- We commit to transformational Scripture engagement, rotating the leading, and sharing our insights and reflections. We commit to keeping the length reasonable, so that the other sonata movements may be completed.
- We commit to praying in heartfelt tones for each other and our communities. We understand we may ask for prayer at any time. We commit to hospitality in prayer styles.
- We commit to sharing our life-story annually, to the depths we feel led by the Holy Spirit. We commit to sharing at each gathering about our life and faith journeys. We seek to create a safe space for sharing joys and struggles alike, without jealousy or judgement. We are invited to share about our faith, family, church, etc., knowing that all things are kept confidential. We receive all emotional expression with compassion.

Conductor Commitment

I understand the orchestra is peer-led. I commit to reminding us of this covenant, to reminding members of gathering times, and to organize Scripture sharing rotations. I commit to being responsible for the time and pacing of our gatherings. I commit to preparing a co-leader to assist and conduct in case of my absence. I commit to seeking help from JPM staff when needed. I commit to the following principles of servant leadership:

- Embody God's word of love through a non-anxious, faithful presence.
- Prioritize integrity of self, accountability with others, and prayer.
- Model and encourage others in Christocentric soul and self-care.

Any Individualized Covenant Additions

APPENDIX D:

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SAMPLE COVENANT

JourneyPartnerMinistries.org
Symphony Orchestra Covenant

Name: “E.V.E.R.Y.” Orchestra

Members: Eve, Vashti, Esther, Ruth, Yolanda

Promise

We, the members of this orchestra, commit ourselves to the following principles, practices, and standards. We ask the Lord’s help in keeping them, in confronting our sister if she beaks them, and for a receiving heart if we are confronted. We will ask for grace and forgiveness from God and our sisters if we break them. We invite our sisters to hold us accountable for the sake of this community and all that God will do through it.

Begin date: January 2, 2020 **Re-Covenant date:** January 14,
2021

Location: Video Conferencing **Re-Covenant celebration:** Peaceful
Waters Retreat Center

Time: 6:30 – 8:30pm

Schedule: Every three weeks, per agreed dates, Thursday nights

Conductor: Eve, 412-214-1111, eve1@somewhere.com

Culture of Transformation**Principles**

- We acknowledge the tension of our faith journey between God’s part of transforming us and our part of intentionally engaging in spiritual practices.
- We acknowledge our own identity as children of God.
- We confess that we are accepted in the Beloved, even as we long to be more like Jesus.
- We commit to the practices of unity and equity, releasing competition and sharing group tasks.
- We commit to humility, hospitality, and fidelity.
- We commit to confidentiality. We seek to create a safe place where all that we share is kept strictly within the group, including from our husbands. We commit

to asking permission to share something, if we feel the Holy Spirit leading us to do so.

Actions:

- We commit to speaking the truth in love and gentleness if our sister somehow hurts our feelings or we disagree; we commit to understanding and reconciliation through grace and forgiveness. We commit to being honest if the orchestra ever feels out of tune to us.
- We commit to authentic emotional expression of all we're feeling and to doing cool system practices and thinking. We understand we can use the instrument language at any time.
- We commit to silence as part of our practice. We understand it is not "dead air" that must be filled-up with words. We may ask for silence any time we need it.
- We commit to sharing openly and receiving lovingly. We seek to allow space for the Holy Spirit to work and lead each other individually, to allow the spiritual invitations of others to be valid, and to support them in exploring Jesus' invitations.
- We commit to ARK (Ask open-ended or clarifying questions. Reflect before speaking. Keep advice unless directly requested – refrain from "fixing" people.)
- We commit to creating space for everyone to be heard and known by giving each other the gift of presence, actively listening to receive and understand (rather than thinking of what to say in response) and allowing all to participate by giving others the time to think and process statements (rather than dominating the conversation ourselves).
- We commit to keeping our phones on vibrate and looking at/answering them only when absolutely necessary.

Structure

- We understand our group is closed. We will not bring visitors without discussing it with the entire orchestra.
- We commit to consistency in our attendance and to extending grace when someone is occasionally absent.
- We commit to completing each sonata movement at each gathering.
- At the re-covenanting celebration, we commit to the following:
 - either disband, renew, or modify our current covenant
 - complete and submit our annual JPM surveys
 - tell our life-stories; review and share our embodied role description and plan.

Sonata Movements: Scripture, Prayer, Sharing

- We commit to transformational Scripture engagement, rotating the leading, and sharing our insights and reflections. We commit to keeping the length reasonable, so that the other sonata movements may be completed.

- We commit to praying in heartfelt tones for each other and our communities. We understand we may ask for prayer at any time. We commit to hospitality in prayer styles.
- We commit to sharing our life-story annually, to the depths we feel led by the Holy Spirit. We commit to sharing at each gathering about our life and faith journeys. We seek to create a safe space for sharing joys and struggles alike, without jealousy or judgement. We are invited to share about our faith, family, church, etc., knowing that all things are kept confidential. We receive all emotional expression with compassion.

Conductor Commitment

I understand the orchestra is peer-led. I commit to reminding us of this covenant, to reminding members of gathering times, and to organize Scripture movement rotations. I commit to being responsible for the time and pacing of our gatherings. I commit to seeking help from JPM staff when needed. I commit to the following principles of servant leadership:

- Embody God's word of love through a non-anxious, faithful presence.
- Prioritize integrity of self, accountability with others, and prayer.
- Model and encourage others in Christocentric soul and self-care.

Any Individualized Covenant Additions

At the re-covenanting celebration, we seek to attend our annual face-to-face gathering at the Peaceful Waters Retreat Center. Ruth has volunteered to book rooms for January 14th and 15th. Transportation is on our own to coordinate. All meals are included, except we will go out for dinner one evening. Eve and Yolanda have agreed to put this year's schedule together to include sonata sessions, silent time together, and individual reflection time. Lydia will bring her guitar and lead some songs.

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