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Before You Burnout: Cultivating Sustainable Practices that Lead to Clergy Family Resilience

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

BEFORE YOU BURNOUT: CULTIVATING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
THAT LEAD TO CLERGY FAMILY RESILIENCE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

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DEDICATION

To those clergy families who give sacrificially of themselves to care for the needs of others.

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EPIGRAPH

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Mark 12:30-31

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PREFACE

My previous encounter with ministry burnout has prompted my interest in this research topic. While working excessive long hours as a consultant for a prominent Christian organization, I became completely exhausted. The combination of my inattentiveness to my self-care and soul care practices and the toxic work environment were the contributing factors to my burnout. I can recall myself saying, “This job is going to kill me!” Being overworked and overstressed had caused me to completely run out of fuel. As a result, I had felt shame because I had perceived that I had failed in my ministry.

Not having others to talk to who could relate to my struggles made this experience even more challenging for me. In addition, my spiritual well had become dry. Disillusionment and feeling abandonment by God had begun to creep in. I attempted to help myself by myself, but nothing seemed to work. In fact, my situation had only worsened including devastating effects on my loved ones. When I had finally decided to release control of my situation to God, He lovingly and graciously met me where I was in my brokenness by surrounding me with a network of support - a therapist, spiritual director, health professionals, and intimate friendships, which I needed during my healing and recovery process.

Indeed, my personal encounter with burnout was a painful journey for me and costly for my family. However, I am convinced that one does not survive from a near death experience without being transformed by it. God wastes nothing! As a result, he has placed within me a burden to care for other ministers and their families. Beauty has finally emerged for me out of these ashes (Isaiah 61:3). I have decided to take the hard

lessons that I have learned over the years to help reduce the occurrence of ministry burnout for others. As a wounded healer, I feel called to journey alongside of other ministry leaders. My hope is for God to use this literary contribution to help strengthen and encourage ministry leaders and their families.

ABSTRACT

While stress is inevitable in ministry leadership, excessive stress can lead to burnout. Pastors who experience burnout causes harmful effects on their loved ones. Burnout also contributes to health complications, spiritual dryness, marital dissatisfaction, and strained family relationships. Continuously ignoring early warning signs burnout can be harmful for pastors and their loved ones.

Focusing on the individual pastor is insufficient to inoculate the clergy family system from the devastating effects of burnout. In addition, their family members need to be cared for as well. It is proposed that clergy families would be able to thrive in ministry if they received training, support, and encouragement to help them to establish healthier ways to maintain their self-care, soul care, and family care practices.

This dissertation will evaluate clergy family functioning based on family systems theory. It will discuss the distinctions between normal family stress vs. excessive family stress by introducing a stress model that can be applied to help improve clergy family functioning. This dissertation will include a resilience model that is proposed to be an effective solution to this ministry problem with the focus on leader care (the pastor) and family care (the clergy family system). In particular, this training program features self-care, soul care, and family care practices to help cultivate clergy family resilience.

SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM

Introduction: A Story

Pastor Bob is fast approaching burnout. He serves as the lead pastor of a mid-size church in an urban setting. From a distance, he seems to be thriving based on numerical growth in his church but is having difficulty keeping up with heavy ministerial demands. His duties include preparing weekly sermons, planning the order of service, performing administrative duties, facilitating staff meetings, visiting the sick, conducting pastoral counseling sessions with individuals and couples, and responding to crisis situations. He feels guilty for wanting to take time off for rest and with no one else to talk to, Pastor Bob feels shame for his desire to quit. Even though he has not shared his struggles with his loved ones, they are all feeling his stress during their daily interactions with one another. At home, Pastor Bob appears to be emotionally unavailable and pre-occupied with his thoughts. His frequent and long periods of absence is causing tension to be built up in his marriage. Due to his excessive work hours, his wife is feeling lonely and neglected by her husband. She is often left alone to care for the needs of their household. Added to feeling constant pressure to be perfect, each of his two children feel sadness, fear, and confusion while wondering, “What’s happening to us?” “Will my parents stay together?” “Is my Dad going to be okay?”

The above story is indicative of many evangelical clergy and their loved ones. For this reason, my research claim is two-fold: burnout causes harm on ministry leaders and burnout causes harm on entire families. While this paper will primarily focus on clergy

family systems, it will later include a brief discussion on how larger organizational and societal systems affect the health of pastors as well.

My objective for this chapter is the following: First, to prove that there is an alarming rate of clergy who burnout or on the verge of burnout. Second, to prove how the occurrence of clergy burnout causes emotional harm on the ministry couples and their children. The result is pastors experiencing burnout symptoms such as chronic stress, negatively impact those they love, as well as themselves. It is important to mention that this dissertation examines the problem of burnout from the perspective of male clergy. As of this writing, there is insufficient data to report on burnout among female clergy.

Stress in Ministry Leadership

Gorman illustrates a compelling story about toxic stress in ministry leadership:

One of the saddest examples of not recognizing our limitations is that of Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision. When he started World Vision in 1950, Pierce gave 100 percent of himself all the time. His motto was ‘Burn out, don’t rust out.’ He also spent up to ten months of the year away from his family visiting various World Vision ministry sites. He made an agreement with God that if he took care of God’s ‘helpless little lambs overseas,’ then he would trust God to ‘take care of mine at home.’ In 1963 at the age of forty-nine, Pierce suffered extreme physical and emotional burnout from which he never recovered. Family and friends say this episode permanently changed his personality and made him much more emotionally volatile. His subsequent outbursts of anger led to a fierce disagreement with the World Vision board, which fired him as their CEO in 1967.¹

There are many reasons why evangelical pastors particularly deal with excessive stress in their work. Having such a hectic work schedule leaves pastors with little time for

¹ Joe Gorman, “Recognizing Our Limitations: The Wisdom of Self-Care,” in *Spiritual Formation: a Wesleyan Paradigm*, eds. Diane Leclerc and Mark Maddix (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2011), 131.

rest and family. Perhaps the greatest source of stress for pastors is their constant struggle with trying to find balance. Oswald argues, “How does one maintain balance in a job that demands so much of us?”² He urges pastors to consider following Jesus’ example: “Jesus chose kenosis rather than burnout...we do not need to be reduced to mush through burnout.”³ Similarly Holeman and Martyn affirm Jesus’ exemplary practice of effective boundary-making in ministry leadership⁴ by having an authentic self: “Jesus knew who he was, whose he was, and what he was about (John 13:1-5).”⁵ Pastors can benefit from maintaining a balance in ministry, developing an authentic self, and establishing effective boundaries in ministry leadership.

Theological and Biblical Considerations of Stress-Induced Suffering

When discussing the topic of suffering from a theological perspective, one must not fail to mention the sixteenth century well-known Doctor of the Catholic Church, mystic, and poet, St John of the Cross. Among his mystical writings is his poem entitled, *The Dark Night*. The following are excerpts included in his commentary based on his poem:

1. Souls begin to enter this dark night when God, gradually drawing them out of the state of beginners (those who practice meditation on the spiritual road), begins to place them in the state of proficient (those who are already contemplatives) so

² Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Family: Finding A Balance for Effective Ministry* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 1991), ix.

³ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴ Virginia T. Holeman and Stephen L. Martyn, *Inside the Leader’s Head: Unraveling Personal Obstacles to Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

that by passing through this state they might reach that of the perfect, which is the divine union of the souls with God.⁶

2. In the measure that the fire increases, the soul becomes aware of being attracted by the love of God and enkindled in it, without knowing how or where this attraction and love originates. At times, this flame and enkindling increases to such an extent that the soul desires God with urgent longings of love.⁷
3. People generally do not perceive this love in the beginning, but they experience rather the dryness and void...Then...in the midst of the dryness and emptiness of their faculties, harbor a habitual care and solicitude for God...A spirit in distress and solicitude for His love is a sacrifice most pleasing to God.⁸
4. Because the enkindling of love in the spirit sometimes increases exceedingly, their longings for God become so intense...They will feel that this is a living thirst, as David experienced when he proclaimed 'My soul thirsts for the living God' (Psalm 42:3).⁹
5. God introduces people into this night to purge their senses and accommodate, subject, and unite the lower part of their souls to the spiritual part by darkening it...in order to purify the spirit and unit it to Himself...As a result, they gain so many benefits...for it is because of this that the soul says it was a sheer grace to have passed through this night.¹⁰

The Dark Night of the Soul includes the perceived absence of God's presence.

Peterson also illustrates this concept in his description of the ancient period of Egyptian slavery of God's people as well as our modern-day Christian experience. He concludes, it is not uncommon for us to experience some difficult seasons in life with feelings of doubt and abandonment by God.¹¹ Many ministry leaders face challenging situations that leave them feeling disillusioned about the absence of God.

⁶ John of the Cross, "Dark Night of the Soul," in *John of the Cross: Selected Writings*, ed. Kieran Kavanaugh (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 163.

⁷ Ibid., 187.

⁸ Ibid., 187.

⁹ Ibid., 187.

¹⁰ Ibid., 188.

¹¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 153.

Another inspirational classic is written by a humble monk by the name of Brother Lawrence. Over 300 hundred years ago, this humble man penned his wisdom and spiritual insights on the art of “practicing the presence of God.”¹² His message has been captured through a collection of his letters and his conversations including the following:

1. We need to be faithful, even in dry periods. It is during those dry spells that God tests our love for Him. We should take advantage of those times to practice our determination and our surrender to Him. This will often bring us to a maturity further on in our walk with God.¹³
2. ...all spiritual life consists of practicing God’s presence...to accomplish this, it is necessary for the heart to be emptied of everything that would offend God.¹⁴
3. If we only knew how much we need God’s grace, we would never lose touch with Him.¹⁵
4. We can make our hearts personal chapels where we can enter anytime to talk to God privately.¹⁶
5. We have a God who is infinitely good and who knows what He is doing. He will come and deliver you from your present trouble in His perfect time and when you may least expect it. Hope in Him more than ever. Thank Him for the strength and patience He is giving you, even in the midst of this trial, for it is an evident mark of His concern for you. Encourage yourself with His love and thank Him for everything.¹⁷

Each of these books demonstrate how there can be beauty in suffering: *The Dark Night of the Soul* encourages ministry leaders to find meaning in their suffering and Brother Lawrence’s’ literary work encourages ministry leaders in their development of a deeper awareness of the presence of God. In contrast, Coe illustrates how one’s

¹² Brother Lawrence, *The Presence of God* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1982).

¹³ Ibid., 12.

¹⁴ Ibid., 33.

¹⁵ Ibid., 34.

¹⁶ Ibid., 37.

¹⁷ Ibid., 44.

experience with the dark night of the soul can result in being vulnerable to temptation in the following manner:

1. To feel guilty and believe that particular sins are responsible for God feeling distant.
2. To engage in the spiritual disciplines with more rigor in order to make religion feel good again and atone for feelings of guilt
3. To weary of doing the spiritual disciplines insofar as they fail to provide the desired spiritual pleasure and thus avoid their guilt feelings, and
4. To despair of the spiritual life altogether, which is not a turning away from God, but a deep resignation that God is not present in one's life as he used to be. The spiritual disciplines are either abandoned or done minimally in order to minimize neurotic guilt feelings.¹⁸

Effective pastors are encouraged to reject their previously held theology and their distorted God-image because many pastors may blame themselves when they go through suffering and/or no longer feel God's presence. Ministry leaders should avoid alleviating their feelings of false guilt by engaging in spiritual disciplines excessively. Rather, pastors could benefit from focusing primarily on "practicing the presence of God," This is similar to how several psalmists expressed their lament during times of suffering.

While "suffering invites us into the spiritual domain,"¹⁹ "spiritual dryness can impede coping ...and may render us unable to invest life with meaning," which means pastors are invited to prayerfully discern what God is doing in their lives.²⁰ The "wounded healer" concept is an example of when suffering enhances the pastor's spirituality. When ministry leaders are able to confront their pain and eventually allow

¹⁸ John H. Coe, "Musings on the Dark Night of the Soul: Insights from St. John of the Cross on a Developmental Spirituality," in *Spiritual Formation, Counseling, and Psychotherapy*, ed. Todd W. Hall and Mark R. McMinn (Hauppauge, NY: 2003), 84-85.

¹⁹ L. Wright, W.L. Watson, and J.M. Bell, "Beliefs: The Heart of Healing in Families and Illness," in *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed., ed. Froma Walsh, 74 (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006).

²⁰ Froma Walsh, ed., *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guildford Press, 2006), 74.

God to use their woundedness to care for others, they can become “wounded healers.”²¹ “There are no shortcuts to wholeness” and spiritual formation can be costly, but “it is good to know that our woundedness can be a way of reaching others.”²²

For many centuries, humanity has struggled with understanding the problem of suffering. Therefore it is noteworthy of mentioning that those who are in Christ never suffer alone.²³ Christianity can provide comfort to those who have faith in Jesus Christ by helping them to discover meaning in their suffering.²⁴ It has been documented that patients who view God as being “in control of their lives and reported lower levels of pain and greater happiness.”²⁵ Therefore, “as long as God, who knows the future, provides our agenda and goes with us as we fulfill his mission, we can have boundless hope. This does not mean that we will be spared pain suffering, or hardship, but that God will see us through a glorious conclusion.”²⁶

In Scripture, the human response to suffering is so powerfully illustrated in the story of Job where he allowed himself to grieve.²⁷ When pastors experience suffering through having heartache and distress in their ministry, it is important that they allow space for lament by admitting their feelings to God.

²¹ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York: Image Books, 1972).

²² Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Family* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 1991), 20.

²³ Isaiah 53, Isaiah 43:1-2, Psalm 42.

²⁴ Edward E. Decker, “Pentecostalism and Suffering,” in *Pentecostal Caregivers Anointed to Heal*, ed. John K. Vining (East Rockaway, NY: Cummings and Hathaway Publishers), 53.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁶ NIV Study Bible Commentary, 1239.

²⁷ Job 1:20-22.

Scripture also records how Elijah²⁸ and David²⁹ struggled with their ministerial stress. Even though they are both highly esteemed as pillars of faith, there were occasions where they had reached their breaking point in ministry. Moses illustrates another classic example of stress in ministry leadership. Oswald describes Moses' struggle with carrying his heavy burden in the following:

He was quite dazzling leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, but then found himself in charge of a rather sizable community of wanderers. Soon his frustration, a sure sign of burnout, becomes apparent... He cries to God in anger and disgust, "Did I conceive these people? Did I bring them forth that thou shouldst say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries the suckling child to the land which they didst swear to give their fathers?'" (Numbers 11:10).³⁰

However, how can one differentiate between suffering from stress and suffering from burnout? Stress and burnout are related and symptoms of both can appear similar. The next section will discuss the distinctions between stress and burnout.

Distinctions Between Stress and Burnout

Oswald presents insightful distinctions between stress in ministry leadership and clergy burnout as outlined in the table below:

²⁸ 1 Kings 19:4.

²⁹ Psalm 27:4.

³⁰ Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Family* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 1991), 72.

*Table 1. Distinctions between Stress and Burnout*³¹

Stress involves...	Burnout involves...
Overuse of our adjustment capacities	Overuse of our listening and caring capacities
Too much transition Too many changes	Too much responsibility Too many needy people
Resulting in psychological and physical symptoms	Resulting in physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, disillusionment, and self-depreciation

As illustrated above, there are four primary negative outcomes that are associated with burnout: 1) Physical exhaustion refers to being deficient of physical rest whereas emotional exhaustion can be described as “that strong feeling that you just can’t handle another meeting”...”or the sense that the last thing you want to do is to stand up in front of another group of people.” 2) Cynicism denotes “the growing negative feeling you have about your congregation.” 3) Disillusionment is similar to cynicism but has a stronger connotation. It refers to a ministry leader’s disillusionment about church ministry and even one’s ministerial calling as a whole. 4) Self-Depreciation occurs when pastors assume responsibility for everything that is going wrong in their church. This critical phase of burnout has been described as “turning the sword inward.”³²

What is Burnout?

One of the leading experts on burnout is Christina Maslach.³³ This dissertation is written based on her definition of burnout which is “a psychological syndrome of

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 70-71.

³³ Thomas M. Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison, *The Resilient Practitioner: Burnout and Compassion Fatigue Prevention and Self-Care Strategies for the Helping Professions*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment”³⁴ and “the chronic condition of perceived demands outweighing perceived resources.”³⁵ She further describes burnout as “the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do,”³⁶ which primarily locates the source of burnout within the workplace setting.³⁷

Burnout has also been defined as "a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations³⁸" and “energy depletion without commensurate renewal.³⁹” It is characterized by “fatigue, listlessness, and high anxiety, and sometimes depression.⁴⁰” Individuals in the helping profession are especially prone to burnout due to their challenges with prioritizing their self-care while caring for others.⁴¹ During times of high stress, they are even less likely to care for themselves.

³⁴ Maslach, 1982 and Goldberg, 1998 and Leiter, 2003 In *Compassion Fatigue Professional Training Manual*, 2017, 38.

³⁵ Gentry and Baranowsky, 1998, In *Compassion Fatigue Professional Training Manual*, 2017, 38.

³⁶ Christine Maslach and Leiter (1997) 17, in *The Resilient Practitioner: Burnout and Compassion Fatigue Prevention and Self-Care Strategies for the Helping Professions*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 104.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

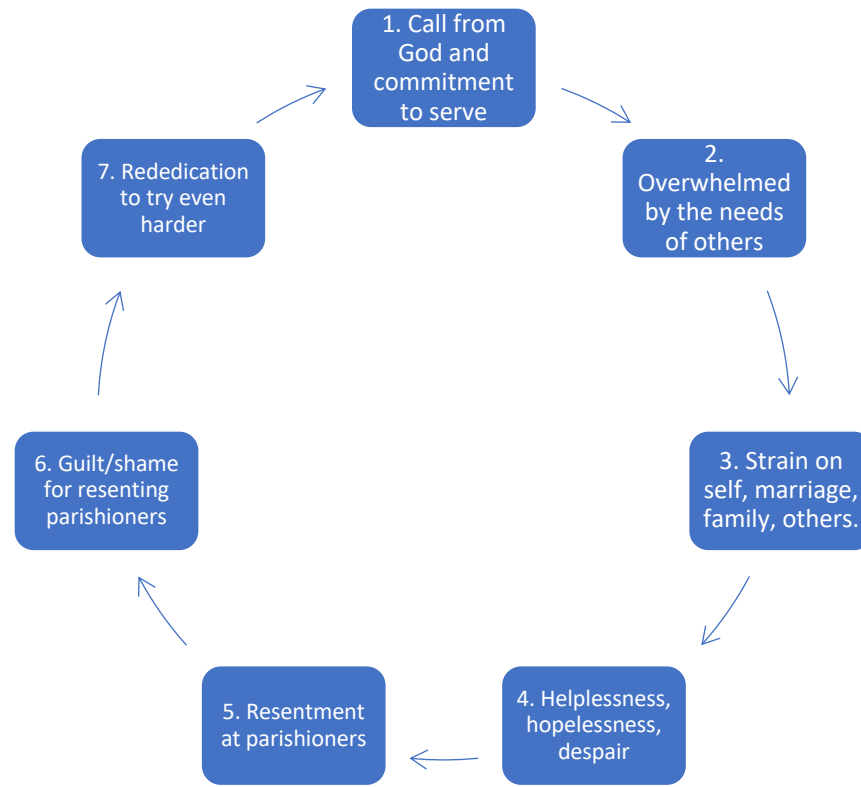
³⁸ Heather F. Thompson, Melodie H. Frick, and Shannon Trice-Black, “Counselor-In-Training Perceptions of Supervision Practices Related to Self-Care and Burnout,” *The Professional Counselor* 1, no. 3 (2011): 152-162.

³⁹ Diane Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-taking, and Support System Practices,” *Pastoral Psychology*, 58, no. 3 (2009): 274.

⁴⁰ Carlyle Fielding Stewart III and Karen D. Scheib, “Why Do Clergy Experience Burnout,” *Quarterly Review* 23, no. 1 (2003): 78.

⁴¹ E. A. Jackson-Jordan, “Clergy Burnout and Resilience: A Review of the Literature,” *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling*. 67, no 1 (2013), 1-2.

Burnout among clergy is cyclical in nature as illustrated in the following:



*Figure 1. Clergy Burnout Cycle*⁴²

Skovholt distinguishes between two styles of burnout, which is very helpful for understanding clergy burnout.⁴³ They are *meaning* burnout and *caring* burnout. Meaning burnout refers to “when the calling of caring for others...no longer gives sufficient meaning and purpose” in the clergy’s life, whereas caring burnout refers to “a decreased ability to professionally attach [with parishioners] because of the cumulative depletion

⁴² Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Family: Finding A Balance for Effective Ministry* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 1991), 68.

⁴³ Thomas M. Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison, *The Resilient Practitioner*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

and negative energy” stemming from the caring relationship between clergy and parishioners.⁴⁴ The caring burnout is most often described in the burnout literature.

Contribution Factors of Burnout

Stewart and Scheib observe, “One of the first problems of clergy burnout has to do with the working paradigm of ministry clergy have adopted as a model for service.”⁴⁵ Ministry models set expectations for ministry and provide a general set of assumptions about the why, the what, and the how of ministry. One troubling paradigm is the “Messiah”⁴⁶ model, which expects clergy to be all things to all people.⁴⁷

More recent attention is being directed to the pastoral roles in recognition of these costly demands.⁴⁸ According to Kay, pastors’ “multiple, ambiguous, and conflicting roles [minister, visionary, manager, pastoral counselor, etc.]... combined with a lack of standardized working hours, and conflicting expectations between clergy and the congregation” cause significant stress.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Thomas M. Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison, *The Resilient Practitioner*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 109.

⁴⁵ Carlyle Fielding Stewart III and Karen D. Scheib, “Why Do Clergy Experience Burnout,” *Quarterly Review* 23, no. 1 (2003), 78.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁸ Todd W. Hall, “The Personal Functioning of Pastors: A Review of Empirical Research with Implications for the Care of Pastors,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 25, no 2 (1997): 240.

⁴⁹ W. K. Kay, “Role Conflict and British Pentecostal Ministries,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 28, no. 2, 119–124, in Joseph D. Visker, et al, “Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms Among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota,” *Journal of Religion and Health*, 56 (2017): 952.

In comparison, pastors work more hours per week than other professionals.⁵⁰ Pastors are also challenged by special circumstances “such as futility, congregational conflict resolution, and increasing internal expectations which are directly related to their profession.⁵¹” According to a Barna Group survey on pastors, many are dealing with some level of risk based on the following:

- More than one-third of pastors are at high (11%) or medium (26%) risk of burnout.
- Two in five tally high (27%) or medium (16%) on the risk metric for relational problems.
- And while only one in 20 is at high risk of spiritual difficulties (5%) – giving the impression that this is a non-issue for most pastors – an unexpected six in 10 fall into the medium-risk category (61%), suggesting there are currents worthy of notice just below the placid spiritual surface.⁵²

These researchers also noticed a correlation between a pastor’s job satisfaction and their job function. “As a rule, pastors who are less satisfied in their current position are more prone to feel like a manager, counselor, referee and administrator, and less like an entrepreneur, coach, doctor and leader. Similar percentages are found among pastors who are high on the metric of burnout risk.⁵³”

Schaefer and Jacobsen present the following common causes of clergy burnout: “church board expectations; clergy role conflict; challenge of multi-tasking; conflict between vision and reality; public/private boundaries; financial pressures; delicacies of

⁵⁰ Kara Miller, “What it Takes to Thrive in Ministry,” *Christianity Today* 60, no. 1 (2016): 79.

⁵¹ Craig Ellison and William Mattila, “The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 1 (1983): 28.

⁵² Barna Group, *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 20.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 72.

leadership; physical health, stress, and depression.”⁵⁴ Another researcher suggests, “Pastors risk burnout because of inordinate ministerial demands, which may drain their emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical energy reserves and impair their overall effectiveness.⁵⁵” Ellison and Mattilla affirm that the pastoral role “carries with it a high potential for succumbing to burnout” as the result of “stress from unrealistic expectations, time demands, feelings of inadequacy, and fear of failure.⁵⁶”

Similarly, Maslach and Leiter identify seven sources of burnout such as work-overload, lack of control, insufficient reward, breakdown of community, unfairness, significant value conflicts, and lack of fit between the person and the job.⁵⁷ However, while it is true that burnout stems from organizational factors, Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison assert that clergy and other helping professionals are responsible for preventing burnout by sustaining their professional selves.⁵⁸ This means instead of expecting the organization to create a positive work culture, clergy need to do it for themselves. When it comes to the causes of burnout, it is the leader’s “perception of their workplace and the happenings therein that cause their stress.”⁵⁹ This statement illustrates the underlying

⁵⁴ Arthur Schaefer and Steve Jacobsen, “Surviving Clergy Burnout,” *Encounter* 70, no. 1 (2009): 45.

⁵⁵ Diane Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-taking, and Support System Practices,” *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (2009): 273.

⁵⁶ Craig Ellison and William Mattila, “The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 1 (1983): 28.

⁵⁷ Christine Maslach and Leiter (1997) 17, in *The Resilient Practitioner: Burnout and Compassion Fatigue Prevention and Self-Care Strategies for the Helping Professions*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 106.

⁵⁸ Thomas M. Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison, *The Resilient Practitioner*, 3rd ed (New York: Routledge, 2016).

⁵⁹ *Compassion Fatigue Professional Training Manual*, 2017, 18.

assumption of this dissertation. After all, pastors are co-creators of their organizational culture.⁶⁰ This means that they can develop effective ways to influence change in their organizational culture.

As previously mentioned, there are many contributing factors of burnout among ministry leaders. Chandler affirms, “Overwork and workaholism can lead to burnout, a debilitating erosion of personal reserves resulting in exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness...overwork ignores the balance of work, rest and leisure that compromises a healthy, holistic lifestyle.”⁶¹

In addition, unhealthy coping mechanisms in response to stress is another contributing factor of burnout. Wright mentions that a person who has poor coping skills can be identified by the following:

1. Emotional weakness (individuals who are emotionally weak prior to the crisis respond in a way that makes matters worse)
2. Poor physical condition (those who have some type of physical ailment or illness have fewer resources to draw on during a crisis)
3. Denial of reality (in an attempt to avoid pain and anger), excessive guilt (tend to blame themselves for the difficulty)
4. Blame (do not focus on what the problem is but instead turn to who they believe caused the problem and project blame onto them).⁶²

Furthermore, having a misplaced identity is another contributing factor of ministry. A misplaced identity means placing more value on what you do rather than on who you are. However, our *being* is more important than our *doing*. “We are God’s. That

⁶⁰ Pastors need to have realistic understandings of how they fit into wider social systems and structures, some of which is out of their control.

⁶¹ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 177-178.

⁶² H. Norman Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling: What to Do and Say When it Matters Most* (Minneapolis, MN: Baker Publishing, 2011), 138.

is enough.”⁶³ Scazzero describes *doing for God* as being more important than *being with God* as one of the signs of an emotionally unhealthy leader.⁶⁴ Establishing their identity in Jesus Christ alone is crucial for well-being of ministry leaders.

Prevalence of Clergy Burnout

According to Wells, "in about every Christian denomination today, churches across North America have one thing in common, a pastorate whose health is fast becoming cause for concern."⁶⁵ Clergy experience burnout due to their overinvolvement with heavy ministerial demands.⁶⁶ As a result, they feel drained emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically. Within the past decade, studies have shown that clergy burnout has become pervasive affecting both experienced and novice clergy members.⁶⁷ In the early 2000s, the Lilly Endowment invested \$84 million into researching pastors in response to clergy burnout.⁶⁸ Typically those who enter the clergy profession do so without anticipating the personal costs.⁶⁹ Experiencing these hazards puts many pastors at risk for their emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical well-being.

⁶³ Janet O. Hagberg and Robert A. Guelich, *The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith*, 2nd ed. (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 2005), 154.

⁶⁴ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015).

⁶⁵ Bob Wells, "Which Way to Clergy Health?" In Arthur Schaefer and Steve Jacobsen, "Surviving Clergy Burnout," *Encounter* 70, no. 1 (2009): 45.

⁶⁶ Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-taking, and Support System Practices," *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (2009): 274.

⁶⁷ Barna Group, *The State of Pastors* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 37.

⁶⁸ Kara Miller, "What it Takes to Thrive in Ministry," *Christianity Today* 60, no. 1 (2016): 80.

⁶⁹ Jill Anne Hendron, et.al, "The Unseen Cost: A Discussion of the Secondary Traumatization Experience of the Clergy," *Pastoral Psychology* 61 (2012): 221.

In 2016, another study was published indicating a high occurrence of burnout surveying fifty-two Assemblies of God pastors. Based on the results, “approximately 65 % of the participants were either suffering from burnout or on the verge of burnout. This places pastors at higher risk for personal health problems.”⁷⁰ In addition, “A significant plurality says they (clergy) wish they had spent more time with their kids (42%), whether that means finding a better balance between ministry and home life, traveling less, being more involved in their day-to-day lives or taking more trips as a family.”⁷¹

Every year, caring and compassionate leaders enter the clergy profession. However, few of them are prepared for the emotional and mental toll that often comes with doing their pastoral work. Upon stepping into their role, many pastors are astonished by the heavy burden of church ministry. As a result, they struggle to keep up with their daily ministerial responsibilities. Research reveals the following data:

- 54% of pastors still work over 55 hours a week
- 57% can't pay their bills
- 54% are overworked and 43% are overstressed
- 53% feel seminary had not properly prepared them for the task.
- 35% battle depression
- 26% are overly fatigued
- 28% are spiritually undernourished and 9% are burnt-out
- 23% are still distant to their families
- 18% work more than 70 hours a week and face unreasonable challenges
- 12% are belittled.
- 3% have had an affair⁷²

⁷⁰ Joseph D. Visker, et. al., “Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms Among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 56 (2017): 951.

⁷¹ Barna Group, *The State of Pastors* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 35.

⁷² “Research on the Happenings in Pastors’ Personal and Church Lives,” Church Leadership, accessed April 28, 2019, <http://www.churchleadership.org/Research-on-Pastors>.

As a result, pastors are experiencing burnout or on the verge of burnout. Pastors face the heavy burden of dealing with crisis situations involving chronic suffering, grief, and loss while tending to the needs of their church families. Carrying the heavy burden for the needs of their congregation contributes to clergy stress and eventually to burnout.⁷³” Duran says, “Exhaustion is not the pastor’s friend. Exhaustion is an obstruction that holds open a door for temptation. When a pastor reaches the point that exhaustion, fatigue, or burnout increase the likelihood of adultery, addiction, or other sinful indulgence, quitting the ministry to save the pastor is the righteous road.”⁷⁴

Alternative Views on Clergy Burnout

Despite the alarming stats on clergy burnout, there is limited data that suggests pastors are thriving in their ministry. Bledsoe and Setterlund define “thriving in ministry” by the following:

Clergy who thrive are those who have obtained success or prosperity over the course of their careers through a variety of factors that may include a consistent desire to serve God and lead His people, the ability to reflect upon and learn from important experiences in ministry, and a focus on maintaining self-care and adequate support systems.⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Marty Duran, “Six Things Church Members Need to Know About Pastor Burnout,” Facts and Trends, accessed April 28, 2019, <https://factsandtrends.net/2016/09/16/6-things-church-members-need-to-know-about-pastor-burnout>.

⁷⁵ T. Scott Bledsoe and Kimberly A. Setterlund, “Thriving in Ministry: Exploring the Support Systems and Self-Care Practices of Experienced Pastors,” *The Journal of Family and Community Ministries* 28 (2015): 50.

These authors conducted a qualitative study with sixteen clergy members on the topic of thriving among pastors. The aim of their research was to determine “meaningful strategies and life skills employed by pastors who seek to reaffirm their spiritual commitments while also staying vital in their calling to the cloth.”⁷⁶ Based on the survey results, two general themes were observed: “support systems and self-care practices.”⁷⁷

While this study identifies meaningful strategies being used by some clergy members, it is difficult to determine the number of pastors who are actually thriving based on its small sample size. Another study conducted on clergy members indicated a high rate of satisfaction about their profession. In fact, 87.2% of the participants for this study indicated a high degree of satisfaction about their work.⁷⁸ However, this study does not clearly state whether satisfaction among these pastors was due to their passion for their ministerial calling or based on their personal well-being.

Overall, the topic of thriving is under-researched. While there may be pastors who are thriving in their ministry, there are many who are not. Therefore, this dissertation addresses the high volume of struggling pastors by examining the underlying causes of their stress and finding effective solutions to prevent ministry burnout.

Systemic Impact of Clergy Burnout: A Family Systems Theory Perspective

Based on Systems Theory, one part of a system affects the entire system. Systems theory is “a way of conceptualizing reality [by] considering the interrelatedness of the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁸ Tom W. Smith, *Job satisfaction in the United States*, University of Chicago, 5, <http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/pdf/070417.jobs.pdf>.

parts.”⁷⁹ In contrast to linear thinking (i.e. A causes B), systems thinking views A and B as being “mutual influences on one another.”⁸⁰

Family Systems Theory views families as interactive parts whereby the behavior of a single member influences the entire family system. For example, when one hears a report that a person has been laid off from work after 15 years of service at their place of employment, one focuses on that individual’s loss of career, status, and financial security. Whereas a systems perspective would focus on how everyone in this person’s family has been affected by this loss evidenced by changes to power structure and roles within the family system.⁸¹

Family Systems Theory provides perspective on human emotional functioning by “viewing families as interactive parts whereby the behavior of a single member influences the entire family system.”⁸² Family systems theory claims that change in one family member affects the entire family system. Key components of this theory include cohesion, individuation, structure, and adaptability.⁸³ The clergy family’s ability to handle stress is closely related to its degree of adaptability and cohesion.

⁷⁹ Peter L. Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publishing, 1993).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸¹ Linda Berg-Cross, *Basic Concepts in Family Therapy: An Introduction Text* (New York: The Haworth Press, 2000), 41.

⁸² Michael E. Kerr and Murray Bowen, *Family Evaluation: The Role of the Family* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 14.

⁸³ Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family: A Christian Perspective on The Contemporary Home* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).

Next this dissertation will discuss four key family systems concepts: cohesion, adaptability, communication, and role structure.⁸⁴ First, cohesion is defined as the degree of emotional closeness between family members. In disengaged families, each family member lives in emotional isolation from other family members. In differentiated families, “each member has a separate identity and therefore experiences meaningful relationships”⁸⁵ with other family members. Enmeshed families provide little space for members to be independent of other members (see charts A, B, and C).

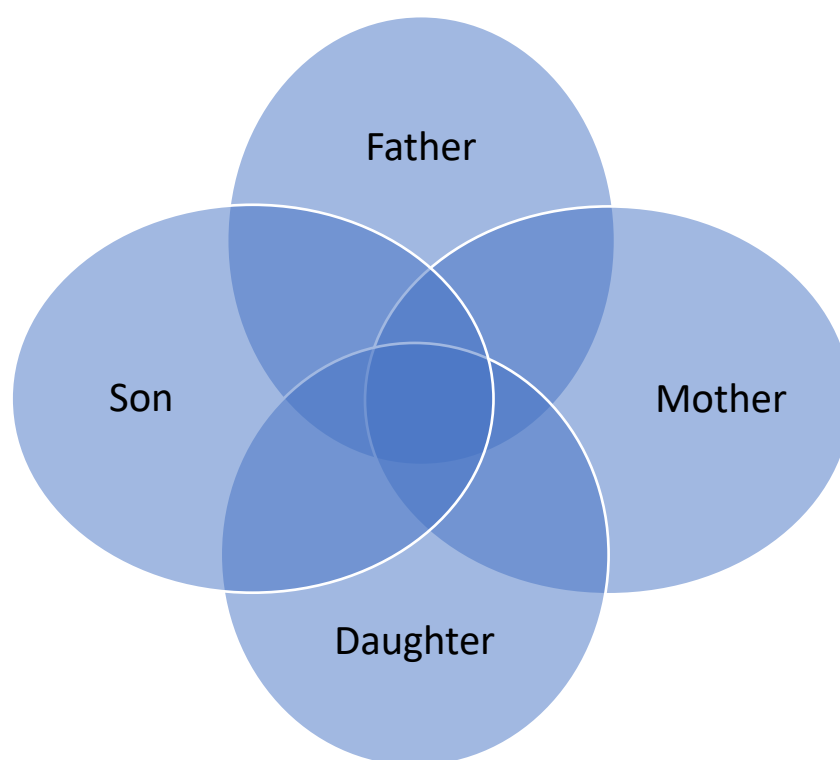


Figure 2. Differentiated Family System

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 48.

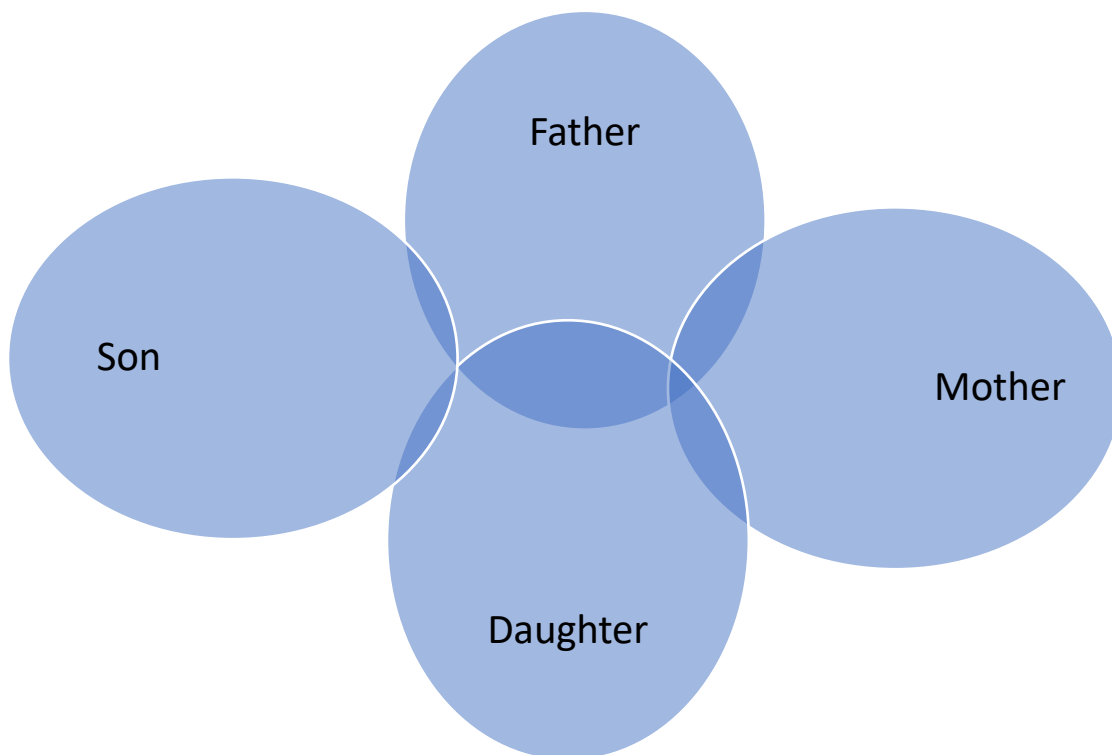


Figure 3. Disengaged Family System

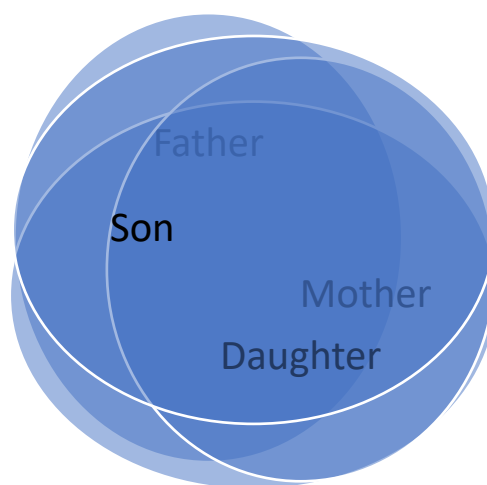


Figure 4. Enmeshed Family System

Second, adaptability can be described as the degree that families are open to change (flexibility) and the degree that families provide adequate structure (stability).⁸⁶ Thus, high functioning families balance flexibility with stability. This means that they are open to change as necessary and they provide the appropriate amount of structure when needed.

Third, communication in healthy families includes “clarity of perception and clarity of expression.”⁸⁷ Clarity of perception is associated with effective listening skills and the ability to “pick up on the sender’s intonations and body language”⁸⁸ including one’s ability to seek clarification when needed. Clarity of expression refers to the ability “to communicate feelings, opinions, wishes, and desires in a forthright and unambiguous manner.”⁸⁹

Fourth, role structure refers to having distinct roles as father, mother, child/children. In high functioning families, spousal roles are clearly defined but also flexible. High functioning families draw “clear boundaries around the parental subsystem and clear boundaries around the sibling subsystem.”⁹⁰ However, these boundaries need to be permeable so that family members can navigate between different roles when needed.

⁸⁶ Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁸⁹ Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 51.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

The following table summarizes the four concepts of this model and applies them to high and low functioning families:

Table 2. Family Functioning⁹¹

	High Functioning Families	Low Functioning Families
Cohesion	Well-Differentiated	Enmeshment or disengagement
Adaptability	Flexibility and stability	Rigidity or chaos
Communication	Clear perception and expression	Unclear perception and expression
Role Structure	Agree on roles and clear boundaries	Conflict over roles & blurred boundaries

How can family stress be viewed from a systems perspective? The following model will be used to illustrate clergy family functioning in response to stress. The chart below illustrates the components of the ABC-X Model:⁹²

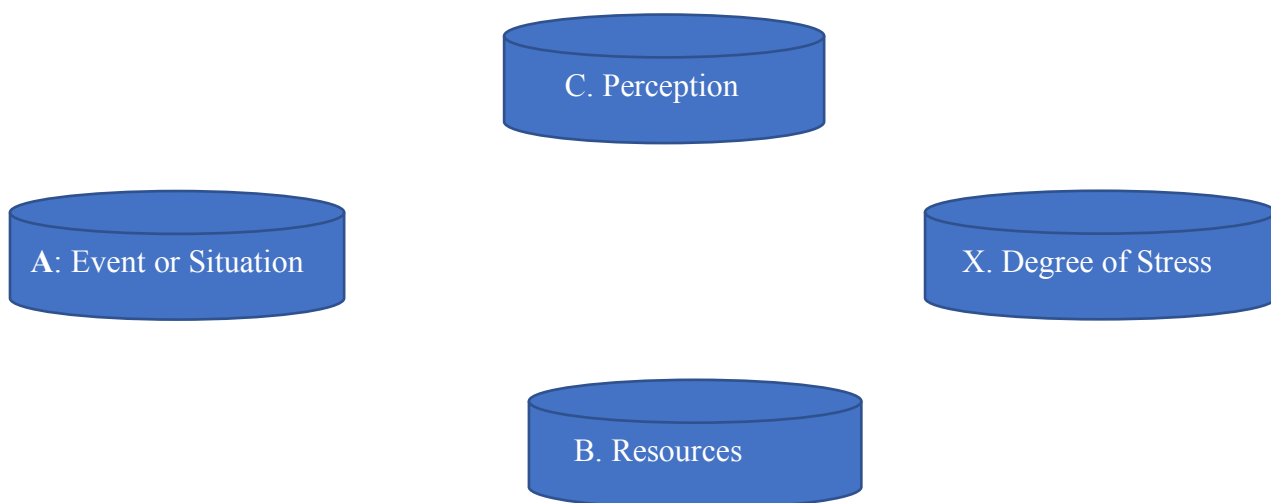


Figure 5. ABC-X Model

⁹¹ Ibid., 47 (adapted).

⁹² Ibid., 6.

The following paragraph will briefly explain the component of the ABC-X Model. The *stressor event or situation* triggers the occurrence of change in a family system, such as boundaries, roles, values, goals, or processes, etc. These can range from normal events such as the birth of a child, children leaving home, etc.. to difficult events such as a job loss, accident, etc. Regardless of the nature of the event, a crisis occurs if the family systems fail to adapt to these changes.⁹³ *Resources* “buffer or moderate the impact of the stressor event” and can include individual (e.g. emotional and physical well-being) and community resources (e.g., social support network).⁹⁴ *Perceptions* refer to “the definition or meaning the family gives to the event” and can be adaptive if the family is able to “redefine a stressor event more positively (i.e., reframe it).”⁹⁵ The final component of the model, *degree of stress* refers to “a state of changed or disturbed equilibrium,” which means that the amount of stress a family faces exceeds the family’s ability to cope.⁹⁶ Hence, stressful events in the clergy family systems can affect their ability to cope depending on their individual/community resources and their perception of the events.

From a systems perspective, clergy burnout is not an isolated incident. When clergy burnout occurs, it creates a trickling effect resulting in lower functioning families. There is an old saying that goes, “wounded people wound people.” When pastors do not

⁹³ Ibid., 7.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 10-11.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 12.

have a safe and sacred place to process their emotions it causes them to leak their frustrations at home. As a result, their entire family experiences their stress.

Moy and Malony⁹⁷ focused their research efforts on clergy families based on family systems concepts. They examined the levels of “family cohesion (enmeshment vs. disengagement) and family adaptability (chaotic vs. rigid)”⁹⁸ in clergy families. Particular attention was placed on examining boundary-making or the lack thereof, levels of differentiation, relational patterns between spouses and parent/child, spoken or unspoken family rules, marital roles and responsibilities, and power structure in the family. These researchers were able to discover that clergy families were significantly different from the normative group, with more than expected in the extreme ranges, perhaps due to the high degree of adaptability required.

All families commonly experience stress and therefore must seek ways to maintain balance in their system. Balswick and Balswick assert, “The ability of a family to handle stress is closely related to its degree of adaptability and cohesion. Effective family systems are structured yet flexible. Families that are chaotic or rigid are ill prepared to handle stressful events.”⁹⁹

Nearly every family experience the daily stressors of raising children, automotive repairs, household duties, etc. However, clergy families face unique stressors, which

⁹⁷ S. Moy and H. Malony, “An Empirical Study of Ministers’ Children and Families,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 6 (1987): 52–64, in Mark R. McMinn, R. Allen Lish, Pamela D. Trice, Alicia M. Root, Nicole Gilbert, and Adelene Yap, “Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses,” *Pastoral Psychology*, 53, no. 6 (2005), 566.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 288.

makes it more difficult for them to maintain flexibility, structure, and balance in comparison to other families. Studies¹⁰⁰ show that clergy families face economic challenges, external pressure from church and community regarding their roles and responsibilities, personal identity crisis, loss of privacy in their home due to frequent intrusions, struggles with spouse/parent routinely absent from home, difficulties with having a sense of normalcy due to frequently being required to move to new church, struggles with spouse/father being frequently absent at home, and unmet spiritual needs.

Clergy families must provide structure to support the adaptation of the family system and its members.¹⁰¹ They must be able to “mobilize and organize their resources, buffer stresses, and reorganize to fit changing conditions.”¹⁰² Healthy family functioning requires connectedness, flexibility, and a strong support system. However, it is imperative to identify stressors that threaten the health of clergy families prior to determining probable solutions. The next chapter of this dissertation deals with primary stressors that cause harm to clergy families.

Stressors that Threaten the Wellbeing of the Clergy Family System

Pastors who face the dreadful encounter with burnout commonly feel hopeless in their situation. Even worse, stress and burnout among pastors also causes suffering on their loved ones. While additional research efforts are needed to be given to the unique

¹⁰⁰ Mark R. McMinn, R. Allen Lish, Pamela D. Trice, Alicia M. Root, Nicole Gilbert, and Adelene Yap, “Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses,” *Pastoral Psychology*, 53, no. 6 (2005): 564.

¹⁰¹ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2016).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 65.

stressors faced by clergy families,¹⁰³ “a chain of incidents describes what clergy spouses and families experience: high and unrealistic expectations and stressors followed by effects of those stressors”¹⁰⁴ which may lead to health complications.

According to survey results based on a study conducted by the Fuller Institute of Church Growth, “80% of pastors indicated that ministry had affected their families negatively, 37% acknowledged having been involved in inappropriate sexual behavior with someone in the church, and 12% confessed to having engaged in sexual intercourse with a church member.”¹⁰⁵

The following are four primary stressors commonly experienced by clergy families.

“Intruders to Our Fishbowl”

Presnell argues, “In no other profession are the philosophy and performance of the vocation so intimately entwined with the commitments, values, and behaviors of one’s private life, in the eyes of those who serve and those who are served.”¹⁰⁶ The high visibility in nature of their roles causes clergy families to deal with “stressors that result from the unique interface between the family and church systems.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Michelle E. Aulhouse, “Clergy Families: The Helpless Forgotten’s Cry for Help Answered Through Reality Therapy,” Paper based on a program presented at the 2013 American Counseling Conference, March 20-24, Cincinnati, OH.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁰⁵ G. L. Headington, *A Guide to Recovery for Fallen Pastors: The Journey Back from Sexual Misconduct*, (1997), in Kathryn Rhoads et al., “Maintaining Personal Resiliency: Lessons Learned from Evangelical Protestant Clergy,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 31, no. 4, 339-347.

¹⁰⁶ William B. Presnell, *The Minister’s Own Marriage* (Tenafly, NJ: United Methodist Church and Pastoral Counseling Center), 272.

¹⁰⁷ Marsha W. Frame and Constance L. Shehan, “Work and Well-Being in the Two Person Career: Relocation Stress and Coping Among Clergy Husbands and Wives,” *Family Relations* 43, no 2 (1994): 197.

Clergy families experience the challenge of living in a fishbowl¹⁰⁸ which is also referred to as “living in a glass house.”¹⁰⁹ Flynn explains, “The public nature of the ministry by definition creates a ‘fishbowl’ effect that places the ministers and their families on public display.”¹¹⁰ In a study conducted on 196 clergy wives, the results indicated that clergy wives are “Feeling and acting as though they are constantly being watched and evaluated by the community culminates in feelings of loss of control over their living space, time management, and personal identities.”¹¹¹

Due to their fishbowl environment, boundary lines become blurred between their private life and their public life. A boundary is one of the key concepts of family systems theory and it can “indicate the degree of separateness between individuals or groups of family members within the family unit.”¹¹² Ambiguous boundaries cause tremendous strain on clergy families. Cloud and Townsend assert that blurred boundaries in families (including clergy families) is one of several serious problems Christians face today.¹¹³ “Intrusion of family boundaries creates stress for clergy families because it makes differentiation of the family and individuation of the members of the family difficult.

¹⁰⁸ James T. Flynn, “Firewall: Health Essentials for Ministers and Their Families,” *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2009).

¹⁰⁹ Leroy T. Howe, “Casting Down Our Golden Crowns Around the Glassy Sea: Travail and Triumph in the Parsonage Family,” *Quarterly Review* (1998).

¹¹⁰ James T. Flynn, “Firewall: Health Essentials for Ministers and Their Families,” *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2009): 319.

¹¹¹ David C. Baker and Jean P. Scott, “Predictors of Well-Being Among Pastors’ Wives: A Comparison with Non-Clergy Wives,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 46, no 1 (1992): 34.

¹¹² Andrew J. Weaver, et al, *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life: A Handbook for Pastors and Other Helping Professionals* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 234.

¹¹³ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, When to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 25.

When boundaries are experienced as ambiguous by the clergy family system, problematic concerns regarding privacy...arise for the clergy family.”¹¹⁴

Due to unhealthy boundaries, there are five primary challenges that pastors and their families face: “The ‘normal’ pressures of marriage and family life; the nature of ministry: always on the job; the conflicting loyalties of church and home; abandonment from always being on the job; and the unmet needs of ministry spouses for confidants.”

¹¹⁵ In addition, there is the ongoing struggle of balancing the pastor’s marriage, his or her children, and ministry, which is often only repaired when the pastor is released.¹¹⁶ Clergy couples have reported that frequent conflicts arise over time restraints on their marriage due to church obligations.¹¹⁷

Furthermore, clergy couple are expected to have a “perfect family.”¹¹⁸ In fact, pastors and their spouses are expected to “model what is durable, moral, and strong in the institution of marriage.”¹¹⁹ “Spouses can be crushed under a weight of judgment and/or criticism, or kids are turned off by hypocrisy and political posturing (real or perceived)

¹¹⁴ Michael L. Morris and Priscilla W. Blanton, “The Influence of Work-Related Stress on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives,” *Family Relations* 43 (1994): 190.

¹¹⁵ Bob Burns, et al., *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 170.

¹¹⁶ Marty Duran, “Six Things Church Members Need to Know About Pastor Burnout,” *Facts and Trends*, September 16, 2016, <https://factsandtrends.net/2016/09/16/6-things-church-members-need-to-know-about-pastor-burnout/>.

¹¹⁷ William B. Presnell, *The Minister’s Own Marriage* (Tenafly, NJ: United Methodist Church and Pastoral Counseling Center).

¹¹⁸ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 182.

¹¹⁹ William B. Presnell, “The Minister’s Own Marriage,” (Tenafly, NJ: United Methodist Church and Pastoral Counseling Center), 272.

among church members.”¹²⁰ As a result, clergy families face the dreadful thought of viewing themselves as a failure if they fall short of meeting all the incoming demands.¹²¹ Burns et.al. affirm, “Yes, the sheep can bite. While there are wonderful people in every congregation, there can also be people who are angry and mean. Pastors and their families often bear the brunt of these negative, critical people.”¹²²

“What About Us?”

Restraint on family time is a major reason for marital dissatisfaction among clergy couples. Clergy wives are wondering, “What about us?” Clergy wives are commonly forced to give up precious time with her husband to the congregation and to consider her own needs as less important compared to church families.¹²³ As a result, there is documented evidence that clergy divorces are on the rise. Lavender and Morgan mention, “clergy rank third among all professional groups in terms of the number of divorces granted annually.”¹²⁴ According to Scazzero, one of the signs of an emotionally unhealthy leader is “prioritizing ministry over marriage.”¹²⁵ Deficiencies in their time

¹²⁰ Marty Duran, “Six Things Church Members Need to Know About Pastor Burnout,” *Facts and Trends*, September 16, 2016, <https://factsandtrends.net/2016/09/16/6-things-church-members-need-to-know-about-pastor-burnout/>.

¹²¹ James T. Flynn, “Firewall: Health Essentials for Ministers and Their Families,” *Christian Education Journal*, 6, no. 2 (2009): 319.

¹²² Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 175.

¹²³ Marsha W. Frame and Constance L. Shehan, “Work and Well-Being in the Two Person Career: Relocation Stress and Coping Among Clergy Husbands and Wives,” *Family Relations* 43, no 2 (1994): 197.

¹²⁴ L. Lavender (1983) and R. Morgan (1982), in Michael L. Morris and Priscilla W. Blanton, “Denominational Perceptions of Stress and the Provision of Support Services for Clergy Families,” *Pastoral Psychology* 42, no 5 (1994), 348.

¹²⁵ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 29.

together weakens the emotional intimacy between couples which is needed for a healthy marriage.

Goodling observes, “Increasingly, the Church is being confronted not only with the reality of marital conflict but also with the reality of separation and divorce among clergy couples. The challenge to the Church is to identify the issues and to establish the structures to provide for theological thought, liturgical practice, pastoral concern, and administrative decision consistent with the nature of the Church.”¹²⁶

Related to this discussion is this issue of spousal neglect. Burns et. al. assert, “pastors can be busy ‘doing the Lord’s work’ to the neglect of their marriages .”¹²⁷ In 2005 and 2006,¹²⁸ a conference was held for pastors in Orange County, California. During the conference, 1,050 pastors agreed to participate in a field research. Based on the results from this research, “77% of pastors felt that they did not have a good marriage and 30% admitted to having an ongoing affair or sexual encounters with a parishioner.”¹²⁹ In addition to this shocking evidence, another study that was conducted shows findings that are just as astonishing. Among the 200 pastors who agreed to participate in this study,

- 81% said that they have insufficient time with their spouse
- 70+% admit to problems with income level
- 53% were experiencing difficulties with raising children

¹²⁶ Richard A. Goodling, “Clergy Divorce: A Study of Issues and Emerging Ecclesiastical Structures,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 37, no 4 (1983): 291.

¹²⁷ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 178.

¹²⁸ James T. Flynn, “Firewall: Health Essentials for Ministers and Their Families,” *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2009).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 311.

- 46% admitted to sexual problems
- 28 % considered ministry to be a hazard to their family life¹³⁰

Not surprisingly, feelings associated with loneliness are therefore commonly expressed among clergy spouses. In a survey¹³¹ conducted on clergy families, the findings indicate that 22% of the pastors and 48% of the clergy wives admit their disadvantage of having non-church friends to share about problems within their marriage. Another survey confirms that over half of clergy wives admit their struggles with intense loneliness.¹³²

Having a weak bond of love in a marriage relationship also impacts the entire family system.¹³³ According to Lewis et al, “Children cannot bloom in a culture where adults do not cohere long enough so that intact families may support needful hearts... The emotional fate of children is inextricably bound to the ability of their parents to love one another.”¹³⁴ Oftentimes, children are influenced by what they see and hear in the home. They will either experience a positive or negative outcome based on what they learned from the relationship between their parents which may impact their future relationships. In the next chapter I will continue to explore the challenges faced by ministry children.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 311.

¹³¹ D. Mace and V. Mace, *What’s Happening to Clergy Marriages?* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980), in Janelle Warner and John D. Carter, “Loneliness, Marital Adjustment and Burnout in Pastoral and Lay Persons,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 12, no 2 (1984).

¹³² P. Valeriano, “A Survey of Ministers’ Wives,” *Leadership* (1981): 64-73, in Janelle Warner and John D. Carter, “Loneliness, Marital Adjustment and Burnout in Pastoral and Lay Persons,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 12, no 2 (1984).

¹³³ Lewis, Thomas, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon, *A General Theory of Love* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

¹³⁴ Ibid., 204.

“Who Am I”

The personal struggle of PK, pastor’s kid, is a ministry problem that has been severely under- researched, yet it deserves considerable attention. While children of pastors face the normal struggles of other youth attempting to “find themselves,” they also experience the unique challenges of being a “PK”. Their entire childhood is lived out before the congregation.¹³⁵ While there are clergy children who would describe their childhood as normal, “many who have these positive experiences consider themselves a minority,” in comparison with some clergy children who are “bitter and resentful, often deeply ambivalent about the church.”¹³⁶

One of the major reasons for clergy children struggle with their personal identity is due to the pressures they face by congregations. According to one child of a pastor, “Everyone in the church and sometimes even your parents act as if you have to have the same ethical, oral and religious views that your parents have.”¹³⁷ Another child of a pastor shared a similar concern, ““I’m not sure if this pressure of having to maintain a certain reputation was silently imposed upon me by my parents or the congregation, or it was my perception of what I was supposed to do.”¹³⁸ A third child of a pastor mentioned,

¹³⁵ Cameron Lee, *PK: Helping Pastors’ Kids Through Their Identity Crisis* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992), 93, in Daniel L. Langford, *The Pastor’s Family: The Challenges of Family Life and Pastoral Responsibilities* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1998), 16.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³⁷ Daniel L. Langford, *The Pastor’s Family: The Challenges of Family Life and Pastoral Responsibilities* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1998), 41.

¹³⁸ Cameron Lee, *PK: Helping Pastors’ Kids Through Their Identity Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1992), 39.

“Lots of people think you’re a little saint, some people find out you’re not and try to make you into one.”¹³⁹

In addition to facing pressures from congregations, clergy children experience pressures from their clergy parents. Most often, their parents want their children “to be seen favorably within the congregation and community.”¹⁴⁰ According to Darling, “clergy parents are seized by their religious subculture that tends to expect conformity of behavior for the teenage sons and daughters of clergy. This adds stress to the parent-child relationship.”¹⁴¹

Lee illustrates the distinctions between how clergy parents can make their children feel in the following table:

*Table 3. Perceived Safety in Children*¹⁴²

Important	Unimportant
They are firmly committed to having family time together.	They are too preoccupied with church matters to have time for their families.
They take the time to listen to their children’s feelings and opinions.	They are too busy to listen to their children.
They support and participate in as many of their children’s activities as possible.	They show little or no support for their children’s extra-church activities.
They involve their children in the ministry in appropriate ways.	They use their children in the ministry in intrusive ways.

Strange and Sheppard discuss other stressors faced by children of pastors include being expected to pursue ministry as a career and the lack of privacy due to their fishbowl

¹³⁹ Ibid., 42.

¹⁴⁰ Carol A. Darling and Lenore M. McWey, “The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families,” *Journal of Family Issues* 27, no. 4, 459.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 459.

¹⁴² Cameron Lee, *PK: Helping Pastors’ Kids Through Their Identity Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1992), 136.

existence.¹⁴³ In addition, the authors discuss how clergy children face difficulty in building a social support system. Their limited involvement with non-church related friends often prevents them from sharing their personal struggles without jeopardizing their family's ministerial role. This is further complicated by their experience of moving for ministry at a new church.

Based on a study of 25 undergraduate clergy children:

Most PKs answered that they believed their actions were closely watched by the community and/or church because they were a PK. A large percentage of the PKs said they were expected to be more spiritual and knowledgeable of the Bible than their peers. Most of the PKs answered at least somewhat true or higher to the statement that people expected them to have wild, rebellious behavior.¹⁴⁴

Strange and Sheppard suggest, clergy parents should be “more sensitive to the stresses that come with being the child of a minister and try to be as supportive and understanding as possible. However, it is worth mentioning that pastors “cannot effectively serve the church family and the community until the needs of his family are adequately met.”¹⁴⁵ This leads to the next discussion on the stressor of lacking a support system in the clergy family.

“On Our Own”

While clergy couples are busy caring for the needs of individuals and families in their congregation, who is caring for their family? The lack of understanding and support for clergy families has longtime been a critical issue. Nearly three decades ago,

¹⁴³ Kimberly S. Strange and Lori A. Sheppard, “Evaluations of Clergy Children Verses Non-Clergy Children: Does a Negative Stereotype Exist?” *Pastoral Psychology* 50, no. 1 (2001).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

“Anderson asserted that denominational superiors were often more interested in chastising or condemning the wrong-doings of clergy rather than providing understanding and support.”¹⁴⁶ As of this writing, clergy families are still in need of support to better cope with their daily stress.

Langford suggests, “This is the generation that has the tools and resources to transform the way the pastor’s family is treated. The unique pastor’s family that is deserving of greater respect and care in our churches collectively shares these qualities:

1. Members of the pastor’s family are human and vulnerable.
2. The family needs the care and attention of its members, which includes the care of the pastor.
3. This family is subject to the same problems and challenges that all families face.
4. The pastor’s family may need counseling and professional intervention from outside its own boundaries.
5. This family needs its privacy.
6. This family needs grace and room to grow.
7. The pastor’s family will not necessarily have the same spiritual intensity as the pastor, nor will this family have the same spiritual intensity as certain congregational members.
8. At the same time, some members of the pastor’s family may have a deeper spirituality than the pastor himself.¹⁴⁷

What would happen if a pastor and his family members received the benefits of having a “healing community”¹⁴⁸ – a social support system including personal coach, therapist, spiritual director, peer support group, etc.? This network of caring individuals

¹⁴⁶ G. Anderson, “Who Is Ministering to Ministers,” *Christianity Today* 7 no. 8 (1963): 6-7, in Michael L. Morris and Priscilla W. Blanton, “Denominational Perceptions of Stress and the Provision of Support Services for Clergy Families,” *Pastoral Psychology*, 42, no. 5 (1994): 346.

¹⁴⁷ Daniel L. Langford, *The Pastor’s Family* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1998), 59.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

would help foster during the healing process for clergy families where their “wounds and pains *become* openings or occasions for a new vision”¹⁴⁹

Perry argues, “For years mental health professionals taught people that they could be psychologically healthy without social support...The truth is you cannot love yourself unless you have been loved and are loved. The capacity to love cannot be built in isolation.”¹⁵⁰ Scripture affirms, “If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.”¹⁵¹ Otherwise, continually ignoring this problem places clergy families at serious health risks which jeopardizes their emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Unhealthy Clergy Families Leads to Unhealthy Churches

Burnout in clergy families has a negative impact on the congregation. Howe challenges the church with these probing questions:

Are not pastors supposed to be the models for the rest of the congregation families? Does not their calling from God both require and empower them to be “special” people, setting the tone and example for all human relationships? How is it, then, that so many are allowing their own marital and family difficulties to cripple their effectiveness in ministry? How can parishioners learn about living godly lives if they cannot count on the pastor to be one who “has it together” as the family leader?¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York: Image Books, 1972), 90.

¹⁵⁰ Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Loss, Love, and Healing* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2006), 262.

¹⁵¹ Ecclesiastes 4:10.

¹⁵² Leroy T. Howe, “Casting Down Our Golden Crowns Around the Glassy Sea: Travail and Triumph in the Parsonage Family,” *Quarterly Review* (1998): 261.

Therefore, an increased awareness is needed for churches to view the health of pastors and clergy families as an important priority “for the well-being of a congregation.”¹⁵³ Friedman affirms, “Clearly defined, non-anxious leadership promotes healthy differentiation throughout a system, while reactive, peace-at-all-costs, anxious leadership does the opposite.”¹⁵⁴

Weaver affirms, “Strong [clergy] families work to develop and maintain relationships beyond the family unit that give the members a sense of being valued and appreciated. Robust families maintain close involvement with [their] church...and other organizations that promote the well-being of [their] family. [Clergy] marriages are more likely to endure and strengthen when they are supported by communities of people committed to their growth.”¹⁵⁵ To that end, an unhealthy pastor leads to an unhealthy church. In reverse, a healthy pastor contributes to a healthy church.

Summary

Stress is inevitable in ministry leadership. However, excessive stress can lead to ministry burnout. There is an increasing rate of burnout or on the verge of burnout currently occurring among clergy professionals due to having unrealistic expectations, time demands, and intrusiveness from church congregations. This chapter has outlined the systemic effects that clergy burnout has on subsystems (parent/child and

¹⁵³ Bob Burns et al., *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 170.

¹⁵⁴ Edwin Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing, 2017), 215.

¹⁵⁵ Andrew J. Weaver et al., *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 32.

spouse/spouse) and even the church. Where do we go from here? Next, this dissertation will explore historical and current approaches that address this ministry problem.

SECTION 2: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

This chapter will examine alternative approaches to clergy burnout. “In about every Christian denomination today, churches across North America have one thing in common, a pastorate whose health is fast becoming cause for concern.¹⁵⁶” According to Wilson and Hoffman, among the ministers across the United States:

- 25 percent have been forced out of or fired from their ministry at least once.
- 90 percent feel inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands.
- 80 percent believe that pastoral ministry affects their families negatively.
- 45 percent say they’ve experienced depression or burnout to the extent that they needed to take a leave of absence.
- 40 percent have serious conflict with a church member at least once a month.
- 20 percent admit to having an affair while in the ministry.
- 37 percent admit that Internet pornography is a current struggle.
- 70 percent do not have someone they consider a close friend.¹⁵⁷

These alarming statistics reveal that clergy either experience burnout or they are on the verge of burnout. In addition, their struggle with burnout symptoms affects their loved ones too.

To address this concern, Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie conducted extensive research on the current state of health for pastors.¹⁵⁸ Their study was conducted with seventy-three participating evangelical pastors from various states across the United States. The data gathered from this study allowed for these researchers to narrow their focus to five major themes: Spiritual Formation, Self-care, Emotional and Cultural

¹⁵⁶ Bob Wells, “Which Way to Clergy Health?” *Divinity* (2002): 1, in Arthur Schaefer and Steve Jacobsen, “Surviving Clergy Burnout,” *Encounter* 70, no. 1 (2009): 45.

¹⁵⁷ Michael T. Wilson, and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A Shepherd Care Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 31.

¹⁵⁸ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 21.

Intelligence, Marriage and Family, and Leadership and Management, which these researchers argue contribute to resilience in ministry leadership.

Similarly, in an article entitled, “Health Essentials for Ministers and their Families,” Flynn examines the health status of pastors.¹⁵⁹ He identifies four key stressors as the causation for this ministry problem: Boundary Stressors, Loneliness Stressors, Identity Stressors, and Healthy Stressors. Flynn argues that once these stressors have been identified, a “firewall should be integrated into the lives of the ministers...to help them cope with these key stressors.”¹⁶⁰

Based on this evidence, stress and burnout in ministry leadership appears to be an ongoing problem. Chronic stress among pastors also causes suffering for their loved ones. Therefore, it is imperative that we find effective solutions for entire clergy families. How has ministerial stress and burnout been addressed historically? What are the contemporary solutions that address this ministry problem? How effective have these approaches been on reducing the occurrence of ministry burnout? In the next chapter this dissertation will explore some of these alternative approaches.

Historical Approaches

It is noteworthy of mentioning the contributions that have been made by church denominations to care for ministers and their family members. For this thesis, relevant data was retrieved during field research on leader care provided by denominations. Those who participated in this field research were senior leaders who provided leader care for

¹⁵⁹ James T. Flynn, “Firewall: Health Essentials for Ministers and Their Families,” *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2009).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 315.

their ministers. These participants currently serve as district overseers/district superintendents for their church denominations – mostly from Mid-western and Southern states. They all share a common passion for ministering to their struggling ministers.

Based on their feedback, each of their denominations receive referrals of struggling pastors from various churches or district offices. The type of services that each of their denominations provide varies depending on the level of service that they are able to offer. In general, their services are comprised of pastoral counseling for clergy individuals or clergy couples to mediate crisis situations.¹⁶¹ Referrals are made for clergy/clergy couples who require psychotherapy. Few of them provide additional services including peer support groups, weekly podcasts on leader care topics, website links to articles on depression, anxiety, etc.¹⁶² Even a fewer number mentioned leadership development training for their pastors.¹⁶³ Furthermore, none of these denominations provide Sabbaticals for their pastors.

During these interviews, there a common theme was noted among pastors of having poor boundaries.¹⁶⁴ Based on participant feedback, “many pastors do not know how to rest and relax. They have even left their family vacations to tend to the needs of church families.”¹⁶⁵ One participant shared a story about a pastor who regularly took a

¹⁶¹ Participant feedback during interviews for field research (October and November 2019).

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., a direct quote from one of the participants during interviews for field research (October and November 2019).

separate car on his family vacation in case of a church emergency.¹⁶⁶ Having blurred boundary lines between their work life and family life “prevents pastors from having a place of refuge – a place to get away from the demands and the pressures that are around them.”¹⁶⁷ Another participant affirmed, “Work-load and balance is the highest need among pastors. They need a 24-hour period where they are able to separate from all of the things that are going on around them.”¹⁶⁸

Establishing healthy boundaries involves learning how to set appropriate limits in our lives.¹⁶⁹ Cloud and Townsend suggest this is one of the most serious problems facing Christians today.¹⁷⁰ They further assert, “Many sincere, dedicated believers struggle with tremendous confusion about when it is Biblically appropriate to set limits.”¹⁷¹ However, “many of our pastors struggle with false guilt over taking time off from work for rest.”¹⁷²

In addition, all participants agreed that there is an urgent need for training in burnout prevention among evangelical pastors. One participant mentioned, “many pastors experience vicarious trauma but have never taken a class on compassion fatigue. When they start having symptoms, they immediately question their calling and want to quit. Our

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., a direct quote from one of the participants during interviews for field research (October and November 2019).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, When to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 25.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 26.

¹⁷² Direct quote from participant during interviews for field research (October and November 2019).

church denomination does not even require seminary training for pastors. As a result, few pastors have the training they need in leader care.”¹⁷³

Finally, all participants shared their common concern about pastors needing to have a support system or a “supportive circle,” as one participant called it. Many pastors experience feelings of isolation in their church leadership and would therefore benefit from receiving emotional support. One participant suggested, “We need to be challenged to discuss this issue at the organizational level. Those serving at the top of our leadership need to provide training for pastors on how to care themselves. In addition, our churches need to receive training on how to care for their pastors.”

Next, this chapter will identify six contemporary solutions for the problem of stress and burnout in clergy families. Each of these approaches will be recognized for their unique contributions. Thereafter, an analysis will be made on these identified solutions, which will include an evaluation of their effectiveness on addressing this ministry problem.

Solution One: Total Ministries

Contributions

*Total Ministry Health*¹⁷⁴ is a non-profit organization that was launched by its founder Scott Reams who had for many years conducting doctoral research on “the damaging effects of transitions, crisis, and burnout among ministry leaders.”¹⁷⁵ As part of

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ “Total Ministries,” accessed June 1, 2020, <http://www.totalministryhealth.com/about.html>.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

his dissertation¹⁷⁶ efforts, Reams developed an assessment tool, “Ream Pastoral Health Scale” which is designed to be used to measure burnout among pastors in addition to other variables. This assessment was validated using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)¹⁷⁷ – the leading research instrument that has been used for more than thirty years to measure burnout. The intended outcome of Ream’s study was to evaluate the health of the eighty-three Christian Missionary Alliance pastors who agreed to participate with his research.¹⁷⁸ This 60-question scale survey focused on three primary areas: Spiritual Maturity, Emotional Health, and Physical Environment. It also measures fifteen subcategories of health and burnout which Reams pairs with the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Following the assessment, pastors receive a customized 22-page report on their assessment results along with a self-help manual. They also have the option to pursue “ministry coaching”¹⁷⁹ through *Total Ministry Health* or other services such as psychotherapy, etc. The ministry coaching provided through this organization provides assists pastors with establishing goals for improving their ministry health.

¹⁷⁶ Scott T. Reams, “Pastoral Health and Burnout: Spiritual Maturity, Emotional Health, and Physical Environment” (dissertation, Alliance Theological Seminary, 2016).

¹⁷⁷ Thomas M. Skovholt, *The Resilient Practitioner* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2001) 107.

¹⁷⁸ Scott T. Reams, “Pastoral Health and Burnout: Spiritual Maturity, Emotional Health, and Physical Environment” (dissertation, Alliance Theological Seminary, 2016).

¹⁷⁹ “Total Ministries,” accessed June 1, 2020, <http://www.totalministryhealth.com/about.html>.

Limitations

The “Ream Pastoral Health Scale Assessment”¹⁸⁰ appears to be a helpful tool for measuring the well-being of pastors. While this assessment can be accessed through a public domain website, it does not seem to be clear on whether evangelical pastors from other denominations are being informed of these resources as well. Furthermore, Ream’s tool focuses on the well-being of pastors and does not address the systemic needs of clergy family members.

Solution Two: Emotionally Healthy Leader Formation

Contributions

As the author of *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, Peter Scazzero argues “the emotionally unhealthy leader is someone who operates in a continuous state of emotional and spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a ‘being *with* God’ sufficient to sustain their ‘doing *for* God’.”¹⁸¹ This book urges leaders to carefully examine their inner and outer lives. Among these areas, only the *Healthy Use of Power and Boundary Making* step is relevant for burnout prevention in that the pastoral leader needs to develop appropriate boundaries in his ministry setting.

In the following paragraphs, this paper will briefly outline the steps for developing the inner life of the pastoral leader based on *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*. The first step, *Facing One’s Shadow* refers to the pastoral leader developing emotional

¹⁸⁰ Scott T. Reams, “Pastoral Health and Burnout: Spiritual Maturity, Emotional Health, and Physical Environment” (dissertation, Alliance Theological Seminary, 2016).

¹⁸¹ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 25.

intelligence, which includes an awareness of one's emotions and the ability to manage them successfully. It further includes that the pastoral leader addresses unresolved issues from his or her past. This relates to burnout prevention because the pastor needs to be able to practice emotional self-regulation.

The second step is *Leading out of One's Marriage or Singleness*. It includes prioritizing one's marital relationship as he serves in ministry leadership. The following outlines three key areas that illustrate this step:

- Marriage Is Your First Ambition - married Christian leaders must shift from leading our church, organization, or team to loving our spouse passionately.
- Marriage Is Your First Passion – this means that our passion – the focus of that strong and barely controllable emotion – is not devoted to pursuing leadership goals or achievements, but to our spouse.
- Marriage is Your Loudest Gospel Message – which means for leaders to preach the love of Christ through their marriage by setting their hearts on making what is important to their spouses also important to them.¹⁸²

The above-mentioned step is very relevant for burnout prevention since a thriving marital relationship can serve as a buffer for burnout. This means a healthy marital relationship provides healthy coping resources for the pastoral leader. The third step is *Slowing Down for Loving Union*. It refers to the importance of pastoral leaders' communion with God on a regular basis, which addresses a leader's spiritual formation with the focus on *being with God* as opposed to *doing for God*. This step involves for leaders to craft their Rule of Life which directly relates to burnout prevention since the communion with God can potentially prevent burnout by reducing excessive "doing for God."

¹⁸² Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 92-99.

The fourth step is *Practicing Sabbath Delight*. It includes establishing a sacred rhythm of life for the pastoral leader. This sacred rhythm includes practicing Sabbath-keeping regularly. This is also an important step for preventing burnout in ministry since few pastors regularly take time off for rest.

Peter along with his wife, Geri Scazzero are also co-founders of *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship*, “a groundbreaking ministry that equips churches in a deep, beneath-the-surface spiritual formation paradigm that integrates emotional health and contemplative spirituality.”¹⁸³ Their website¹⁸⁴ features various resources including a free 47-question personal assessment that church leaders can take on Emotional Health and Spiritual Maturity,¹⁸⁵ an *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (EHS) Discipleship* course, and top ranked podcasts for church leaders hosted by Peter. The Emotionally Healthy Leader podcasts include the following topics: “Finding Rest While Under Pressure,” “Limits, God’s Grace in Disguise,” and Surrendering to God’s Season When Life Turns Upside Down” – to name a few.

Limitations

Scazzeros’ approach does not address the needs of children. And does not include modifying perceptions and other systems concepts (adaptability, communicate on, etc.).

¹⁸³ Bible Gateway, “Jonathan Peterson Interview with Peter Scazzero,” June 30, 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/blog/2015/06/the-emotionally-healthy-leader-an-interview-with-peter-scazzero/>

¹⁸⁴ Peter Scazzero, “Emotionally Healthy Discipleship,” accessed June 1, 2020, www.emotionallyhealthy.org.

¹⁸⁵ Peter Scazzero, “Emotional Health and Spiritual Maturity Personal Assessment,” Emotionally Healthy Discipleship, accessed June 1, 2020, https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/mature/personal-assessment/?v=7516fd43adaa_

Additionally, there is no statistical analysis given of the assessment which is also a limitation.

Solution Three: Short Term Evaluation and Psychotherapy

Contributions

For nearly 50 years, established in 1973, Emerge Counseling Ministries has been caring for the needs of ministry leaders by providing counseling services (and other services such as “Healthy Pastors seminars”). Their staff is comprised of 29 mental health professionals including counselors who are specialized in the needs of pastors and ministry families.¹⁸⁶ This ministry describes its approach in the following statement: “The Emerge way of counseling is the integration of Biblical truth with sound psychological principles to help people live in the “freedom for which Christ set us free (Gal. 5:1)” or to live the “abundant life” that Christ has promised.”¹⁸⁷

Emerge recognizes the rewards and obstacles faced by church ministry leaders and has demonstrated its long-term commitment to helping pastors and ministry families improve their current state of health by offering a specialized service which they refer to as Short Term Evaluation and Psychotherapy (STEP). STEP is an “accelerated counseling service over the course of three to four days”¹⁸⁸ which begins with psychological testing to determine a baseline prior to the initial counseling session.

¹⁸⁶ Emerge Counseling Ministries, “Services,” accessed June 1, 2020, <https://emerge.org/services/>.

¹⁸⁷ Emerge Counseling Ministries, “About,” accessed June 1, 2020, <https://emerge.org/about/>.

¹⁸⁸ Emerge Counseling Ministries, “Ministry Leaders,” accessed June 1, 2020, <https://emerge.org/ministry-leaders>.

Limitations

While Emerge Counseling Ministries includes the language that they provide counseling services to ministry families it appears that they focus more on the needs of the pastor.

Solutions Four: Pastors Empowerment Program

Contributions

In 2015, Abernathy et. al. developed a burnout prevention program, the Pastors Empowerment Program (PEP)¹⁸⁹ for pastors. According to these authors, “there is a pressing need for preventive interventions that may promote physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational aspects of healthy living that may strengthen clergy resilience in the aftermath of complex disasters or other challenging contexts.”¹⁹⁰

The Pastors Empowerment Program refers to itself as an “educational intervention”¹⁹¹ due to its psycho-educational and therapeutic components. Its mission is to “enhance the self-care and psychological resilience of pastors and their spouses/partners serving in the aftermath of trauma or other demanding ministry contexts.”¹⁹² The program was initiated in response stress-related concerns among clergy following the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina. As a result of this disaster, many

¹⁸⁹ Alexis D. Abernathy, Gillian D. Grannum, Carolyn L. Gordon, Rick Williamson, and Joseph M. Currier, “The Pastors Empowerment Program: A Resilience Education Intervention to Prevent Clergy Burnout,” *American Psychological Association* 3, no. 3 (2016).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 175.

of these pastors were on the verge of burnout primarily due to lack of self-care and limited support/resources.

The Pastors Empowerment Program was designed as a three-year program with three primary phases. Phase 1 focuses on self-care (pastoral health, promoting self-awareness, reflecting on relational dynamics, etc.), Phase 2 emphasizes the concept of resilience (information and application of the concept including “healthy renewal practices”), and Phase 3 stresses “cultivating relationships” including expanding the “clergy’s current support network.”¹⁹³ Abernathy et.al. indicate that while this program was originally intended for ministers who had served during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, this program may benefit other clergy as well. Due to the pandemic currently impacting thousands of families across our world, this program would have most likely benefited many clergy serving on the front lines to meet the needs of their congregations and communities.

Limitations

While the Pastors Empowerment Program can be adapted for other clergy in various ministry contexts, it is primarily geared towards crisis intervention rather than prevention, While the article makes references to the needs of clergy spouses, it seems to be primarily designed clergy evidenced by the content of its curriculum. Therefore, it provides insufficient resources for the spouses and children of the pastor.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 179.

Solution Five: Marriage Enrichment Approach

Contributions

David and Vera Mace were well-known counselors and pioneers in the field of marital enrichment. In 1973, they founded the *Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment* (in 2010, the organization was rebranded as *Better Marriages*) – an organization that “emphasized the importance of dealing with personal and interpersonal challenges by providing skills and experiential learning for individuals and families before they get into serious difficulty.”¹⁹⁴ They also served as Executive Directors of the *American Association of Marriage Counselors* for many years. Together, they co-authored 33 books including, *What’s Happening to Clergy Marriages?*¹⁹⁵ which was written in response to their awareness of “grave concerns about pastors in marital trouble.”¹⁹⁶

While the Maces’ approach does not specifically refer to burnout, these authors listed pre-burnout symptoms among other symptoms in describing clergy couples.¹⁹⁷ Their marital enrichment approach includes providing information to foster knowledge and insight as well as includes “experimental action” during which the couples “learn a

¹⁹⁴ Better Marriages, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.bettermarriages.org/>.

¹⁹⁵ David and Vera Mace, *What’s Happening to Clergy Marriages?* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1980).

¹⁹⁶ David and Vera Mace, “Marriage Enrichment for Clergy Couples,” *Pastoral Psychology* 30, no. 3 (1982): 153.

¹⁹⁷ David and Vera Mace, *What’s Happening to Clergy Marriages?* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1980).

new way of interacting” in order to promote long-term behavioral change.¹⁹⁸ This process occurs in “atmosphere of mutual trust in the group of couples” (“community building”) which can be summarized as follows “...marriage enrichment aims to do: to create a unique environment in which a married couple can, under the most favorable conditions possible, learn experientially, and commit themselves to continue, the kind of creative love and companionship that is their hearts’ desire.¹⁹⁹

Limitations

Mace and Mace focus their approach primarily on relationship dynamics of the clergy couple. They do not address the individual needs of the pastor and their approach does not include children. The primary focus is on improving the marital relationship between the husband and the wife.

Benefits of Contemporary Solutions

All the above-mentioned provide a unique contribution to helping improve the well-being of ministers (at least one of them pertains to ministry couples). The criteria used for each of their solutions, ranging from evaluation and coaching to crisis intervention, include an insightful perspective on the integration of biblical and psychological evidenced by their holistic framework. This dissertation will further examine each of these criteria beginning with the usage of assessment tools for evaluation as mentioned in both Ream’s and Scazzero’s approaches.

¹⁹⁸ David R. Mace, *Close Companions: The Marriage Enrichment Handbook* (Winston-Salem, NC: 1982), 64, 70.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

First, assessment tools are helpful for determining an individual's baseline – “how well they were functioning prior to the crisis event.”²⁰⁰ Using the BASIC acronym,

Wright identifies five key areas where assessment is particularly needed:

1. **B** refers to the behavior patterns of the people in crisis. What do you look for? How has their working, eating, and sleeping been impacted by their crisis? You need to know how the current pattern is different.
2. **A** is for their affective functioning. What feelings or inner responses have they experienced? When feelings are identified, look for how they have been translated into behavior.
3. **S** stands for any physical symptoms created in response to the crisis. Are they new or have old ones intensified?
4. **I** relates to the interpersonal category of functioning. How has this crisis impacted the other people in this person's world? What kind of support system does he or she have?
5. **C** stands for cognition. What are the thoughts, should and should nots, dreams, thought distortion or destructive fantasies?²⁰¹

According to Grenny et al., it is important to regularly maintain measurable outcomes.²⁰² “Measurement is an integral part of the change effort, and done correctly, it informs and drives behavior.”²⁰³ Assessments can help an individual to identify potential behavioral growth areas as well as obstacles that may prevent their growth. Ongoing assessments also help determine what is working and what is not working during the behavioral change process. For example, the Emotional Intelligence (EI) Star Profile Assessment screens for areas of competence such as emotional self-awareness, self-

²⁰⁰ Norman H. Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling: What to Do and Say When it Matters Most!* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2011), 153.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 153.

²⁰² Joseph Grenny et al., *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2013).

²⁰³ Ibid., 23.

management, social awareness, and relationship management.²⁰⁴ This instrument can also be helpful by allowing individuals to see if perceived competencies align with what others notice about them. Northouse affirms, “people who are more sensitive to their emotions and the impact of their emotions on others will be leaders that are more effective.”²⁰⁵ In general, assessments can be an effective method for both measuring and monitoring a person’s current state of health in terms of their emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing.

Next, this dissertation will discuss the benefits of coaching as also mentioned in Ream’s approach. Professional coaching is “an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. Coaches help people improve their performances and professional lives.”²⁰⁶ Other coaching definitions include the following: Coaching is “the art and practice of enabling individuals and groups to move from where they are to where they want to be.”²⁰⁷ To further explain, “Coaching helps people expand their visions, build their confidence, unlock their potential increase their skills, and take practical steps towards their goals.”²⁰⁸ Grenny et.al. suggest that a leader’s first steps toward change are “focus and measure”²⁰⁹ and establish

²⁰⁴ Reldan Nadler, *Leading with Emotional Intelligence: Hands-On Strategies for Building Confident and Collaborative Star Performers* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011), 67-71.

²⁰⁵ Peter Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2015), 24.

²⁰⁶ Patrick Williams and Diane S. Menendez, *Becoming a Professional Life Coach: Lessons from the Institute for Life Coach Training* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2007), xxix.

²⁰⁷ Gary R. Collins, *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009), 14.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁰⁹ Joseph Grenny, etc. *Influencer* 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2013), 16.

clarity on their stated goals.²¹⁰ Otherwise, a leader’s “fuzzy, un compelling goals”²¹¹ will result in “only a vague sense of what they’ll achieve.”²¹²

A practical tool for coaches to use with clients is S.M.A.R.T. goals²¹³ (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) which was introduced in the published work of Dr. Edwin Locke in the 1960’s.²¹⁴ Helping coaching clients with determining their goals is one of the core elements of the behavioral change process.

An executive coach mentioned the following: “As a society, we may lose twenty to fifty years of experienced leadership, innovation, and contribution when a leader retreats or is removed from the forefront and decides to never again assume important responsibilities, all because of burnout. Therefore, coaching can benefit by “helping [leaders] to sustain productivity and improve life/work balance.”²¹⁵ In addition, the author of this dissertation holds the following views: Coaching involves the following essential elements: create a safe environment for the coachee, meet the coachee where they are in their situation, regularly assess the coachee’s readiness for change (and refer for therapy when needed), and provide the coachee with ongoing support and encouragement.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid., 16.

²¹² Ibid., 16.

²¹³ Joseph Krause, “The History and Evolution of SMART Goals,” Achieve It, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.achieveit.com/resources/blog/the-history-and-evolution-of-smart-goals>.

²¹⁴ Joseph Krause, “The History and Evolution of SMART Goals,” Achieve It, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.achieveit.com/resources/blog/the-history-and-evolution-of-smart-goals>.

²¹⁵ A direct quote from Gary Wood, an executive coach who helps leaders deal with burnout at <http://www.leaderandprofessional.com> In Gary R. Collins, *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009), 278.

Similar to coaching is marriage enrichment, which is featured in the Maces' approach. Marriage enrichment can be described as "creating a unique environment in which a marriage couple can...learn experientially, and commit themselves to continue, the kind of creative love and companionship that is their hearts' desire."²¹⁶ Mace argues,

Everyone makes great efforts to ensure the success of the wedding, which lasts a few hours. But nobody does anything much to ensure the success of the marriage, which is expected to last a lifetime. Hosts of friends congratulate the couple, wish them well, then walk discreetly away and leave them to their own devices. After that, no inquiries are made, no checkups, no offers to help.²¹⁷

He further explains, "we need to "discover why so many people are failing to find satisfaction in married life; and then to consider whether we can do something about it."²¹⁸

Finally, this dissertation will examine the benefits of crisis intervention, which is referenced in both approaches, Abernathy et.al. and *Emerge Ministries*. The term crisis is often referred to "a person's internal reaction to an external hazard"²¹⁹ which causes a disruption to his or her "baseline level of functioning."²²⁰ A crisis intervention is "the emergency assistance that focuses on providing guidance and support to help mobilize the resources needed to resolve a crisis."²²¹ It involves the following key principles:

1. Listen - with both head and heart
2. Assess - for both needs and progress
3. Normalize - validate their experience

²¹⁶ David R. Mace, *Close Companions* (Winston-Salem, NC: The Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment, 1982), 70.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 228-229.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 13.

²¹⁹ Norman H. Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling: What to Do and Say When it Matters Most!* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2011), 128.

²²⁰ Ibid., 128.

²²¹ Andrew J. Weaver et al., *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 234.

4. Reassure - let them know they can work through the process
5. Support - affirm any effort they make
6. Plan – realistic, attainable plans, prioritize needs, co-design the plans
7. Educate – printed materials (if appropriate)
8. Monitor – observe for signs of suicidal ideation and intervene promptly when needed²²²

Heifetz's identifies three strategic options that leaders face when they encounter a crisis situation: "circumvention, with the risk of backing into a potential crisis; frontal challenge – getting out in front and becoming the "bearer of bad tidings" by introducing the crisis; or riding the wave – staying just in front of the crisis, anticipating the wave and trying to direct its power as it breaks."²²³ As a pastor, how does he/she determine where to position himself in relation to an issue when dealing with messy church situations?

Analysis

A close examination of these approaches for preventing and treating clergy burnout reveals that solutions either narrowly focus on the individual needs of the pastor or solely on the marital relationship. These solutions are effective, but they are incomplete. For example, the above-mentioned approaches do not adequately address the individual needs of the spouses and children of the clergy household. What is missing are solutions that combine both – leader care and family care that address the needs of entire clergy families. In addition, few of these approaches explicitly include spiritual formation practices as a key component. Furthermore, current solutions are more geared towards responding to crisis situations rather preventing the crisis in the first place. Therefore,

²²² Norman H. Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling: What to Do and Say When it Matters Most!* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2011), 164-165

²²³ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), 166.

finding solutions that focus more on prevention is an urgent need for clergy families.

Summary

In this chapter I have explored the historical solutions offered by church denominations. In addition, this chapter has identified and analyzed five contemporary solutions on ministry burnout, which includes prevention as well as treatment. Based on the author's analysis, there needs to be more emphasis placed on prevention. In fact, church leaders would benefit from being trained during the early phase of their ministry on the following areas: self-care, soul care, and family care, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

SECTION 3: SOLUTION

What is Resilience?

This chapter will discuss my proposed solution including discussing the resilience concept as well as outlining Kilian’s Clergy Family Resilience Model. Resilience is “a person’s capacity to *adapt well* to adversity, crises, trauma, threats, etc. It is *not* a personality trait but involves thoughts and behaviors that can be acquired by everyone.”²²⁴ Resilience is commonly referred to as the ability to “bounce back.”²²⁵ Substantial research indicates that resilience is acquired primarily through having caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family (based on love and trust). Other factors associated with resilience include the capacity to make realistic plans and to carry them out, self-efficacy (belief in one’s strengths and abilities), communication and problem-solving skills, and the capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses.²²⁶

Similarly, the term family resilience is characterized as “coping and adaptational processes in the family as a functional unit.”²²⁷ In dealing with the aftermath of family crisis situations, clergy families need to understand and learn to accept the reality that does not “simply return to a ‘normal’ life as they knew it.”²²⁸ Rather than focusing on

²²⁴ “The Road to Resilience,” brochure published by the American Psychological Association (APA).

²²⁵ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 134.

²²⁶ “The Road to Resilience,” brochure published by the American Psychological Association (APA).

²²⁷ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 15.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 134.

their ability to “bounce back” it may be helpful for clergy families to develop a determination to “bounce forward,” which is characterized by “constructing a new sense of normality and adapting to meet new challenges.”²²⁹ They will need to learn how to “navigate new terrain, recalibrate relationships, and reorganize patterns of interaction to fit new conditions.”²³⁰

Kilian Clergy Family Resilience Model and Approach

While clergy families sacrificially serve the needs of others, their own family needs are often neglected. Burns et.al. assert, “It is time for all of us in the church to raise our understanding of ministry demands, reviews our expectations and make plans for building resilient pastoral excellence.”²³¹ Working towards “resilient pastoral excellence”²³² will, therefore, be the aim for this dissertation. So far, this dissertation has examined the well-being of clergy families from a systemic perspective, revealed disturbing evidence on the occurrence of burnout in clergy families, and identified and analyzed contemporary solutions for this ministry problem.

This dissertation proposes an alternative approach to this ministry dilemma by focusing on two key concepts: clergy burnout prevention and behavioral strategies for cultivating clergy family resilience. Due to the emphasis on prevention, this discussion focuses on male evangelical pastors and their family members in the early and middle

²²⁹ Ibid., 134.

²³⁰ Ibid., 134.

²³¹ Bob Burns et al., *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 28.

²³² Ibid., 28.

years of the family life stages²³³ characterized by married couples between the ages of 30 to 45 with younger children and/or adolescents. Emerging clergy families need to be prepared and equipped for dealing with complex and challenging ministerial demands by receiving training on burnout prevention. Fletcher and Sarkar (2013), affirm, “resilience development training” is very helpful for individuals and groups who are at risk for chronic stress, such as burnout.²³⁴

²³³ Andrew J. Weaver et al. *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2002).

²³⁴ Alexis D. Abernathy, Gillian D. Grannum, Carolyn L. Gordon, Rick Williamson, and Joseph M. Currier, “The Pastors Empowerment Program: A Resilience Education Intervention to Prevent Clergy Burnout,” *American Psychological Association* 3, no. 3 (2016).

Kilian Clergy Family Resilience Model

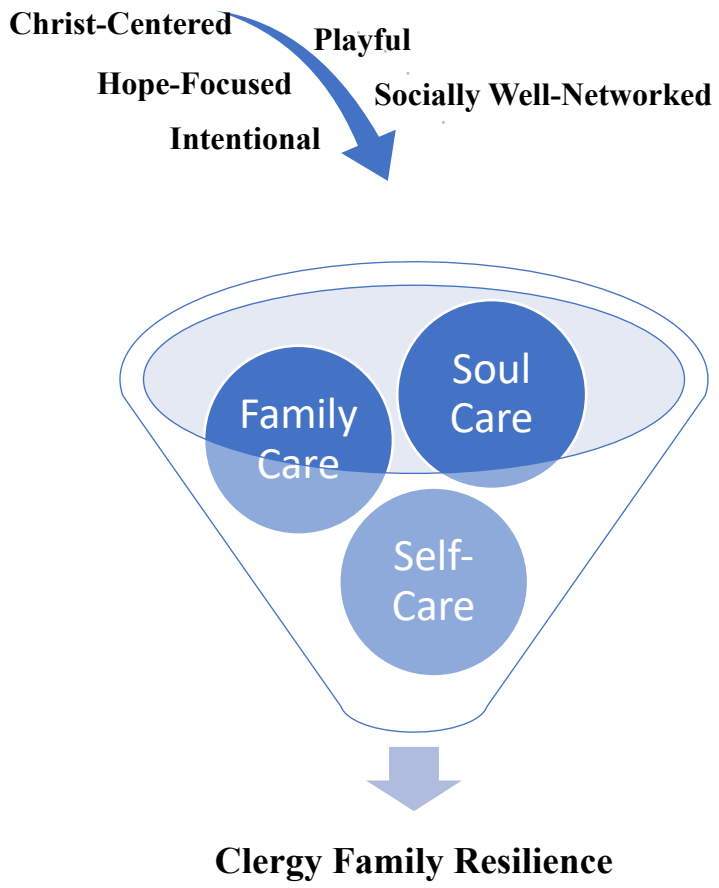


Figure 6. Kilian’s Clergy Family Resilience Model

Description of the Model

The Kilian Clergy Family Resilience Model is exclusively designed for pastors and their wives. Its purpose is to clergy and their spouses with training and coaching on ways to cultivate resilience in their families. This model will be used to illustrate how the combination of self-care, soul care, and family care practices contribute towards clergy family resilience.

Essential Ingredients for Family Resilience

The essential ingredients of family resilience are illustrated by the **CHIPS** acronym:

C stands for Christ-Centered

H refers to Hope-Focused

I relates to Intentional

P is for Playful

S refers to Socially Well-Networked

Christ-Centered

The clergy family is Christ-centered because family relationships are characterized by a covenant commitment, “which has [God’s] unconditional love at its core.”²³⁵ Based on the ABC-X Model, factor C (Perceptions) can be applied to determine how clergy families can cope with crisis and stress. Factor C (Perceptions) includes “parental beliefs, values, attitudes, [and] expectations,” which either increase or “decrease the emotional burdens associated with stressors.”²³⁶ By maintaining a Christ-centered perspective, clergy families can make sense of their crisis and stressors. Walsh discusses the importance of families “meaning making” in their approach to overcome stress and crisis. This consists of learned optimism (as illustrated in Hebrew 11), values

²³⁵ Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 21.

²³⁶ Gary W. Peterson, Charles B. Hennon, and Terence Knox, “Conceptualizing Parental Stress With Family Stress Theory,” in *Families and Change*, 4th ed., ed. Sharon J. Princes, Christine A. Price, and Patrick C. McKenry (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 39.

and purpose, and spirituality.²³⁷ She mentions that spiritual beliefs and practices can “foster strong family functioning” during times of crisis.²³⁸ Spirituality within the family can be reinforced by crafting a family rule of life (see appendix G). A family rule of life can help ensure that intentional efforts are being made on spending time daily together with God and with one another. For instance, some pastors attribute their resilience due to “spiritual activities that were part of the marriage: praying together, praying for one another, and reading the Bible together.”²³⁹

Hope-Focused

In order to have intentional family living, the clergy family needs to have “a sustaining hope in the face of overwhelming odds.”²⁴⁰ Hope is an essential ingredient for dealing with crisis and trauma because it characterizes resilient clergy families.²⁴¹ Walsh illustrates the word hope as “[leaping] with expectations,” which is from the old English meaning of hope.²⁴² Martin Luther King Jr. articulated hope in the following way, “We must accept finite disappointment but we must never lose infinite hope.”²⁴³ Hope is a component of the “belief systems” in Walsh’s family resilience model, which is

²³⁷ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 55.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

²³⁹ Kathryn R. Meek, et al., “Maintaining Personal Resilience: Lessons Learned from Evangelical Protestant Clergy,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 31, no 4 (2003): 343.

²⁴⁰ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 65.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 65 (quote by Martin Luther King, Jr.).

necessary for family resilience (note that belief systems refers to factor C in the ABC-X Model).²⁴⁴ The concept of hope is also key ingredient in the Hope Focused Couple Therapy Model.²⁴⁵ From a biblical perspective, hope includes “faith as the evidence things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).” Spiritual hope is centered in the clergy family’s faith in God and directly pertains to marital relationships in clergy families: “they have faith that their relationship will be full of love, care, fidelity and intimacy” (see appendix C).²⁴⁶

For example, clergy families can work together to select a scripture verse on hope to adopt, memorize, and include in their Family Rule of Life. They could also do a Daily Examen Prayer of Gratitude at the end of each day. Each of these spiritual practices can help foster hope for clergy families during crisis situations. Later in this paper these spiritual practices will be discussed in greater detail.

Intentional

As a recap, key concepts from family systems theory include healthy family functioning such as cohesion, adaptability, stability, and structure.²⁴⁷ These key concepts will now be used to illustrate resilience through having intentional family living. Walsh informs, “A crisis can shatter family cohesion, leaving members unable to rely on each other.”²⁴⁸ Therefore, family cohesion is a key ingredient for “effective family

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 65.

²⁴⁵ Jennifer S. Ripley and Everett L. Worthington, Jr., *Couple Therapy: A New Hope-Focused Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014).

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 24.

²⁴⁷ Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).

²⁴⁸ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 135.

functioning.”²⁴⁹ Weaver et.al. explain, “Strong [clergy] families take pride in their identity as a unit. They know they can depend on one another and can work together to solve common problems. Commitment is demonstrated by the fact that the members invest much of their time and energy together.”²⁵⁰ Their ability to successfully do so indicates intentionality in being a cohesive family unit.

Adaptability, which is also implied in the ABC-X Model as previously discussed, means the clergy family system has successfully changed “roles, rules, patterns of interaction, and perceptions” in response to a family crisis/stressor.²⁵¹ Adaptation, also referred to as the process of recovery from stress and crisis, may occur “either through the elimination of disruptions in family relationships and the return to preexisting patterns or by moving to new levels of relationship organization and stability.”²⁵² Walsh affirms the concept of “adaptive change” and identifies flexibility as being “a core process in resilience.”²⁵³ She therefore suggests, “How a family confronts and manages a disruptive experience, buffers stress, effectively reorganizes, and moves forward with life will

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 135.

²⁵⁰ Andrew J. Weaver et al., *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 31.

²⁵¹ Sharon J. Price, Christine A. Price, and Patrick C. McKenry, “Families Coping With Change,” In *Families and Change*, 4th ed., ed. Sharon J. Prices, Christine A. Price, and Patrick C. McKenry (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 15.

²⁵² Gary W. Peterson, Charles B. Hennon, and Terence Knox, “Conceptualizing Parental Stress With Family Stress Theory,” In *Families and Change*, 4th ed., ed. Sharon J. Price, Christine A. Price, and Patrick C. McKenry (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 41.

²⁵³ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 134.

influence immediate and long-term adaptation for every families member and for the very survival and well-being of the family unit.”²⁵⁴

Likewise, stability and structure is evidenced in clergy families who make intentional efforts by setting appropriate boundaries, establishing clear family rules, and maintaining family traditions. To develop resilience, clergy families need to learn how “to buffer and counterbalance disruptive changes and regain stability.”²⁵⁵ In addition, intentional family living involves identifying family values (see appendix E), which would allow them to determine if their family values align with their family goals. Thereafter it can be helpful for clergy families to reflect on the following: Have you set goals – both short term and long-term goals for your family? 5 years/10 years. What are the obstacles hindering your family from achieving these desired goals?

Playful

One of the characteristics of resilient families is having positive interactions with one another.²⁵⁶ Positive interactions include sharing humor.²⁵⁷ Walsh acknowledges, “Abundant research attests to the importance of humor in times of crisis and hardship.”²⁵⁸ Using humor enables clergy families to better cope with tough situations.²⁵⁹ The ability to apply humor when feeling heartache and despair allows clergy families “to detoxify

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 15.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 134.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 114.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

threatening situations and lessen anxiety,” which promotes warmth and affection with one another.²⁶⁰

As a synonym to humor is the pleasurable activity of playfulness. Shigematsu describes, “Play is more like a meal shared with a beloved friend.”²⁶¹ Clergy families can mitigate crisis and stress when they “simply delight in the company of God and [one another].”²⁶² From a theological perspective, Oswald explains the concept of laughter by discussing the importance of “believing and experiencing God to be a God of great love and compassion...with a sense of humor as well.”²⁶³

Medical science also informs us that play “refreshes our bodies...when our minds and bodies experience renewal through play, our spirits are lifted too.”²⁶⁴ In fact, studies reveal that “laughter decreases the perception of pain...it both stimulates and relaxes.”²⁶⁵ This means that clergy families would be able to relax together if they discovered ways to laugh together. During time of stress and crisis, clergy families may struggle with their ability to experience laughter but “those are the times when we most need a good laugh.”²⁶⁶ The following story of an eighty-seven-year-old student named Rose will be used to illustrate this important principle:

²⁶⁰ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 114.

²⁶¹ Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People to Enjoy God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 143.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Family* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 1991), 183-184.

²⁶⁴ Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 144.

²⁶⁵ Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Family* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 1991), 181.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 183.

The first day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know. I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder. I turned round to find a wrinkled, little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being. She said, "Hi handsome. My name is Rose. I'm eighty-seven years old. Can I give you a hug?" I laughed and enthusiastically responded, "Of course you may!" and she gave me a giant squeeze. "Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?" I asked... [She said], "I always dreamed of having a college education and now I'm getting one!" she told me. After class we walked to the student union building and shared a chocolate milkshake. We became instant friends. ...Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and she easily made friends wherever she went...At the end of the semester we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet. I'll never forget what she taught us. She was introduced and stepped up to the podium. As she began to deliver her prepared speech, she dropped her three by five cards on the floor. Frustrated and a little embarrassed she leaned into the microphone and simply said, "I'm sorry I'm so jittery. I gave up beer for Lent and this whiskey is killing me! I'll never get my speech back in order so let me just tell you what I know." As we laughed, she cleared her throat and began, "We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. There are only four secrets to staying young, being happy, and achieving success. You have to laugh and find humor every day."²⁶⁷

Support Network

Strong clergy families are "well-networked socially."²⁶⁸ A social support network refers to factor B of the ABC-X Model, which consists of two types: "emotional support" (caring relationships) and "instrumental support" (concrete assistance).²⁶⁹ Both are needed for dealing with clergy family crisis and stress. Positive social support increases coping abilities, enhances the emotional well-being of the parents, and improves the quality of parenting by encouraging "parents to be more nurturant and rational" when

²⁶⁷ "Rose the 87-Year Old College Student: Real or Fake," Waffles at Noon, accessed June 1, 2020, <http://wafflesatnoon.com/real-or-fake-rose-the-87-year-old-college-student/>.

²⁶⁸ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006).

²⁶⁹ Gary W. Peterson, Charles B. Hennon, and Terence Knox, "Conceptualizing Parental Stress With Family Stress Theory," In *Families and Change*, 4th ed., ed. Sharon J. Price, Christine A. Price, and Patrick C. McKenry (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 37.

providing discipline.²⁷⁰ To be connected to a support network in times of crisis is “vitaly important for family resilience.”²⁷¹ Having a support network provides “affirmation” and “encouragement” for clergy families as they navigate challenging situations which helps them to “counter a sense of helplessness, failure, and blame as it reinforces pride, confidence, and a ‘can do’ spirit.”²⁷²

Resilient clergy families possess the courage to admit that they need help and then turn to their social support network for help. Research indicates that it is not the size of the social network nor the frequency of contacts but the quality of the relationships that makes a difference.²⁷³ In addition, positive social support network can help members of the clergy household to become aware of their own blind spots. Examples of positive support systems include spiritual friendship, personal coaching, individual/couple/family therapy, spiritual direction, peer support group, etc. – this type of support helps clergy families “build confidence and competence through experiences of successful mastery, as they learn that their efforts can make a difference.”²⁷⁴ Developing family resilience is not an easy task especially for clergy families who experience chronic stress. In fact, it requires a lot of hard work, steadfast commitment, relentless faith, and remarkable courage. This reinforces the argument that a strong support system is needed for clergy families.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 38.

²⁷¹ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 99-100.

²⁷² Ibid., 133.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 133.

Key Components of Kilian’s Clergy Family Resilience Model

The following story will be used to introduce this discussion on self-care. This story is a modified version ²⁷⁵ of the Parable of the Good Samaritan which is based on the Scripture passage in Luke 10:29-37:

You were going down life’s road when you fell into the hands of stressors. They stripped you of your energy and left you wounded and totally exhausted. A priest, who was in reality the religious part of you, saw you lying there hurting and weary and said, “this poor person has a spiritual problem. I’ll remember to pray for this unfortunate one at church.”

Then a Levite, who was, in reality, the performing part of you, came by and said, “This poor character really looks all worn out, but I know that she can get up if she really wants to. After all, where there’s a will there’s a way.” The Levite hurried on to a committee meeting. Next came a Samaritan. The Samaritan was in reality the sympathetic part of yourself which is not too well thought of by the religious and performing parts. The Samaritan came by and saw how totally burnt out you were. This Samaritan cancelled all plans for the time being and bandaged your wounds as you lay there, injured. The Samaritan poured on the oil of compassion and nurture. Then the Samaritan saw to it that you had a place where you could rest. The Samaritan promised to pay whatever it cost to see you well again.

Jesus asked, “Which of these was a neighbor to the one who had fallen into the hands of the stressors?” The answer was, “The one who had mercy.” Jesus said, “Go and do likewise.” When you see yourself as an exhausted victim of too much stress, then you know that Jesus would have you stop in the middle of your journey, care for your wounds, and rest until you are better. During this season of your life, practice being a Good Samaritan to yourself.²⁷⁶

Self-care: Equipping the Pastor for Tending to Their Personal Well-being

The concept of self-care includes “the pursuit of physical, mental, and emotional health.”²⁷⁷ Self-care has been described as “the wisdom to ensure, as far as humanly

²⁷⁵ Pat King, *An Invitation to Take Care of Yourself: Lessons from the Good Samaritan* Adapted from “Scripture Based Solutions for Handling Stress.” (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1990).

²⁷⁶ Pat King, *An Invitation to Take Care of Yourself* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1990).

²⁷⁷ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 21.

possible, a wise and orderly work that conserves and lengthens a pastor's ministry."²⁷⁸ In general, self-care involves maintaining a healthy eating habits, regular exercise, and good sleep hygiene.

In addition, self-care involves learning how to maintain balance between discipline and play and "doing" and "being." Many clergy do not regularly maintain their self-care practices, which may result in lower levels of emotional, physical, and/or spiritual well-being. Therefore, they need to be encouraged to pursue hobbies of personal interests, fun adventures, life-giving friendships, and regular time off for rest. Resilient pastors focus on "engaging in physical health activities, receiving adequate rest, adapting flexible schedules, upholding healthy emotional boundaries, and seeking support and counsel when encountering challenges."²⁷⁹ Completing a self-care assessment (see appendix B) would enable clergy to evaluate their strengths and growth areas as they relate to their self-care practices.

Courage to Explore Hidden Areas

Scazzero urges ministry leaders to examine the "hidden mass" which he refers to as "beneath the-surface components."²⁸⁰ He illustrates how having a lack of self-

²⁷⁸ Peter Brain, *Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry* (Kingsford, NSW: Matthias Media, 2004), 24, In Bob Burns, et al *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 21.

²⁷⁹ Scott Bledsoe, "Thriving in Ministry: Exploring the Support Systems and Self-Care Practices of Experienced Pastors," *Research Gate* (2015): 49, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306372306_Thriving_in_Ministry_Exploring_the_Support_Systems_and_Self-Care_Practices_of_Experienced_Pastors.

²⁸⁰ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 16-17.

awareness on the condition of their emotional health and spiritual health can be detrimental for ministry leaders by causing for them to “remain stuck in repeated cycles of pain and immaturity.”²⁸¹

Willard affirms, “The thoughts, feelings, and intentions we are aware of are only a small part of the ones that are really there in our depths; and they often are not the ones most revealing of who we actually are and why we do what we do.”²⁸² It is essential for pastors to make courageous efforts of discovery on the level of deep impact that their unconscious activity may have on their daily thought and behavioral patterns. Being aware of our emotions is a prerequisite for successfully manage them.

Pastoral leaders who are unwilling or unable to regulate their emotions eventually end up causing emotional harm on others. For example, some pastors have incredibly high IQ and excellent cognitive abilities (self-explanatory) and are multi-talented but have significantly lower levels of EQ (self-awareness and self-management, i.e., emotional regulation, etc.),²⁸³ thereby lacking emotional maturity in their relationships with others. In such cases, pastoral leaders maintain keen focus on their individual strengths, achievement of goals, and their work performance but have limited self-awareness for how they come across on others in their church.

In addition, clergy need to have realistic expectations about their ministry. Helping professionals such as pastors “often want so much to help that they get caught up

²⁸¹ Ibid., 16.

²⁸² Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 17.

²⁸³ Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press), 2002.

in wanting to make a big difference for many people.”²⁸⁴ The solution is for the pastor to reduce his or her expectations and to focus on smaller, incremental impact. In order to reduce perfectionism and over-functioning, resilient pastors need to become a “good enough practitioner.”²⁸⁵ It is too exhausting and unrealistic in ministry to provide a hundred percent performance a hundred percent of the time. It is helpful to reduce one’s expectation to believe that ministry does not have to be perfect, it just has to be “good enough.”²⁸⁶

Furthermore, pastors benefit from becoming aware of their source for validation. Seeking their self-worth, validation, and admiration from helping others can be a primary source for ministry burnout.²⁸⁷ For this reason, the concept of differentiation can be helpful. Pastors “need to learn to separate [their] own sense of self and its basic needs from the professional attachments [they] make with those [they] serve.”²⁸⁸ Pastors need to therefore focus their efforts on increasing one’s self-validation and/or validation from God.

Courage to Face Fear of Failure

Taking responsibility for mistakes, failures, etc. may cause anxiety and/or shame in leaders and therefore requires courage and strength. Friedman asserts, “the less

²⁸⁴ Thomas M. Skovholt, *The Resilient Practitioner: Burnout Prevention and Self-Care Strategies for Counselors, Therapists, Teachers, and Health Professionals*, 1st ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Pearson, 2016), 130.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 139.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 140.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 134.

confidence leaders have in their ability to stand alone after they make a decision, the less likely they are to make one.”²⁸⁹ He describes the harmful effects that chronic anxiety can have upon a leader's thoughts and actions which often times keeps them from presenting creative solutions for their organization. Many pastors are reluctant to move forward with making necessary changes within church due to fear of others’ disapproval or “failure of nerve.”²⁹⁰ While avoiding risk-taking may feel safer for pastors, failure to do so may prohibit their congregations from experiencing a deeper level of transformation that may be needed. Pastors are accustomed to hearing phrases such as, “Well, we've always done it this way.” This type of mindset can cause an entire church system to become stuck and create barriers for innovation and creativity. Pastors who successfully manage their stress are also able to demonstrate a “non-anxious presence”²⁹¹ with their church families in addition to their own families. Pastors can benefit from experiencing freedom in being present with God, with others, and with themselves.

Furthermore, pastors who successfully identify and challenge their internal dialogue work towards their “true self” and “fully-differentiated self.”²⁹² Consistently applying this behavioral pattern would help reduce the occurrence of pastors’ internalizing their external stress. Differentiation is defined as “the lifelong process of striving to keep one’s being in balance through the reciprocal external and internal processes of self-definition and self-regulation.”²⁹³ Being well-differentiated means being

²⁸⁹ Edwin Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve* (New York: Church Publishing, 2017), 77.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 253.

²⁹² Richard Schwartz, *Internal Family Systems Therapy* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), 37.

²⁹³ Edwin Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve* (New York: Church Publishing, 2017), 194.

able to “focus on their strengths, [show] concern for one’s own growth, look at one’s own ‘stuckness,’ and create intimate relationships.”²⁹⁴ Well-differentiated pastors are less likely to become anxious when they encounter ministry stress.²⁹⁵

Courage to Admit Human Limitations

Resilient pastors are willing to admit their human limitation, which includes working a reasonable number of hours during the week. Reducing their workload would also increase their ability to cope with stress. After all, “our physical bodies are masterpieces of God’s creation.”²⁹⁶ Working excessive work hours (“more than fifty hours per week”)²⁹⁷ can contribute to clergy burnout (see appendix A). Reason being, “our bodies deteriorate because there is not enough time to rest, exercise, or eat properly, our relational life goes because there is no quality time with significant others, and our spiritual life suffers because there is not enough time to read, journal, walk, think, pray, etc.”²⁹⁸

Accepting their human limitations also implies that clergy willingly delegate responsibilities and tasks to others in the church who are capable and competent.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 245.

²⁹⁵ Ronald W. Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor’s Own Family* (Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 2005).

²⁹⁶ Diane Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-taking, and Support System Practices,” *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (2009), 171.

²⁹⁷ Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Family* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 1991), 123-124.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 124.

²⁹⁹ Mark R. McMinn, R. Allen Lish, Pamela D. Trice, Alicia M. Root, Nicole Gilbert, and Adelene Yap, “Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses,” *Pastoral Psychology* 53, no. 6 (2005): 252.

Blanchard and Hodges discuss four styles of leadership, which they characterize as “four basis combinations of directive and supportive behaviors that a leader can use.”³⁰⁰

Among these various styles of leadership, the delegating style (low support, low direction) is particularly relevant to this discussion because it involves “leaders empowering their people to act independently with appropriate resources to get the job done.”³⁰¹ These authors suggest that Jesus used a delegating style of leadership (low support, low direction) as he “transformed the disciples from enthusiastic beginners to peak performers.”³⁰² A delegating style of leadership is also evident in Exodus 18:13-27 where Moses was advised by his father-in-law, Jethro to delegate to “able men” and “let them judge the people at all times...So it will be easier for you.”³⁰³ As part of their acceptance of their human limitations, clergy therefore need to be open to input from others about their ministry performance and maintain a humble posture.³⁰⁴

Soul Care: Equipping the Pastor for Tending to Their Spiritual Needs

According to Mulholland, “Spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the glory of God and for the sake of others,”³⁰⁵ “a journey into becoming persons of compassion, persons who forgive, persons who care deeply for

³⁰⁰ Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *The Servant Leader: Transforming Your Heart, Head, Hands, and Habits* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 73.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁰³ Exodus 18:21-22.

³⁰⁴ Thomas M. Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison, *The Resilient Practitioner*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

³⁰⁵ Presentation on the topic “Spiritual Formation,” MaryKate Morse, 2019.

others and the world.”³⁰⁶As part of their spiritual formation, clergy need to regularly cultivate the garden of their souls. It is imperative for pastors to care for their own spiritual needs as they provide spiritual nourishment for others. Otherwise they fall prey to spiritual dryness which is described as “spiritual lethargy, a lack of vibrant spiritual encounter with God and an absence of spiritual resources.”³⁰⁷ Rolheiser writes, “a healthy soul keeps fire in our veins” [and] “keeps us fixed together...continually gives us a sense of who we are, where we came from, where we are going, and what sense there is in all of this.”³⁰⁸ Legendary author Eugene Peterson cautions, “constant distractions from overactivity can prevent us from noticing God’s presence.”³⁰⁹

One of the means to experience spiritual formation is by receiving spiritual direction. Spiritual direction is “a type of spiritual companionship in which a [director] makes a commitment to listen attentively to the Holy Spirit with and on behalf of another believer (directee). Spiritual direction can be described as “the ongoing process of maturing as a Christian, both personally and interpersonally.... The key to this definition is the phrase *process of maturing*”³¹⁰ which is needed for effective church leadership.

³⁰⁶ Robert M. Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 25.

³⁰⁷ Diane Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-taking, and Support System Practices,” *Pastoral Psychology*, 58, no. 3 (2009): 274.

³⁰⁸ Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2014), 14.

³⁰⁹ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 34.

³¹⁰ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 19.

Spiritual direction helps the directee to see themselves as “objects of God’s love”³¹¹ which would then allow them to also experience His grace.

Through the transforming work of God and a safe place for sharing within a spiritual direction environment, individuals can replace distorted God-images with healthier ones. Willard affirms, “The process of spiritual formation in Christ is one of progressively replacing those destructive images and ideas with the images and ideas that filled the mind of Jesus himself.”³¹²

Due to the significant benefits that spiritual direction provides, a modified version of spiritual formation (referred to as spiritual coaching) will be the term used in the next chapter for the artifact.

Slow and Steady Rhythm

Approaching their daily rhythm slow and steady would increase pastors’ sustainability throughout the day. Leclerc and Maddix explain, “Some people are sprinters and others are more like marathoners...Knowing our duty cycle (*similar to a machine which has duty cycles*) will help us to know how much “off” time we need each day in order to be at our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual best.”³¹³ Resilient clergy understand the importance of pacing themselves by establishing a slow and steady rhythm which pertains to determining appropriate “timing – when it is time to engage or

³¹¹ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 101.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 101.

³¹³ Diane Leclerc and Mark Maddix, *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm* (Kansas City, KS: Beacon Hill Press, 2011), 131.

disengage, to remain or to transition, to be with people or be apart, to work or to rest, to play or to be serious.”³¹⁴

Oswald presents some insightful suggestions for clergy to maintain their rhythm. He urges clergy to regularly take time for daily breaks, weekly breaks, quarterly breaks, yearly breaks, and Sabbaticals (every four years).³¹⁵ Pastors are especially notorious for neglecting their need for rest. To promote time for rest, clergy need to develop ways “to help our parishes flourish on five days a week.”³¹⁶ Otherwise, pastors will fail to maintain a slow and steady pace, which prevents them from having a successful longevity in their ministry. The key is for clergy to be intentional about maintaining their rhythm and renewal practices.

Sabbath-Keeping and Silent Retreats

Chandler discusses the importance of demonstrating a devotion to God by making time spent with him daily a priority.³¹⁷ To maintain resilience in leadership, “we need regular times of refreshment with God”³¹⁸ and therefore it is imperative for pastors to “withdraw from the busyness of life with others in order to draw closer to the love of

³¹⁴ Geri Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Woman: Eight Things You Have to Quit to Change Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 200.

³¹⁵ Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Family* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 1991), 123.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

³¹⁷ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014).

³¹⁸ David Robinson, *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010), 194.

God”³¹⁹ which includes maintaining their Sabbath-keeping practices. Sabbath is defined as “a twenty-four block of time in which we stop work, enjoy, rest, practice delight, and contemplate God.”³²⁰ Sabbath-keeping is also described as “a deliberate act of interference, an interruption of our work each week, a decree of no-work so that we are able to notice, to attend, to listen, to assimilate this comprehensive and majestic work of God, to orient our work in the work of God.”³²¹

Scazzero asserts, “The problem with too many leaders is that we allow our work to trespass on every other area of life, disrupting the balanced rhythm of work and rest God created for our good... Once we stop, we accept God’s invitation to rest.”³²² Wilson and Hoffman suggest, “Ceasing from labor one day in seven also provides needed opportunity for reflection on who we are, what we’re doing and, perhaps most important, why we’re doing it.”³²³

Similarly, silent retreats increase clergy resilience by providing a safe and sacred place for them to temporarily distance themselves “from the busyness of life with others in order to draw closer to the love of God.”³²⁴ During his earthy ministry, Jesus invited

³¹⁹ Ibid., 190.

³²⁰ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 144.

³²¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005).

³²² Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 146-147.

³²³ Michael T. Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 178.

³²⁴ David Robinson, *Ancient Paths* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press), 190.

his servant leaders to “Come away and rest for a while.”³²⁵ It is important for pastors to understand that weeks and perhaps even days following a retreat, they can easily revert to our old habits of having a life with no rhythm. Therefore, ongoing support and accountability are needed for sustainable life change.

To conclude this discussion on Sabbath-keeping and retreats, this dissertation will briefly discuss the concept of “re-creation.”³²⁶ This term is defined as “an investment in ourselves that will increase and renew our stamina.”³²⁷ Amongst their list of strategies for mitigating ministry failure, authors Wilson and Hoffman discuss the “Three R’s of Re-creation: Rest (physical repair and rebuilding of the body and mind), Recess (involves focused activity and enjoyable ‘uptime’), and Renewal (re-energizes our spiritual vitality).”³²⁸ Clergy can increase their sustainability if they consider implementing this practice.

The Spiritual Practice of Lectio Divina

The spiritual practice of Lectio Divina is an excellent tool that pastors can use to help cultivate the garden of their souls. Lectio Divina as a “slow attentive, transformational practice of ‘divine reading’ of the sacred Scriptures,” where we “feed on Christ, the incarnate Word.”³²⁹ It is “a movement toward rather than away from the

³²⁵ Mark 6:31 (NIV).

³²⁶ Michael T. Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 178.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 179-181.

³²⁹ George Kalantzis and Jeffrey Greenman, eds., *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 16.

Scripture, a willingness to read slowly, hungrily, attentively, prayerfully, with the full expectation that there is a word in the text – an inspired word spoken by the eternal Word made flesh.”³³⁰

There are several versions of Lectio Divina that pastors can use for their daily spiritual practice. One of them is described in the following:

1. In the first reading listen for the general sense of what is being communicated. Attend to the words you hear but listen particularly for the word or phrase that stands out for you. Sit in stillness after hearing the words and allow the Word of God to form within you as you open yourself in attentiveness and expectancy to what God has for you.
2. Listen now to the same passage read a second time. This time allow yourself to ponder what you are hearing in both your head and your heart. Notice the thoughts that arise in response to the Word and notice the movements in your heart.
3. Listen now to the passage a third time. This time allow yourself to respond to what has touched your mind and heart. This response may be worded or unworded, but it is prayer if it is offered with faith and openness to God. Finally, after another period of silence...listen to a final reading and allow yourself to simply be with God in stillness. Rest in God and be with the God who has spoken to you through the Word.³³¹

The above-mentioned illustration is similar to the four stages of monastic prayer, which was first introduced in the twelfth century by monk named Guigo II.³³² This Carthusian monk “taught that prayer is a journey from the biblical text (lectio) to inquiry (meditatio) to response (oratio) and finally to the gift of God’s presence (contemplatio). Benner has modified these four stages by referring to them as “four broad prayer paths – prayer as attending, prayer as pondering, prayer as responding, and prayer as being.”³³³

³³⁰ Ibid., 144.

³³¹ David G. Benner, *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Books), 52.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid., 52.

Shigematsu also discusses the concept of nourishing your soul through sacred reading³³⁴ where he mentions the importance of having regularity in time spent “chewing on the Word.”³³⁵ He illustrates this by using the example of Psalm 1 where he compares the phrase “meditate on the Word of God” to “gnawing and sucking its marrow, growling with delight over it.”³³⁶ Shigematsu cautions the practice of limiting oneself to analytical Bible reading instead of letting Scripture speak to us:

Dangerous reading [of Scripture] occurs when we limit our reading of the text to analysis only. It occurs when we consciously or unconsciously distance ourselves from the text, making it a source of information and nothing more. It occurs when in our reading we attempt to control the text’s access to us, rather than allowing the lively, active, inspired text of Scripture to address us directly, an address to which we must respond.³³⁷

So far in this dissertation the focus has been on the inward journey of pastoral leaders. Next, this dissertation will discuss the needs of pastors’ responsibilities as a husband and father. It will also address the needs of pastors’ wives and their children.

Family Care: Equipping Clergy Families to Thrive in Their “Fishbowl”

Clergy families can thrive in their fishbowl environment if they learn to identify obstacles to their family functioning and develop effective strategies for cultivating their family resilience. This process can be initiated for clergy families by completing the

³³⁴ Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

³³⁷ George Kalantzis and Jeffrey Greenman, eds., *Life in the Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 143.

“Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire (see appendix D)”³³⁸ which can enable for them to measure their current level of family functioning.

The journey of cultivating family resilience begins by challenging the myths about what clergy families have been taught about serving in ministry which compromises their ability to set appropriate limits with unfair demands from church members.³³⁹ Clergy families need to learn how to establish healthy boundaries between their church ministry and family life. The concept of boundaries is referred to as “the limits we set around who and what we allow to get close to us.”³⁴⁰ Boundaries help us to “define who we are and how we live” as well as “who we are and who we are not.”³⁴¹ Resilient clergy families determine appropriate boundary-making and are therefore able to “maintain stressful circumstances.”³⁴²

Related to this discussion on boundary-making between church ministry and family life is the need for pastors to safeguard against making their wife a “nuclear dumping ground” – someone to share their frustrations and other private details related to their work. Immediately thereafter their spouse is “left holding the pain, unable to bring closure to the experience.”³⁴³ According to Burns, et al, pastors and their spouses could

³³⁸ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 3rd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2016).

³³⁹ Cameron Lee, *PK: Helping Pastors' Kids Through Their Identity Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 39.

³⁴⁰ Patrick Williams and Diane S. Menendez, *Becoming a Professional Life Coach: Lessons from the Institute for Life Coach Training* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), 256.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 256.

³⁴² Virginia Todd Holeman and Stephen L. Martyn, *Inside the Leader's Head* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008).

³⁴³ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 174.

determine appropriate sharing during his or her discussions with their spouse. In addition, pastors could make a clear distinction between “need to know information and knowledge that become too stressful to bare.”³⁴⁴

Empower Clergy in their “Faithful Presence”

Resilient pastors focus on being a “faithful presence”³⁴⁵ at home with their family. Their ability to provide a faithful presence with their spouse and children is evidenced by their refusal to give their family members leftovers or place them on the back burner. Clergy need to make intentional efforts to keep their spouse and children at the top of their list of daily priorities. Their emotional presence (this refers to quality time, not just quantity) re-assures their loved ones on “emotional, physical, and spiritual levels”³⁴⁶ which is especially needed during times of stress.

Clergy wives and children “need assurance of continuity, security, and predictability through turmoil.”³⁴⁷ For instance, during a stressful event, the “connected child looks within himself for what he can provide, then goes to God and others for the rest. The detached child is left to fend for himself, and he does not have sufficient to conduct life on his own.”³⁴⁸ For this reason, authors Cloud and Townsend strongly

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 175.

³⁴⁵ James D. Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford, England: University Press, 2010).

³⁴⁶ Oliver McMahan, *Scriptural Counseling: A God-Centered Method* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1995), 154.

³⁴⁷ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 134.

³⁴⁸ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Raising Great Kids: Parenting with Grace and Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 70.

encourage parents to ensure a secure attachment for their children by suggesting the following: “We cannot overemphasize the importance of developing your child’s ability to attach...the attached child is never without a way to get the resources for life.”³⁴⁹

Furthermore, clergy wives need for their husbands to demonstrate their “faithful presence”³⁵⁰ by “making their marriage their loudest gospel message,”³⁵¹ which involves “increasing [their] awareness of, [their] ability to be present to [their wives] first especially at church services.”³⁵² Scazzero urges husbands to “set their hearts on making what is important to [their spouse], also important to [them].”³⁵³

Empower Clergy Wives to Find Themselves

Clergy wives “be crushed under a weight of judgment and/or criticism.”³⁵⁴ need to be empowered to “find themselves” so that they will be able to effectively deal with constant criticism in the church. Baker explains, “The high performance expectations placed upon them by congregations and church officials, as well as their own self-imposed high expectations and lack of clarity regarding specific role expectations, result in reduced quality of life for many women married to clergy.”³⁵⁵ Balswick mentions that

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 70.

³⁵⁰ James D. Hunter, *To Change the World* (Oxford, England: University Press, 2010).

³⁵¹ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 99.

³⁵² Ibid., 99.

³⁵³ Ibid., 99.

³⁵⁴ Marty Duran, “Six Things Church Members Need to Know About Pastor Burnout,” *Facts and Trends*, accessed April 28, 2019, <https://factsandtrends.net/2016/09/16/6-things-church-members-need-to-know-about-pastor-burnout/>.

³⁵⁵ David C. Baker, “Predictors of Well-Being Among Pastors’ Wives: A Comparison with Nonclergy Wives,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 46, no. 1 (1992): 33.

clergy wives have some serious concerns about their role in the church as indicated by the following: “Not having a life apart from the church and living up to other members’ expectation; Fighting feelings that I must be a certain type of person; Feeling that I’m always on display, that I can’t be myself.”³⁵⁶

One method that can be helpful for clergy wives in their self-exploration is the Enneagram Personality Test,³⁵⁷ which is a powerful tool that “invites us to look deeply into the mystery of our true identity.”³⁵⁸ This is a practical resource that clergy wives can use to identify inner obstacles and discover the unique aspects of themselves³⁵⁹ which can help them to feel empowered in their ministerial role. It would also benefit clergy wives to complete a self-care assessment and evaluate their current level of emotional, spiritual, and physical health (see appendix).

Geri Scazzero (author and church co-founder), encourages for Christian spouses to embark on “journey to an authentic self” which involves “four practices that provide trustworthy guidance for this journey: discover your integrity, listen to your inner rhythm, set boundaries, and let go of others.”³⁶⁰ These four practices are illustrated in the following:

1. Discover Your Integrity – What is your integrity calling you to do? What is important to you?

³⁵⁶ Cameron Lee and Jack O. Balswick, *Life in a Glass House* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989), in Daniel L. Langford, *The Pastor’s Family: The Challenges of Family Life and Pastoral Responsibilities* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1998), 25.

³⁵⁷ The Enneagram Institute Testing Center, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://tests.enneagraminstitute.com/>.

³⁵⁸ Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson, *Wisdom of the Enneagram: The Complete Guide to Psychological and Spiritual Growth for the Nine Personality Types* (New York: Bantam Books), 17.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Geri Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Woman* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 197.

2. Listen to Your Inner Rhythm – Do you know when it is time to be with people and when it is time to be alone? Do you know when it is time to rest or time to play? How does the pace of your life feel?
3. Set Your Boundaries – What problems or commitments might you have taken on that God never intended? In what relationship/s do you need to establish a healthier boundary today?
4. Let Go of Others - not trying to run other peoples' lives [which can be] detected when traces of resentment and judgementalism prevail in [our] heart rather than an appreciation for differences. When, where, and with whom do you need to let go?³⁶¹

Clergy spouses are often “talented, creative, dedicated group of Christians”³⁶² and therefore, need to be empowered to discover their true selves and their individual gifts and strengths. In fact, they need to be encouraged in their self-discovery and celebrate the unique aspects of themselves. As a result, they can feel empowered in their ministerial role and use their God-given gifts and strengths to both joyfully and faithfully serve in the church.

Empower Clergy Couples to Protect Their Sacred Bond

Resilience in clergy marriages is reinforced “by mutual support, collaboration, and commitment to weather troubled times together.”³⁶³ Clergy couples can protect their sacred bond by establishing “healthy connecting habits”³⁶⁴ such as taking the time to regularly pray for one another, date nights, hobbies of mutual interest, and shared evening

³⁶¹ Ibid., 197-206 (adapted).

³⁶² Roy Oswald, Carolyn T. Gutierrez, and Liz S. Dean, *Married to the Minister: Dilemmas, Conflicts, and Joys in the Role of the Clergy Wife* (Washington, D.C., Alban Institute, 1980), 115, in Daniel L. Langford, *The Pastor's Family: The Challenges of Family Life and Pastoral Responsibilities* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1998), 28.

³⁶³ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 135.

³⁶⁴ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 193.

time together with no usage of technology. In the event that their planned events get suddenly interrupted, the following idea can be helpful: “When [church] work interferes with important family activities, such as dinner...it would be better for your marriage to come home early for dinner and work at home after dinner, or substitute family breakfast for family dinner.”³⁶⁵

Similar to the concept of establishing “healthy connecting habits”³⁶⁶ is the idea of “couple rituals”³⁶⁷ which is referred to as something that the couple already enjoys doing together and “making it a regular ritual in [their] marriage.”³⁶⁸ “Couple rituals” may include taking evening walks together while holding hands, scheduling “coffee times” together, or having “cuddle time” at bedtime.³⁶⁹

Thriving clergy marriages develop effective strategies for communication and conflict resolution, take ownership for their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and willingly negotiate when they encounter problems.³⁷⁰ In particular, resilient clergy couples successfully work together to maintain the following communication processes: “Clarity (clear, consistent messages), Open Emotional Sharing (sharing wide range of feelings and [taking] responsibility for own feelings), and Collaborative Problem Solving

³⁶⁵ William J. Doherty, *Take Back Your Marriage: Sticking Together in a World That Pulls Us Apart* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), 64.

³⁶⁶ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 193.

³⁶⁷ Jennifer S. Ripley and Everett L. Worthington, Jr., *Couple Therapy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014).

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

³⁷⁰ Andrew J. Weaver, et al., *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 32.

(identifying problems and creative brainstorming).³⁷¹ Establishing clarity in their communication is especially important when clergy couples encounter stress and crisis because “ambiguity and uncertainty fuel anxiety and block understanding of what is happening and what can be done.”³⁷² For maintaining their cohesion and effective communication strategies, clergy couples can also benefit from having regularly scheduled marriage “checkups”³⁷³ with a coach or a therapist – “an ongoing relationship with a trained professional who could serve as a confidant and speak into their lives with candor.”³⁷⁴

Furthermore, creating a family mission statement (see appendix F) can help reinforce effective communication and couple/family functioning. The following questions can be helpful ways to introduce this exercise: Does your family have a clear understanding of where you are headed? Moreover, it can be helpful for clergy couples create a vision statement exclusively designed for themselves by first reflecting on the following: “Consider yourselves 5, 10, and 20 years in the future. What does your relationship look like? What things will it take to get to your vision of your future together?”³⁷⁵ Ripley and Worthington suggest, “Creating a vision statement together can help couples develop a sense of common purpose and meaning.”³⁷⁶

³⁷¹ Froma Walsh, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 108.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁷³ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 190.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

³⁷⁵ Jennifer S. Ripley and Everett L. Worthington, Jr., *Couple Therapy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 248.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 248.

Along with the importance of having a clear understanding of where they are going as a couple and family, it is equally important for clergy couples to establish clarity in their family rules and individual roles. Each family member needs to have a clear understanding of their role and how their participation is a vital part in the family system.³⁷⁷ In the context of marriage, Langford suggests, “marital roles should be shared equally between spouses.”³⁷⁸ This implies that clergy family members’ need to develop an ability to listen to each other, validate each other’s perspective, and problem solve towards viable solutions.

Due to the nature of their ministerial involvement, it may be beneficial for clergy couples to consider the idea of a “ministry partnership with their spouse”³⁷⁹ which involves “a careful and ongoing discussion around the spiritual gifts and interests of the spouse, the expectations of the congregation (and how you will address those expectations as a couple), the needs of the family and your stages of life.”³⁸⁰

Resilient clergy couples protect their sacred bond by demonstrating their love for one another as described in I Corinthians 13:1-8. They also regularly remind themselves of their shared faith and commitment to their marital covenant. In addition, they frequently reflect on what attracted them to their partner in the first place. Completing the “Hope Couples Assessment” can be helpful to facilitate this process (see appendix C).

³⁷⁷ Linda Berg-Cross, *Basic Concepts in Family Therapy* (New York: The Haworth Press, 2000), 47.

³⁷⁸ Daniel L. Langford, *The Pastor’s Family* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1998).

³⁷⁹ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 180.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 180.

Clergy Children: Empowerment in Their Self-Discovery

Children of pastors who view their earlier childhood years as being “positive” and “normal,” also “consider themselves a minority.”³⁸¹ Meanwhile other PK’s (pastor’s kid) recall having a common occurrence of facing stereotypes held by church families. “The role expectations can be so rigidly defined that the PKs feel as if they are not allowed thoughts, feelings, or the right to define personal boundaries.”³⁸² Moreover, even young children sometimes deal with the expectations by parishioners for them “to be spiritually mature beyond their years.”³⁸³

Erikson’s developmental theory is a helpful framework for understanding the emotional development of children.³⁸⁴

Table 4. Erikson's Developmental Theory

Age	Stage	Central concern
Birth to 1 year	Trust vs. mistrust	Sensing that the world is safe and I can trust others
1-3 years	Autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Knowing that I can act on my own and be independent
3-6 years	Initiative vs. guilt	Planning and doing new things and managing my failures
6-12 years	Industry vs. inferiority	Learning basic competencies and comparing myself favorably with others
12-20 years	Identity vs. identity confusion	Integrating my roles into a single, consistent identity

³⁸¹ Cameron Lee, *PK: Helping Pastors’ Kids Through Their Identity Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 15.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁸⁴ James Gavin and Madeline McBrearty, *Lifestyle Wellness Coaching: Practice-based Coaching Competencies to Promote Lasting Change* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2013), 26.

Age	Stage	Central concern
20-40 years	Intimacy vs. isolation	Sharing myself deeply without fear of losing my identity
40-65 years	Generativity vs. stagnation	Contributing to others and society through my offspring and productive work
65+ years	Integrity vs. despair	Appraising my life in a way that allows me to appreciate its significance and meaning

For example, PK's between 6 to 12 years old, are in the industry vs. inferiority stage which entails "learning basic competencies and comparing [themselves] favorably with others."³⁸⁵ Meanwhile, PK's who are adolescents need to integrate their "roles into a single, consistent identity."³⁸⁶ One way that clergy parents can help their children to feel empowered in their individuality is to ensure that their child's interests truly reflect their personal interests and not their parents.³⁸⁷ Otherwise, their child's "drive to be separate will overshadow their drive to succeed."³⁸⁸

Establishing their identity in Jesus Christ is a primary area that clergy parents need to discuss with their child during their period of self-discovery. This is important because many clergy children "derive too much of their sense of self-worth"³⁸⁹ based on the opinions of others. Clergy parents therefore need to help facilitate the emotional and

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 26.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 26.

³⁸⁷ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Raising Great Kids* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 203.

³⁸⁹ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 152.

spiritual development of their children. For instance, older children need for their parents to help them to identify their emotions³⁹⁰ and successfully manage them such as having them to complete the following packet, “Emotional Intelligence Activities for Teens.”³⁹¹ Meanwhile, younger children need empathy from their parents due to their immaturity and they also need their help with skill-building.³⁹²

In addition, it can benefit clergy children to have their parents regularly initiate discussions with them on things that children can relate to. For example, “Table Conversational Starters” (see appendix H) can be used to help guide clergy parents during their discussions with their children. Clergy families need to make intentional efforts on having regular meal sharing and lively discussions with their children about their dreams, personal interests, and daily life experiences.

Resilient clergy children have a healthy sense of self-worth and they understand that what matters most is *who they are* and *whose they are*. This means that “As sons and daughters of the living God, we reflect the glory of God (*Gloria Dei*), who made us in the *imago Dei*, redeemed us through Christ’s sacrifice, and sanctifies us by the Spirit into the *imago Christi*.”³⁹³ These children are resilient largely due to receiving ongoing support and encouragement by their parents and others in their self-discovery.

³⁹⁰ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Raising Great Kids* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 74.

³⁹¹ “Emotional Intelligence Activities for Teens,” Ohio National Guard, accessed June 1, 2020, https://www.ong.ohio.gov/frg/FRGresources/emotional_intelligence_13-18.pdf.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 44-45.

³⁹³ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 64.

Summary

Stress and burnout affects entire clergy families. When pastors experience stress and burnout, their loved ones are negatively impacted by their stress too. This chapter has provided substantial evidence in support of this fact. Current solutions for preventing and treating clergy burnout have proven to be less effective in addressing the clergy family system because they narrowly focus on the needs of the pastor. For this reason, the problem of clergy burnout needs to be approached from a family systems perspective. So far, this dissertation has introduced the Kilian Clergy Family Resilience Model, which includes three major components: self-care, soul care, and family care. By using this model, this chapter has illustrated how each of these components contribute to clergy family resilience. The next chapter will discuss ways to better equip clergy families for sustainable ministry and to reduce the occurrence of burnout.

SECTION 4: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

This chapter will outline a training program featuring Kilian’s Clergy Resilience Model. Focusing on the individual pastor is insufficient to inoculate the clergy family system from the devastating effects of burnout. Thriving in ministry requires that pastors and their families establish healthier ways to tend their self-care, soul care, and family care practices. An online psychoeducational training program for clergy couples would help reduce the occurrence of ministry burnout. The purpose of this training is to assist pastors and their wives in the development of knowledge and skills to be effective in cultivating resilience in their families. In addition, clergy couples would benefit from receiving quarterly coaching to help reinforce their formal training experience.

Objectives

- Understand how to identify the early warning signs of burnout
- Gain new insights on effective individual and family functioning
- Learn how to “bounce forward” when dealing with family crises
- Establish healthier self-care, soul care, and family care practices
- Develop strategies for building individual and family resilience
- Identify family values, mission, and vision
- Acquire effective couple/family communication and conflict resolution skills
- Discover meaningful ways to help foster the emotional development of children
- Create daily couple/family connection rituals
- Obtain effective tools and resources for building a social support network

Audience and Scope

This training program is exclusively designed for pastors and their wives to help them to cultivate resilience in their individual lives and couple/family relationships. Due to the emphasis on prevention, this discussion focuses on evangelical clergy families in

the early and middle years of the family life stages³⁹⁴ characterized by married couples between the ages of 30 to 45 with younger children and/or adolescents. Emerging clergy families need to be prepared and equipped for dealing with complex and challenging ministerial demands by receiving training on burnout prevention.

This program provides a combination of training, support, and accountability for participants. Using a cohort model (a closed group – limited to 4 couples), the psychoeducational sessions will be conducted bi-monthly which includes breakout sessions for peer learning. These sessions will be conducted by me as a certified life coach. As a licensed minister, I will also serve as a spiritual companion to journey alongside of participants to promote spiritual formation. In addition, every participant will be assigned a journey partner within their cohort. Participants will be required to meet weekly with their journey partners for prayer support.

³⁹⁴ Andrew J. Weaver, et al., *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002).

SECTION 5: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

Goals

Goal #1: To provide participants with a safe and sacred place for developing lifelong friendships with others who can relate to their experience

Goal #2: To provide training and coaching for clergy couples on how to cultivate resilience in their individual and family lives and in their ministries

Goal #3: To help foster emotional and spiritual formation for pastors and their families

Goal #4: To equip clergy couples with practical tools that will help them to improve their self-care, soul care, and family care practices

Content

Sessions 1 & 2: Introducing the Training and Coaching Program & “Red Flags” of Burnout

Sessions 3 & 4: “Bouncing Forward: Please, Pass the CHIPS!”

Sessions 5 & 6: “Keeping your Tank Full”: Strengthening Self-care Practices

Sessions 7 & 8: “Digging Deeper in the Garden of your Soul:” Strengthening Soul Care Practices

Sessions 9 & 10: “Speaking the Truth in Love:” Telling it Like it is Without Making it Worse

Sessions 11 & 12: “Speaking the Truth in Love:” Fair Fighting Without Hitting Below the Belt”

Sessions 13 & 14: “Thriving in Your Fishbowl:” Family Care 101

Sessions 15 & 16: “Thriving in Your Fishbowl:” Family Care 201

Sessions 17 & 18: “Thriving in Your Fishbowl:” Family Care 301

Sessions 19 & 20: “Way to Go!” Measuring Your Growth and Celebrating Your Progress!

Format

The delivery method will be Zoom video conferencing. There will be a total of 20 sessions with a duration of 60 minutes per session, twice per month. Each session includes 30 minutes of psychoeducational content and 30 minutes of breakout sessions. Pre/post assessments will also be used to measure participants' level of progression towards meeting their goals. Each participant will be required to read/sign a coaching agreement (see appendix A) and a covenant group agreement (see appendix B). In addition, each participant will be required to complete an intake form (see appendix C). These documents, along with coaching session notes (see appendix D) will be kept in a locked cabinet for confidentiality.

Budget

Bi-weekly personalized training sessions will be conducted virtually with participants for a total of twenty sessions plus quarterly coaching sessions which includes a post-assessment / feedback session. The cost will be \$125 per session (per couple). This amount includes twenty psychoeducational sessions, quarterly coaching sessions (four), and the training manual. This amount can be subsidized by churches/district offices. All psychoeducational sessions and coaching will be conducted through Zoom Video Conferencing.

Marketing

Clergy couples will be directed to my company website <https://www.paraclotecare.com/BurnoutPrevention.en.html>. At the conclusion of this

training program, participants will be encouraged to complete a participant feedback survey. This feedback will be used to help improve my training/coaching services for future clients. Participants will also be encouraged to share about their experience with other clergy couples. My plan is to build partnerships with the executive leadership of various church organizations by highlighting the important benefits that their offices will also receive through this training program: 1) district offices will receive research-based evidence that reveals a strong correlation between unhealthy clergy families and unhealthy churches (and vice versa).

2) district offices will receive statistical data on the well-being of their ministers/families following the training program.

Website Endorsements

"My husband and I saw Dawn for couple coaching, and we are so thankful we did! We were recommended to her by our pastor and heard nothing but great things about Dawn and her practice. From the time we walked in, she was warm and welcoming and instantly made us feel at ease. Over the next few weeks, we learned how to create our own family culture by studying the cultures we grew up in. Dawn coached us through the differences in our communication and conflict resolution styles, and we still lean on those lessons and insights today. While receiving coaching was not always a fun thing as we worked through some of the challenges we faced, we can see the positive impact it had on our marriage and on us as individuals. We are incredibly thankful we went to Dawn for our couple coaching and highly recommend her!"
(A. Hudson and L. Hudson)

"I have had Dawn as my coach for several months, and every time I meet with her, I think, 'Why don't I do this more often!' Dawn approaches each session, and I can imagine client, with great forethought, prayer, and attention. One particular thing I appreciate about Dawn is her ability to challenge me gracefully. She consistently encourages me to pursue all that God has created me to be, and all that He has for me! I have grown spiritually, professionally, and personally in ways that I am not sure would have been possible without Dawn's coaching!" (W. Gerdes)

"Working with Dawn has been invaluable for me, both personally and professionally. Dawn's guidance and questioning helped me to process through a stressful change in my ministry, as well as helped me to better understand myself and how I relate to God and

others. Having someone to process with that is outside of my work and social life was a huge asset, and God used my time meeting with Dawn to grow and stretch me. I really appreciated her kind and prayerful approach to each of our sessions, and they quickly became a highlight of my week. I would highly recommend coaching to anyone." (A. Grumbach)

Post-Graduation Considerations

The development of a marketing strategy for expanding this training program includes a spiritual retreat center for clergy couples. This center would be developed by the author of this paper as a non-profit organization to support the emotional and spiritual needs of clergy couples. I plan to apply for a Lilly grant to help fund this project and future research on clergy families. Clergy couples who have completed the training program will be encouraged to experience this spiritual retreat center together annually.

Summary

Why does this training matter? Church denominations need to understand that churches often function like families. The health of a clergy family impacts the church, which means that healthy clergy families contribute to a healthy church. However, the reverse of this is also true.

This training program is transformational because it includes relevant concepts as well as intentional skill-building exercises. Placing an emphasis on self-care, soul care, and family care will help cultivate individual and family resilience. As previously mentioned, this training program is a gradual step towards cultivating resilience in clergy families and thereby reducing the occurrence of ministry burnout. However, I am hoping that this will make a profound impact on how we care for our pastors and their family members.

SECTION 6: POSTSCRIPT

Every year, many emerging leaders feel drawn to the clergy profession. However, few of them are prepared for the emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical toll that comes with doing their pastoral work. Upon stepping into their role, many pastors are astonished by the costly demands of ministry leadership, which often leads to burnout.³⁹⁵ One of the reasons for ministry burnout is because pastors are notorious for putting others' needs above their own needs. However, pastors need to understand the importance of "securely placing on their own oxygen masks before assisting others."³⁹⁶

Pastors who suffer from burnout or on the verge of burnout often end up causing devastating effects on their loved ones. As a result, many clergy couples and families experience marital dissatisfaction and strained family relationships. This is further complicated by their stress of having blurred boundaries between their private life and their public life.

As part of this dissertation, a virtual psychoeducational training program has been designed for emerging pastors and their wives to help cultivate resilience in clergy families thereby reducing the occurrence of ministry burnout. To thrive in their "fishbowl"³⁹⁷ clergy couples need to receive training and coaching to help their entire household to establish healthier ways of family functioning. This training program

³⁹⁵ Heather F. Thompson, Melodie H. Frick, and Shannon Trice-Black, "Counselor-In-Training Perceptions of Supervision Practices Related to Self-Care and Burnout," *The Professional Counselor* 1, no. 3 (2011): 152-162.

³⁹⁶ Borrowing from the language commonly used by airlines for passenger safety.

³⁹⁷ James T. Flynn, "Firewall: Health Essentials for Ministers and Their Families," *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2009).

features Kilian's Clergy Family Resilience Model which introduces effective ways for clergy families to maintain their self-care, soul care, and family care practices.

While this paper has primarily focused on the clergy family system it is important to also acknowledge how the health of pastors is currently being negatively affected by larger systems. For example, there are pastors across our nation who are serving on the front lines by advocating for social justice. The issue of systemic racism continues to be a major concern in our society. While necessary, social justice advocacy is painful, messy, and exhaustive work for pastors which has the potential to jeopardize their health. Not to mention the unique pressures of pastors who are people of color. Not only are they lamenting and listening to the painful stories of the people of color in their church and surrounding communities, they are also struggling to find ways to comfort themselves and their own families.

In addition to the normal challenges of promoting Biblical unity and diversity, some pastors also face the challenges of working in a toxic organizational system. In these situations, pastors need to evaluate whether they have sufficient internal and external resources to cope with their toxic organizational system. This would also help prevent the occurrence of pastoral burnout.

In summary, this dissertation has evaluated clergy family functioning based on family systems theory. It has also discussed the distinctions between normal family stress vs. excessive family stress by introducing a stress model that can be applied to help improve clergy family functioning. In addition, this dissertation has discussed the strengths and limitations of alternative approaches to burnout in clergy families. And

finally, a proposed solution to this ministry problem has been presented that focuses on both leader care and family care.

In the future, I am hoping to gain opportunities to build partnerships with the executive leadership of various church denominations. Based on their referrals, I will then be able to officially launch this training program. Future conversations with referring district overseers and district superintendents will help determine the effectiveness of this training program. In addition, I plan to request survey feedback from every participant which will help me with making continual improvements on my training and coaching services. It is my prayer that this training program will help many clergy families maintain successful longevity in their ministries.

APPENDIX A
Training Manual



“BEFORE YOU BURNOUT”
Sample Outline for Training Sessions

Sessions 1 & 2: Identifying “Red Flags” of Burnout and Introducing Kilian’s Clergy Family Resilience Model

1. Opening Prayer
2. Introductions
3. Icebreaker
4. Complete the “Clergy Burnout Assessment.”
5. Facilitate a discussion on the “Early Signs of Burnout.”
6. PowerPoint presentation: “Before You Burnout.”
7. Breakout session for couples: Review and discuss the chart, “Stress in Ministry.”
8. PowerPoint presentation: “Kilian’s Clergy Family Resilience Model.”
9. Spiritual Group Practice
10. Assign Homework for Couples

Sessions 3 & 4 “Keeping Your Tank Full:” Strengthening Self-Care Practices

1. Opening Prayer
2. Inspirational Reading: “Lessons from the Good Samaritan”

3. Personal Reflection Exercise.
4. Icebreaker for peer groups: “Virtual Coffee Chat”
5. Complete the Self-Care Assessment
6. Breakout Session with your spouse: discuss your assessment results.
7. Presentation on “Self-care and Self-Coaching”
8. Group Relaxation Practice
9. Facilitate a discussion on “Self-care Practices”
10. Assign Homework for Individuals: Spiritual Retreat

Sessions 5 & 6: “Digging Deeper in the Garden of your Soul:” Strengthening Soul Care Practices

1. Opening Prayer and Inspirational Poem
2. Breakout Session with Peers: Share about your spiritual retreat experience
3. Spiritual Group Practice
4. PowerPoint Presentation on “Spiritual Formation”
5. Watch video, “10 Symptoms of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality”
6. Breakout session with peers: share insights on video
7. Assign Homework for Couples

APPENDIX B
Clergy Burnout Assessment

(Source: Adapted from *Clergy Self-Care* by Roy Oswald)

For each question, circle the number from 1 to 6 that best describes you. Then add all your answers for your total score.

1. The extent to which I am feeling negative or cynical about the people with whom I work (despairing of their ability to change and grow)

1	2	3	4	5	6	
Optimistic about parishioners						Cynical about parishioners

2. The extent to which I have enthusiasm for my work (I enjoy my work and look forward to it regularly.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	
High internal energy for my work						Loss of enthusiasm for my job

3. The extent to which I invest myself emotionally in my work in the parish.

1	2	3	4	5	6	
Highly invested emotionally						Withdrawn and detached

4. The extent to which fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience.

1	2	3	4	5	6	
Cheerfulness, high energy much of the time						Tired and irritated much of the time

5. The extent to which my humor has a cynical, biting tone.

1	2	3	4	5	6	
Humor reflects a positive joyful attitude						Humor cynical and sarcastic

6. The extent to which I find myself spending less and less time with my parishioners.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Eager to be involved
with parishioners

Increasingly withdrawn
from parishioners

7. The extent to which I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with parishioners.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Remaining open
and flexible with
parishioners' needs
and wants

Becoming more fixed
and rigid in dealing with
parishioners

8. The extent to which I feel supported in my work.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Feeling fully supported

Feeling alone and isolated

9. The extent to which I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Reasonably successful in
accomplishing tasks

Mainly frustrated in accomplished
tasks

10. The extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can't explain.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Generally optimistic

Sad much of the time

11. The extent to which I am suffering from physical complaints (e.g. aches, pains, headaches, linger colds, etc.).

1 2 3 4 5 6

Feeling healthy most
of the time

Constantly irritated by
physical ailments

12. The extent to which sexual activity seems more trouble than it is worth.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Sex is a high

Sexual activity is just
another responsibility

13. The extent to which I blame others for problems I encounter.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Minimal blaming
or scapegoating

Others are usually to blame
for the malaise I'm feeling

14. The extent to which I feel guilty about what is not happening in this parish or with parishioners.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Guilt free

Feeling guilty much of
the time

15. The extent to which I am biding my time until retirement or a change of job.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Highly engaged in
my work

Doing what I "have to do" to get by

16. The extent to which I feel used up and spent

1 2 3 4 5 6

High source of energy
for my work

Feeling empty and depleted

Total the amount of the numbers that you circled _____

0-32 Burnout not an issue

33-48 Bordering on burnout

49-64 Burnout is a factor in my life

65-80 I am experiencing a major burnout. My life needs a radical change so I can regain my health and vitality.

APPENDIX C

Self-Care Assessment

(Adapted from *Risking Connection: Training Curriculum for Working with Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*. Saakvitnes, Gamble, Pearlman, Lev, 2009 In Training Manual for Certified Compassion Fatigue Professional.)

How frequently do you engage in the following?

0	1	2	3	4
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently

Physical Self-Care

___ Aerobic activity: Exercise regularly (3 times a week)

___ Eat regularly (e.g., breakfast, lunch, and dinner)

___ Eat healthy foods

___ Tone muscles

___ Preventative medical care

___ Medical care when needed

___ Take time off work when sick

___ Physical activities you enjoy

___ Get enough sleep

___ Wear clothes you like

___ Take vacations

Psychological Self-Care

___ Relaxing your muscles

___ Make time away from demands

___ Write in a journal

___ Read literature that is unrelated to work

- Do something at which you are not an expert or in charge
- Let others know different aspects of you
- Say no to extra responsibilities
- Decrease stress in your life
- Reach out for professional help when needed (counseling services)

Emotional Self-Care

- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- Be kind to yourself
- Laugh
- Cry
- Play and adventure with your family and friends
- Identify ideas for healthy coping and pursue them
- Be of service to others
- Express your feelings in an appropriate manner
- Take time to enjoy hobbies of personal interest
- Pursue opportunities for peer support

Spiritual Self-Care

- Private and Corporate Prayer and Worship
- Meditate on Scripture
- Spend time with others in Christian Community
- Listen to worship music
- Receive spiritual support (spiritual direction/coaching)
- Practice Gratitude

- Cherish optimism and hope
- Search for meaning during difficult periods
- Be open to not knowing
- Have experiences of awe
- Engage in creative and artistic activity
- Spend time in nature

Professional Self-Care

- Take time to eat lunch
- Take time to connect with others who can relate to your work
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are energizing for you
- Set limits with parishioners and church staff
- Balance your workload so that you are not “overwhelmed”
- Get regular supervision and consultation
- Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raise)

Now circle one item from each subheading that you will commit to raise one level (i.e. from 2 “sometimes to 3 “often”) over the next month.

APPENDIX D

The HOPE Couples Assessment

(Adapted from “Couple Therapy” by Ripley & Worthington, 2014,
Couple Therapy: A New Hope Focused Approach)

Make an **X** on the line indicating how you feel about each of these areas

	None – Could not be worse	100% - Could not be better
Love. How much do you feel like you were valuing each other and not devaluing each other this week?		
Hope. How much do you feel like you have hope that things are going to change in your relationship for the better?		
Working Alliance. How much do you feel like you and your partner are working well together for your relationship goals?		
Work. How much time and effort did you put into improving your relationship?		

APPENDIX E

Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire

Source: "Strengthening Family Resilience" by Walsh (2016)

Directions: We are interested in your family's experience with your highly stressful situation. Please share your view on how your family deals with crises and ongoing challenges. Read each statement below and circle a number, 1 – 5, to indicate how much this is true for your family.

Rarely/Never (1); Not Often (2); Sometimes (3); Often (4); Almost Always (5)

Respondent(s): _____

Rarely or Never - 1

Not Often - 2

Sometimes - 3

Often - 4

Almost Always - 5

1. Our family faces difficulties together as a team, rather than individually.
1 2 3 4 5
2. We view distress with our situation as common, understandable.
1 2 3 4 5
3. We approach a crisis as a challenge we can manage and master with shared efforts.
1 2 3 4 5
4. We try to make sense of stressful situation and focus on our options.
1 2 3 4 5
5. We keep hopeful and confident that we will overcome difficulties.
1 2 3 4 5
6. We encourage each other and build on our strengths.
1 2 3 4 5
7. We seize opportunities, take action, and persist in our efforts.
1 2 3 4 5
8. We focus on possibilities and try to accept what we can't change.
1 2 3 4 5
9. We share important values and life purpose that help us rise above difficulties.
1 2 3 4 5
10. We draw on spiritual resources (religious or non-religious) to help us cope well.
1 2 3 4 5
11. Our challenges inspire creativity, more meaningful priorities, and stronger bonds.
1 2 3 4 5
12. Our hardship has increased our compassion and desire to help others.
1 2 3 4 5
13. We believe we can learn and become stronger from our challenges.
1 2 3 4 5
14. We are flexible in adapting to new challenges.
1 2 3 4 5

15. We provide stability and reliability to buffer stresses for family members.
1 2 3 4 5
16. Strong leadership by parents / caregivers provides warm nurturing, guidance, & security.
1 2 3 4 5
17. We can count on family members to help each other in difficulty.
1 2 3 4 5
18. Our family respects our individual needs and differences.
1 2 3 4 5
19. In our immediate and extended family, we have positive role models and mentors.
1 2 3 4 5
20. We can rely on the support of friends and our community.
1 2 3 4 5
21. We have economic security to be able to get through hard times.
1 2 3 4 5
22. We can access community resources to help our family through difficult times.
1 2 3 4 5
23. We try to clarify information about our stressful situation and our options.
1 2 3 4 5
24. In our family, we are clear and consistent in what we say and do.
1 2 3 4 5
25. We can express our opinions and be truthful with each other.
1 2 3 4 5
26. We can share difficult negative feelings (e.g. sadness, anger, fears).
1 2 3 4 5
27. We show each other understanding and avoid blame.
1 2 3 4 5
28. We can share positive feelings, appreciation, humor, and fun and find relief from difficulties.
1 2 3 4 5
29. We collaborate in discussing and making decisions, and we handle disagreements fairly.
1 2 3 4 5
30. We focus on our goals and take steps to reach them.
1 2 3 4 5
31. We celebrate successes and learn from mistakes.
1 2 3 4 5
32. We plan and prepare for the future and try to prevent crises
1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX F

Identifying Values

(Source: Adapted from *Christian Counseling* by Gary Collins)

Values Are FOUNDATIONAL beliefs that anchor our lives, the things that matter to us the most, the nonnegotiable characteristics that best describe who we are. Look over the following list and circle the words and phrases that best illustrate your values. If you have values not on the list, add your values in the spaces provided. Try to circle between twelve and fifteen words. These are the values that best describe you, even though there may be others that apply as well.

Accomplishment	Excellence	Integrity
Affirmation	Excitement	Joy
Ambition	Experiencing pleasure	Lack of pretense
Authenticity	Faithfulness	Love
Beauty	Family	Love of learning
Being a model	Forgiveness	Loyalty
Being in control	Forward looking	Making money
Career	Freedom	Marriage
Caution	Frugality	Mentoring
Collaboration	Fulfillment	Nurturing
Communicating	Fun	Obedience
Community	Gentleness	Orderliness
Compassion	Genuineness	Patience
Competence	Good taste	Peace
Competition	Growth	Perfection
Consistency w/ Bible	Hard work	Performance
Creativity	Honesty	Persistence
Determination	Humility	Personal Power
Diligence	Humor	Physical vitality
Efficiency	Impacting people	Productivity
Elegance	Independence	Purity
Encouragement	Influence	Quality
Enlightenment	Inspiring Others	Recognition
Relaxation	Sensitivity	Success
Respect for life	Servanthood	Temperance
Respect for people	Service	Tolerance

Respect for the environment	Silence	Tongue control
Risk taking	Sincerity	Trust
Security	Solitude	Truth
Self-esteem	Spiritual growth	Winning
Self-expression	Stability	Worship

APPENDIX G

Writing the Statement of the Vision for the Marriage

(Source: Adapted from “Hope-Focused Marital Enrichment” by Ripley & Worthington)

Plan: Come up with a one-page description of your joint vision for the marriage.

Instructions

1. Recall things that both of you said would make a ‘perfect’ marriage. Those things are a large part of a vision statement.
2. Picture yourself five years from now. Where would you like for your marriage to be? Write down how you would feel if your desired goal were successfully accomplished.
3. Next, prepare a chart showing the five-year period, broken down into six-month segments. Discuss together some of the things that might happen over the next five years.
4. Then, list the obstacles you expect to encounter in implementing your plan.
5. Discuss together ways that you plan to deal with each challenge.

Creating A Family Mission Statement

(<https://jdgrear.com/blog/5-steps-to-writing-a-family-mission-statement/>)

Step #1: Engage the whole family

This is a great exercise for the entire family. Set aside some extended time to cast vision with your children for why a family mission statement is important. The more your children feel a part of the process, the more likely they will be to embrace it.

Step #2: Identify specific goals and values based on Scripture

As you talk with your children about God’s purpose for their lives, take time to discuss specific values and goals you have for the family. Also let your children speak into the process by sharing specific things God is putting on their hearts.

Step #3: Work together to craft a statement

Here’s where you can get really creative. There’s no one format that your family mission statement needs to take. It may take the form of a catchy motto, be an acrostic using your family’s last name, or take on some other creative form. *The easier to remember, the better.* But remember, no one size fits all.

Step #4: Creatively display and reinforce your family mission statement

In order to keep the family mission statement in front of your family, look for ways to prominently display it in your home. Also try and celebrate when a family member honors a value or accomplishes a goal that’s been identified. The best mission statement

in the world won't do anything if you don't reinforce it. The more it comes up, the more those key ideas take root.

Step #5: Evaluate periodically

Especially if you've never done anything like this before, it may take a while to land on a family mission statement that actually fits you and your kids. Don't get frustrated if your first attempt turns out to be a dud. Revisit, revise, and move on. You may also find that as your children grow and mature that your family ministry statement needs to be modified. Evaluating periodically will allow you to adjust for the different seasons of life your family will go through.

APPENDIX H

Sample Family Rule of Life

- Participate in private family prayer and worship
- Practice daily gratitude and prioritize family meals together
- As a couple, engage in meaningful dialogue with our children about their daily life
- Prepare healthy meals for our family
- Maintain a weekly practice of Sabbath-keeping
- Schedule bi-weekly date nights or coffee dates as a couple
- Engage in daily family connection rituals and family traditions
- Participate in weekly fun activities together (hiking, board games, camping, etc.)
- Friday movie and popcorn nights with my family
- Serve others in the church and community
- Regularly give in tithes and offerings at church

APPENDIX I

A Parental Guide for Table Conversational Starters

1. What was your favorite part of today?
2. What was your least favorite part of today?
3. What is one of your favorite all time memories?
4. If you had \$20 to do anything you wanted with, what would you do with it?
5. What do you want to be when you grow up?
6. If you visit any place in the world, where would it be?
7. What qualities do you think make a good friend?
8. Describe yourself with one word.
9. If you could be invisible for one day, what would you do?
10. What is your favorite book?
11. What is your favorite meal?
12. What is your favorite movie?
13. If you could make your own movie what would you call it?
14. If you had to give all your toys or favorite things away, who would you give them to?
15. If you could only keep one toy or favorite thing, which one would it be?
16. What is your favorite word? Why?
17. What is the funniest joke you know?
18. If you could change one thing in the world, what would you change?
19. Who do you want to be most like when you grow up?
20. If you could build anything in our backyard, what would you build?

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