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BETHEL UNIVERSITY
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A MODEL FOR SMALL CHURCH LEADERSHIP TO SUPPORT THEIR
MINISTER'S SELF-CARE

A THESIS PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE
IN LEADING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

BY
JEREMY S. ALLARD
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

MAY 2017

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I begin by acknowledging my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by whose His rich grace I am His child and servant. By His grace he has given me salvation, a blessed life and family, and a call of ministry to a wonderful church. I am humbled by His blessing and thankful for His daily provision and protection for my life, family, and ministry.

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ABSTRACT

The complexity of vocational ministry is difficult to manage and maintain. Balancing the complex nature of the church, relationships, family life, spiritual and personal life provides the minister with a struggle that rarely ceases. Pursuing self-care within this environment can provide relief to the struggle but is difficult to do alone. The study seeks to provide a model for local church leadership to support their minister so he or she can successfully manage ministry and personal life through self-care practices.

The project identified ministers employed at Stone-Campbell churches with a weekly attendance of less than 125 in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A survey was sent to these ministers asking what types of support they receive from their congregation and leadership. The results of the survey identified five ministers who received the highest support. These five ministers were interviewed to determine the relationship between the church leadership support and their self-care practices.

The biblical and theological review examined the *imago Dei*'s relationship with the elements of self-care with a priority towards spiritual formation. The literature review identified six strategies for successful self-care practice. The interviews identified three relationships that influence the practice of a minister's self-care. These relationships are the foundation to the model for how church leadership can support their minister's self-care.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP SUPPORT FOR MINISTER SELF-CARE

The Problem and Its Context

Statement of Problem

Throughout his participation in the Leading from the Inside Out Doctor of Ministry Cohort, the researcher has informally asked ministers about their church leadership's investment in their personal self-care. The researcher has come to believe there is not a workable model for successful minister self-care support among smaller churches within the Stone-Campbell Movement. The problem this project addressed is the absence of a workable model for local church leadership within the Stone-Campbell Movement to support the self-care efforts of their minister.

In response to this problem the researcher has (a) explored the theology of *imago Dei* and self-care and how it is exhibited throughout scripture, (b) reviewed the relevant literature to identify self-care practices and principles for a healthy partnership between church leadership and the minister, (c) surveyed the ministers of the Stone-Campbell Movement churches in Minnesota and Wisconsin with an attendance of less than 125 to identify churches investing in their minister's self-care, (d) interviewed the ministers of the five identified churches to compare practices and principles found in the literary review, and (e) produced a workable model consisting of practices and principles for local church leadership to invest in the self-care of their ministers.

The researcher limited the project in three areas. The first area was limited to Stone-Campbell Movement churches associated with the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ (CCCC). The research was also limited to the self-care practices of the minister, not the church leadership. The third area was limiting the psychological area of self-care to intellectual enrichment and relational support, not addressing more advanced psychological issues that might include the need for professional services.

The researcher had seven assumptions in this project. The first assumption was the Holy Bible is authoritative and represents God's truth and the only plan for salvation. The second assumption was successful practices of self-care will increase life vitality, long term effectiveness and longevity in ministry. The third assumption was ministers have the ability to increase their efforts for self-care. The fourth assumption was church leadership will be more proactive with their minister's self-care if they understand its need and correlation to a healthier church. The fifth assumption was church leadership will support a minister's self-care if given an opportunity and model for self-care support. The sixth assumption was churches with an attendance of less than 125 are less likely to support a minister's self-care due to the lack of resources and increased dependence upon the minister for church functionality. The seventh assumption was psychological and emotional self-care elements can be interchangeable.

The researcher addressed five subproblems in this project. The first subproblem reviewed the biblical and theological literature to discover self-care practices and the application of *imago Dei* and the Ten Commandments. This shows the priority of spiritual formation in self-care and how self-care is shown in Jesus' life and teaching.

The second subproblem reviewed relevant literature related to the problem to determine the current need for self-care among ministers and core elements and strategies for self-care practices for a healthy, spiritually-formed minister in the four areas of self-care: biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual.¹ The third subproblem was preparing a survey for the CCCC churches in Minnesota and Wisconsin to identify those churches whose leadership is supporting the minister's self-care. Once identified, the researcher conducted personal interviews with the five ministers and collected any documentation about the investment of the church leadership into the minister's self-care.

The fourth subproblem in the research was to collect, organize, analyze, and synthesize all the data gathered to identify common practices and principles between the churches interviewed. This led to the fifth subproblem which took the discoveries found and produced a model for churches to use in encouraging self-care practices by their ministers.

Setting of the Project

Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ (CCCC) are a group of churches that identify with the teachings of the Stone-Campbell Movement. These core teachings emphasize independence for each congregation, weekly communion, and a high value on believer's baptism by immersion. The autonomous nature and absence of denomination oversight in the churches causes uniqueness among the church's polity, policy, values, ministry programs, and organizational mission and vision. While functioning independently, they consider themselves a "fellowship" or a "brotherhood"

¹ Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry* (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1991) x.

of churches. This involves partnering in the support of independent mission groups, church camps, colleges, and ministries.

Minnesota and Wisconsin have only 79 CCCC churches between them.²

Minnesota has 46 churches. Of those churches, only one has an average attendance of over 350, 14 have an average of 126 to 350 in attendance, and 31 have fewer than 125 in attendance. Wisconsin has 32 churches; 2 have an average attendance of over 1,000, 2 have average over 350, 8 have an average of 126 to 350 in attendance, and 21 have fewer than 125 in attendance. The focus of this project was on the 52 churches that average fewer than 125 in attendance.

The churches' efforts to network together are typically through the shared ministries they support. These groups have been composed mainly of church camps, church planting organizations and colleges. Minnesota has one church camp, Pine Haven Christian Assembly in Park Rapids, Minnesota, that the churches in the state strongly support. In Wisconsin, two camps are supported: Christian Harbor Youth Camp in Holcombe, Wisconsin and Rock River Christian Camp in Polo, Illinois. A majority of the churches support one of these camps through giving, providing volunteers, or sending their kids. Those in south central and southeast Wisconsin support Rock River Christian Camp, while those in northern and western Wisconsin support Christian Harbor Youth Camp. These week-long camps often provide ministers with rare opportunities to connect and build relationships with other ministers and church leaders if they choose to participate.

² J. Noll, ed. *Directory of the Ministry* (Springfield, IL: Specialized Christian Services, 2016).

Recently, three ministry organizations within Minnesota and Wisconsin have discontinued their services. These organizations provided a place for networking and connecting among the churches and their ministers. The Wisconsin Christian Ministries Association, a church planting and networking organization, discontinued activity with the sudden death of the director in 2015. In 2015 the Minnesota Christian Evangelizing Association, a church planting and networking organization closed its ministry. In 2016, Crossroads College in Rochester, Minnesota, discontinued offering classes and released all but three staff. With the loss of these three organizations, the camps are now the only ministries that offer networking and support to the churches within Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Training and encouragement efforts for ministers and church leaders are independently sought out within the CCCC. Each church has its own views and practices for how it supports and works with their minister. The minister has no established support structures in place like that are found within a denomination or organization. If the church or minister is to take advantage of training or networking opportunities, it is often self-initiated. The low number of churches in Minnesota and Wisconsin makes it geographically challenging for the minister to find local support among fellow ministers, which can increase a sense of isolation. Therefore, it is left to the individual church and/or minister to find advice, support, and accountability.

Importance of the Project

Importance of the Project to the Researcher

This project's focus on the well-being of a minister comes from personal, family, and other shared experiences with ministers. These experiences, along with a 20-year

passion for ministers and their well-being, are the foundation for this project. The goal is providing a healthier framework for ministers to live in their call to ministry and remain cared for and live with vitality.

The researcher has repeatedly experienced the ups and downs of ministry in relation to personal well-being. Intervals of chaotic busyness and lack of self-care usually bring about a point of needing physical and mental restoration and spiritual realignment. These intervals have led the researcher to pay more attention to self-care in order to promote the longevity of his ministry. In an effort to maintain his self-care, the researcher has established personal accountability relationships. Since establishing these personal accountability relationships, a significant decrease in the frequency and intensity of those times of poor well-being has occurred. Thus, self-care and accountability have benefitted him in many ways. His desire is to find a model to improve church leadership support for minister's self-care in his current church ministry as well as other church ministries.

The researcher has also seen family members leave vocational ministry. His father, sister, and two brothers in-law are all ordained ministers. Currently his two brothers in-law have left the ministry. His sister at one time vowed never to return to the ministry, but has since returned. Out of his closest college friends who completed formal training, received ordination, and started vocational ministry, he is the only one who has not left the ministry, either permanently or for a prolonged period of time. In many of these stories, partnership between the leadership and the minister deteriorated, causing great anxiety and/or diminished self-care. His desire as a researcher is to combine the effectiveness of self-care for a minister's longevity while building a trust partnership with church leadership.

The researcher also sees this project as a needed exercise to understand important relationship between integrating the four levels of self-care (biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual)³ with the three primary roles of a minister he has identified: follower of Christ, member of Christ's body, and leader in the church. The minister's first priority is to be a follower of Christ. This allows the follower eternal salvation, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and a new life with purpose. That purpose for each follower is to abide in the presence of Christ, allowing Him to work in his or her individual life to produce the fruit He desires the individual to produce. Jesus provided a template for abiding and producing in the upper room discourse (John 15:1-11). The central theme is "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing"⁴ (John 15:4). The minister's first role and responsibility is to abide in Jesus Christ the vine in order to produce the fruit the Master desires.

The researcher sees the minister as an active member in the body of Christ. In the researcher's experiences with other ministers, he has seen that ministers are often excluded from personal relationships within the church. The Apostle Paul's "body of Christ" passages (1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12) suggest it is impossible to be excluded from the interpersonal ministry of the local church due to a leadership role. The Apostle Paul did not refuse relationships but cherished those who came to him by hosting them, providing prayer and financial support, having personal friendships, and giving encouragement (Acts 16:14, Eph. 6:19, Col. 4:9, 1 Tim. 1:2). The minister must make concerted efforts

³ Oswald, x.

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from *English Standard Version Bible*, (London: Crossway, 2010).

toward seeking the support offered by the local and universal body of Christ if self-care is to be maintained.

Finally the researcher sees the minister as a leader in the church. God holds all matters of authority in His being (Dan. 4:35) and those who have authority are established by God (Rom. 13:1). God gives part of that authority over to the stewardship of the leaders of the local church. A modern day vocational minister can best be seen as the elder who is of “double honor” (1 Tim. 5:17-18) and has support from the body of believers to provide ministry (1 Cor. 9:11). This elder, or minister, is recognized as being called to leadership by the fruit produced shown by an abiding relationship with Christ and with the church (1 Tim. 3:2-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Pet. 5:1-2).

The researcher believes understanding these roles and their relationship with self-care will help him manage self-care practices and ministry responsibilities. He also believes it can assist church leaders and ministers to prioritize and identify efforts to increase self-care support.

Importance of the Project to the Immediate Ministry Context

The researcher has been at Sheldon Church of Christ in Sheldon, Wisconsin for over thirteen years. In that time, the church has grown and become healthier. There are seven individuals that make up the church board and eldership. Of those seven, only two were present when the researcher came to be minister. Despite the turnover, the researcher has had the fortunate opportunity to work closely with several of the board members and provide church leadership training. The local church board has been overwhelmingly supportive in the work and personal life of the researcher; however the process of implementing a plan for self-care of the researcher has not been undertaken.

Based on his personal experiences with other pastors, as mentioned in the previous section, the researcher knows the importance of this action in the work of his ministry. The research collected is expected to give the researcher and the local congregation insight on how to better work together in promoting the self-care of the pastor. The implementation of the principles and practices should provide a healthier context for the congregation and the minister.

Importance of the Project to the Church at Large

The goal of this project for the church at large is to provide a framework for other CCCC churches to use in helping their ministers. Two problems face the CCCC. The first is the need for more ministers to fill the current ministerial vacancies in churches. This need was presented at the 2012 North American Christian Convention, which is the gathering event for this group of churches, by the presidents of the Bible colleges.

The second problem is that once a person has received training to be a minister, the transition into church ministry is not always smooth and sustainable. “Most statistics say that 60% to 80% of those who enter the ministry will not still be in it 10 years later, and only a fraction will stay in it as a lifetime career.”⁵ Providing a framework for the minister to be encouraged in self-care is one area that can support a minister’s longevity in ministry. It is common for ministers to become imbalanced heavily toward administrative and ministry duties and less focused on their personal relationship to Christ. This leads to spiritual dryness.⁶ To offset this lack of balance, this project hopes

⁵ Richard J. Krejcir, “Statistics on Pastors,” Into Thy Word Ministries, accessed May 15, 2014, <http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=36562>

⁶ Craig W. Ellison and William S. Mattila, “The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11 (1983): 33.

that having church leadership support the minister's self-care will provide a partial answer to this concerning problem.

Data and Methodology

This project was qualitative in nature with some quantitative elements. The model employed included a case study with grounded theory. The primary tools used in the case study were a survey, five personal interviews, documents, and observational field notes.

Primary data includes the survey responses of 30 ministers in Minnesota and Wisconsin that identified how self-care practices are encouraged by the leadership for the minister; personal interviews with the senior minister of the five churches identified as encouraging self-care for their minister through the survey; and personal observations recorded in field notes. The secondary data included biblical, theological and secular literature dealing with issues relevant to the problem of this project and any relevant documents from personal interviews.

CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR SELF-CARE
WITHIN THE *IMAGO DEI*

Imago Dei

Jesus' life is the perfect example of the *imago Dei*, "image of God," and produces for all humanity a model for how to fully experience it. It is important to understand the theology of *imago Dei* because it explains humanity's primary function: to live for, interact with, and follow God. It is explained within the creation story, the Ten Commandments and in the model of Christ. Stanley Grenz states, "Although not a dominant motif within the Bible, the *imago Dei* is central to biblical anthropology."¹ The researcher seeks to recognize how identifying the interpretations of *imago Dei* is central to understanding one's role as a follower of Christ and the importance of self-care for the minister and humanity.

The *imago Dei* exists within all humanity (Gen. 1:26-27). The first two chapters of Genesis show God as the Creator of all things through His voiced commands. Each command is followed by a result phrase, "and it was so" (Gen. 1:7, 9, 11, 15, 24). This form of command and result repeats itself until the end of the sixth day of creation.

A change in the command and result structure of the verses reveals that the sixth day of creation will be different:

¹ Stanley Grenz, "Social God and Relational Self, The Social God and the Relational Self: Toward a Theology of the *imago Dei* in the Postmodern Context," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 24, no. 1 (2002): 33.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Gen. 1:26-27).

The introduction of the plural personal pronouns describing God, along with the terms image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demut*), has resulted in a theological position that humanity alone is given the image of God (*imago Dei*). This additional description of the creation process not only signifies the importance of humanity’s creation but also reveals that placing the *imago Dei* in humanity is the climax over all creation.² For centuries theologians have considered how these verses apply to an understanding of humanity and its relationship to God.

The different interpretations have drawn one common conclusion: the *imago Dei* does not mean humanity is made in the same deified essence as the Trinity. Russell Reno compares the similarity between the *imago Dei* and God’s prescribed pattern (or plan) for the tabernacle (Exodus 25:9). He suggests, “When man is made ‘in the divine image,’ just as the tabernacle was made ‘in the pattern’ suggests that man is a copy of something that had the divine image, not necessarily a copy of God himself.”³

The significance for understanding this concept is found in the story of the fall of humanity (Gen. 3). The introduction of sin by the created image-bearers of God caused judgment and separation. The separation occurred because the presence of sin conflicted with the holiness of the creator God. Judgment was the consequence of this separation

² Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 25.

³ Wenham, 32.

and led to a different life of hardship outside the Garden of Eden. It also included the marred relationship with God, resulting in a veiled understanding of *imago Dei* due to the corruption sin caused in humanity's understanding and interaction with God.

The need for self-care is one of the consequences of the fall of humanity. The struggles of intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, and relational turmoil, unknown when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, were introduced at that time. Their separation from God begins a separation from the fully realized *imago Dei* and God's intended experience for humanity. A holistic view of spiritual formation can define a self-care that can bridge this separation.

Diane Chandler's work, *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness* is formative in an understanding and implementation of self-care for a follower of Christ. Chandler brings a holistic approach to spiritual formation, reflecting elements similar to those of self-care. She believes spiritual formation is foundational for humanity's pursuit of *imago Dei*.⁴ Subsequently, the researcher believes this is foundational for a pastor's pursuit of self-care.

Chandler describes four perspectives to help her reader understand what *imago Dei* might mean. She starts by explaining the reason no definite understanding exists is because "image" and "likeness" are used rarely in the Bible, lending uncertainty to the etymology and making interpretation problematic.⁵ The four perspectives of *imago Dei* show humankind's capacity for thinking and reasoning, interpersonal relationships, dominion of the earth, and becoming further restored into God's image through the

⁴ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 31.

⁵ Chandler, 29.

sanctification process in the present reality, but with a divine goal and destiny.⁶ These perspectives represent the common historical positions of the *imago Dei*. Chandler believes incorporating these perspectives, and possibly finding new perspectives, will provide a robust, multidimensional and “fully orbed understanding of the human person.”⁷ This holistic approach to understanding *imago Dei* within the human person helps one understand the position self-care should have in all human life, and especially in the life of a follower of Christ. Vladimir Lossky agrees with a holistic view of *imago Dei*. He suggested the Church fathers, and all believers, refrain from limiting the definitions of the *imago Dei* to any one part of humanity since, “the biblical narrative gives no precise account of the nature of the image.”⁸

The first perspective Chandler presents has historical roots dating back to the Early Church and the works of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. This perspective identifies reasoning and rational thinking as the element of humanity that sets it apart from all other creation. “Heavily influenced by Greek philosophical tradition, the perspective designates reason as the distinctive feature of our humanity and the seat of the image of God.”⁹ It has value but is limited to the intellectual dimension. This is insufficient as it ignores the

⁶ Chandler, 32-33.

⁷ Chandler, 33.

⁸ Vladimir Lossky. *The Image and Likeness of God* (London/Oxford: Mowbray, 1974), 116, quoted in Malcom Jeeves, ed., *The Emergence of Personhood: A Quantum Leap?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2015), 187.

⁹ R. R. Reno, *Genesis*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010), 53.

multidimensionality of the human person.¹⁰ It also ignores the relational, emotional, and physical dimensions of the human experience.

The second perspective of *imago Dei* is the capacity for relationship. This view is founded upon the inherent relationship between God and humanity in the creation story, the experience in the Garden of Eden, and the broken relationship due to the introduction of sin in the fall. These relationships provide a basis for a part of the *imago Dei*. Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer found that when God wanted male and female to be in Their image in Genesis 1:27 it was a statement of relationship between God and creation not in anything else created.¹¹ This capacity for relationship with God is further seen in how the relationship is broken at the fall and judgment comes upon Adam and Eve even though the *imago Dei* is not removed. Therefore the *imago Dei* provides the “fundamental, permanent characteristics of our humanity that make us capable of receiving the consummating gift of the seventh day, the gift of fellowship with God that he plans for us ‘in the beginning.’”¹² This relational approach to *imago Dei* reveals humanity’s need for inter-human relationships, which reveal the human experience of emotions. This view alone is inadequate when considering the other dimensions of humanity because it focuses only on relationship and emotions.

The third perspective of *imago Dei* is humankind’s dominion over the earth: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the

¹⁰ Chandler, 34.

¹¹ Beth Felker Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau, eds., *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 33.

¹² Reno, 53.

earth” (Gen. 1:28). This prominent view in current scholarship¹³ is based on the Ancient Near Eastern understanding of *imago Dei*. Kings would erect images of themselves in places in their empire where they would not appear. That image would not only represent the king but would also act as a reminder of their authority and royal office.¹⁴ This perspective sees Genesis 1:26-27 as the climax in the creation narrative, describing how God created the world external from Himself, and places humanity in it to represent His transcendent deity.¹⁵

As espoused by many Old Testament scholars, the dominion perspective views humankind as superintending all of the nonhuman world, earthly life, and its institutions, including politics, education, and the arts.¹⁶ Chandler ascribes the value of this perspective to three of her formational dimensions of vocational, physical health and wellness, and resource stewardship.¹⁷ This perspective connects the self-care principle of physical wellbeing to the *imago Dei*.

Chandler’s fourth perspective of *imago Dei* is the relevance of *imago Dei* for the Christ follower. She says this perspective is “humankind’s divine goal and destiny.”¹⁸ This view comes from a constructionist theology in which the *imago Dei* is seen from a post-modern mindset that views the image of self with a subjective and relational

¹³ J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 29.

¹⁴ Middleton, 26.

¹⁵ Grenz, 48.

¹⁶ Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 29, quoted in Chandler, 36.

¹⁷ Chandler 36.

¹⁸ Chandler, 37.

essence. Stanley Grenz defines this overlooked perspective as the “divinely-given goal or destiny awaiting humankind in the eschatological future and toward which humans are directed ‘from the beginning.’”¹⁹ The connection in this perspective is between the *imago Dei* in Genesis to Christ being the perfect image of God in the flesh.

The best way to identify *imago Dei* is to look at Christ’s example rather than that of humanity. Paul writes, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Col. 1:15). The *imago Dei* in humanity is “blurred, compromised, and rendered ambiguous in a thousand different ways.”²⁰ Conversely, “Christ displays in himself, eternally, the complete image of God, and he retained that image fully even as he took on human nature.”²¹ The *imago Dei* found in Christ is not just the act of putting on flesh, but His experience of humanity including its frailty (Heb. 5:7), its struggle with temptation (Heb. 4:15), and being affected by its sin in allowing humanity to place Him upon the cross (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ’s incarnation was the perfect embodiment of the *imago Dei*, particularly in that His desire was entirely God-directed.²²

This God-directed desire that Christ exhibited is the part of *imago Dei* Chandler describes in the fourth perspective. Thomas and Shawna Gaines connect this desire to the *imago Dei* saying:

¹⁹ Grenz, 42.

²⁰ Tom Smail, *Like Father, Like Son; the Trinity Imaged in our Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 271.

²¹ Craig L. Bloomberg, “True Righteousness and Holiness: The Image of God in the New Testament,” in *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology*, eds. Beth Felker Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 78.

²² Timothy R. Gaines and Shawna Songer Gaines, “Uncovering Christ; Sexuality in the Image of the Invisible God” in *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology*, eds. Beth Felker Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 94.

We were created in love at God's desire and by God's design. We were created in the image of the triune God who is eternal, self-giving love among Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons who are intimately poured out in one life, one God. God's creative act of love hints that desire is an elemental divine characteristic.²³

The *imago Dei* as a divine goal or desire is tied to Jesus' perfect likeness to God and the call for Christ's followers to emulate that likeness through the sanctification process by the Holy Spirit, made possible through the work of Christ on the cross. Paul's writings suggest "that ultimately the *imago Dei* is Christ and, by extension, the new humanity, consisting of those who through union with Christ share in Christ's relationship to God and consequently are being transformed into the image of God in Christ"²⁴

This perspective reveals the spiritual dimension of humanity in need of a transformational relationship with the creator God, made available through the life, death, and resurrection of the perfect *imago Dei*, Jesus Christ. This is the primary dimension for Chandler's approach to spiritual formation²⁵ and the primary element of self-care because the others are incomplete without the relational ability of the *imago Dei* with the creator God.

These four perspectives collectively form a more complete understanding of what humanity is to become in light of being made in the *imago Dei*. Oliver Crisp states the *imago Dei* includes "the whole of human nature."²⁶ He continues saying that "to abstract

²³ Gaines and Gaines, 92.

²⁴ Grenz, 54.

²⁵ Chandler, 37.

²⁶ Oliver Crisp, "A Christological Model of the *Imago Dei*" in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, eds. Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 224-225.

from human nature one aspect that is in the likeness of God is to divide what is united in Christ.”²⁷ This holistic approach is the reason for the acceptance and incorporation of Chandler’s application of the perspectives of *imago Dei* into this research. It allows for a fuller, multidimensional approach to understanding what it means for humanity to be made in God’s image. Therefore, the four elements of self-care are found in the understanding of the *imago Dei*. The first perspective of reasoning and thinking can be attributed to the intellectual element. The second perspective of being inherently relational applies to the emotional element. The third perspective of dominion gives insight into the stewardship humanity is to have over the world, including the personal health and wellness element. The final perspective of transforming into the likeness of Christ correlates to the foundational self-care element of spirituality.

Understanding Self-Care in Scripture

Self-care principles and their application can be found throughout Scripture. The goal of self-care is not mastery of self-disciplines as a follower of Christ, rather its success is found in the act of following Christ. This includes maintaining a humble submission to the leadership of God with the support of the body of Christ. The introduction of the Mosaic Law and the Ten Commandments to the Israelites not only explained God’s expectations for His people, but also introduced elements of self-care so the *imago Dei* may be more developed. Christ, who is the perfect example of the *imago Dei*, can also be seen as the perfect example of incorporating self-care.

²⁷ Crisp, 224-225.

The origin of self-care can be found in the conversations and writings of the Early Church fathers, when they were on a quest to understand the self. Augustine's writings directly affected how Western civilization has come to understand the idea of "self."²⁸ His work on self introduced the idea of "inner self" to the discussion of *imago Dei*.²⁹ Augustine's work set a foundation for how Western civilization would eventually integrate the idea of self and promote improvement upon the self.

In the Age of Reason, practical methods started integrating with philosophical concepts. Reason became "the means to objectify the world in the cause of gaining mastery and exercising instrumental control over it."³⁰ The idea of mastery was to exercise will over that which was not mastered. The emphasis on the intellectual was accepted even in Christianity, and promoted the self as the primary agent for personal change. This understanding of self can be seen in the practices of the Pietists, the Puritans, and in the Wesleyan tradition.

Unfortunately, the approach to improving self through religious practices does not provide a holistic, theological framework. Understanding and living out the *imago Dei* given to each human must begin with grace given as a follower of Christ, rather than self-discipline. Scripture teaches that humility and recognition of the Almighty God is where proper understanding and living begin (Prov. 1:7, 9:10). The initiation and continual

²⁸ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 121.

²⁹ Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 140.

³⁰ Grenz, 36.

relationship with God is based on the grace given by God (Eph. 2:8)³¹ and demands a humility that submits to the direction of Jesus if a life is to be saved (Luke 9:23-24).³²

Therefore, for self-care to function properly in the *imago Dei* it must begin with humility and submission to Jesus as Lord and then extend to His Church. Scripture points out that pride will bring one to destruction (Prov. 16:18) where humility will be rewarded by God (James 4:10). This starts with the initial step of humility and the submission of dying to one's self when deciding to follow Jesus for life as one's savior and Lord (Matt. 10:38; Rom. 10:9, 10). The follower must also practice submission (Eph. 5:21) and humility as shown in Jesus' example (Phil. 2:3-8). When a follower of Jesus humbly submits his or her life, he or she will experience the fruit of the Spirit which includes self-control (Gal. 5:22-25)³³, a necessary element of self-care. Scripture shows that improved self-control and perseverance to obey is a natural outcome of a humble and contrite heart that maintains an abiding relationship with Jesus (John 15:4-5).

Leaders must also have humility in understanding they need others who will listen to them and speak honestly to them. There are biblical examples of leaders who chose pride over humility by removing themselves from God's leadership and became distracted. Moses, God's chosen spokesperson, needed to hear wisdom from Jethro (Exod. 18:13), David needed Nathan (2 Sam. 12), and Peter needed Paul (Gal. 2:11-13).

³¹ William Hendriksen, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*. New Testament Commentary, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002) 123.

³² R. C. Sproul, *A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 200–201

³³ Hendriksen, 226.

Likewise, the minister must be humble and have people in place to provide honest assessment and encouragement toward self-care realignment.

One example of choosing pride over humility is King Solomon. God offered Solomon anything he wanted and his request was for “a discerning heart ... to distinguish between right and wrong” (1 Kings 3:9). God’s response was one of blessing, where Solomon would acquire not only wisdom but also wealth and honor (3:13-14). God promised Solomon that his monarchy would be successful. He was able to fulfill his father’s dream of building a magnificent temple for the Ark of the Covenant (1 Kings 6). He expanded the borders than any Israelite king (4:21) through strategic relationships without any major military campaigns.³⁴ He received annually almost 25 tons of gold, which did not include the additional money from trading and taxes.³⁵ King Solomon was a successful king, just as God promised he would be.

Solomon did not, however, find success in one area: being obedient to God in his relationships with women. Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, plus numerous women from other nations. His love for them took priority over God’s command to not marry them “for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods” (1 Kings 11:2). In his pursuit of peace through strategic marriages with other kingdoms, and his love for women, Solomon allowed his wives to introduce the worship of their false gods to Israel. Solomon allowed his heart to turn away from God to worship these foreign gods by building temples for them (11:4-8).

³⁴ D. A. Hubbard, “Solomon,” in *The New Bible Dictionary*, eds. I. Howard Marshall et al., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1119.

³⁵ Thomas L. Constable, “1 Kings,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 1, eds. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 507.

This step away from God's leadership in his life had serious consequences, even though God warned him twice about worshipping his wives' false gods (1 Kings 10:9-10). God raised up two adversaries that would remove the peace Solomon enjoyed for most of his reign (10:25). God then sent a message through the prophet Ahijah that because of Solomon's disobedience his kingdom would not remain unified after he died (10:31-34). Because Solomon chose to remove God as his leader, he threatened the safety of his household, destroyed the peace of his kingdom, scarred his reputation, and wavered in his obedience to God. Solomon's example shows that even though one can have all the physical, intellectual, and emotional tools available for success, one can sabotage any effort if they choose to no longer humbly submit to God.

Mosaic Law and Self-Care

God interacted with His people to help incorporate the *imago Dei* with self-care principles. Before the body of Christ could be established through Jesus Christ, God formed Israel to be His people. In the Mosaic Law God taught the people of Israel what it meant to be the people of God. For over 400 years, the nation of Israel had lived in the polytheistic culture of the Egyptians. They learned how to understand their role in the world through the religion and culture of Egypt. It was not until the injustices of Egypt bore down on them that they turned to the roots of their nation and cried out to the God of their fathers, Yahweh (Exod. 3:7).

When God sent Moses to deliver the Hebrew people, He displayed His supreme power over the Egyptians and their gods through the ten plagues. This exercise of power reintroduced God's ability to be protector and provider to His people, the Hebrews. As

God delivered the nation from the hands of the Egyptians, He then had the task of teaching Israel how His people should live individually and as a community.

Exodus 19 shows the beginning of God explaining the type of nation they will be, and their role to the rest of humanity. God revealed His plan for Israel, “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exod. 19:5-6). God expected His nation to show obedience as part of the covenant agreement, serve God as a nation of priests, and be a holy nation, different from all the others. This would reveal God’s character to the rest of humanity, and offer a glimpse of how humanity is to realize *imago Dei* within them, both individually and corporately.

God begins His instruction with the Ten Commandments, reminding Israel He was the one who freed them from slavery (Exod. 20:2). The Ten Commandments and Mosaic Law are not restrictive laws bringing about a new type of slavery. Instead, these commandments would provide Israel with instructions on how to be free.³⁶ God provides through the Law how humanity can flourish by following His instructions through proper decision-making. An examination of the Ten Commandments illustrates this human flourishing within the context of the self-care principles.

The first four commandments focus on the relationship between God and humans. These four commandments instruct how humanity should prioritize and worship God in life. The first commandment “You shall have no other gods, before me” (Exod. 20:3) sets

³⁶ Rick Atchley, *Sinai Summit: Meeting God with Our Character Crisis*, (Fort Worth, TX: Sweet Publishing, 1993), 9.

the priority for the human experience. Each person is to stay in humble submission to the one true God, Yahweh, who demands priority over all things. This command also prioritizes the elements of self-care. The spiritual element of the *imago Dei* keeps God as the center making it the priority over the other self-care elements.

The second and third commandments address how to worship God through these two prohibitions. The second commandment calls for not making any “carved image, or any likeness of anything ... [nor should one] bow down to them or serve them” (Exod. 20:4-5). This command addresses the *imago Dei* in that God desires humanity to be representatives of Himself existing as the only physical representation of *imago Dei* within creation.³⁷ The third command describes the proper use and reverence due to the name of God. At face value, these can both be attributed to the spiritual and intellectual elements of self-care. They are spiritual as they explain how not to worship and intellectual because they describe the transcendence of God over the created world, including His revered name.

The fourth commandment is remembering to keep the Sabbath holy. This describes the spiritual element of how one should set apart a day to worship God. This commandment more emphatically appeals to proper physical self-care, as it prescribes no work and rest for all created beings, including animals. Jesus made it clear that this command was created for the benefit of humans and not for the benefit of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). This benefit provides the rest needed for the human body while reminding

³⁷ Anthony C. Thiselton, “The Image and Likeness of God: A Theological Approach” in Jeeves, 190.

humanity “the well-being of creation does not depend on endless work.”³⁸ This was so important that God set an example by taking a day of rest after the six days of creation.

The fifth commandment shifts from how humans are to understand their relationship with God to how they are to function in their relationships with others. This command calls for children to “honor your father and mother” (Exod. 20:12). This command imparts authority to the parents, who are part of the creation process for a child. This authority is to be honored by the children just as God is honored. When the minister’s family functions properly in this commandment, overall well-being improves reducing stress levels.³⁹ God is identifying the need for the family in creation so a child may be raised with instruction on how to properly function as a humble follower of God who lives in community with others. These functions reflect the three roles of a minister as a follower of Christ, a member of the body of Christ, and a humble leader of the church. This is best seen in the *Shema*:

Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all you might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on doorpost of your house and on your gates (Deut. 6:4-9).

The role of the family is to produce a spiritual foundation that identifies loving God with the whole being. Other elements of self-care are also included in this command.

³⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 31.

³⁹ Cristie Jo Johnston. “Examining the Challenges Pastors and their Families Encounter Emerging from a Period of Overwhelming Ministry Stress, and Developing a Strategy for Overall Health,” (D.Min. thesis, Acadia University, 2012), 3.

The intellectual in the teaching of life, the physical in the giving of one's whole self to the following of God's commands, and the emotional in functioning within the family. By functioning within the family structure, the child will develop an understanding of humble submission and love toward God, which is the basis for proper self-care.

The next four commands focus on the prohibition of certain actions that relate to how one person treats another. Each of these carries a strong emotional connection to self-care as seen through the additional teachings of these commandments by Jesus. The connection Jesus makes is not only on the act described but on the motivating emotion behind the action (e.g. anger and murder, lust and adultery). Jesus said, "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, and adultery" (Mark 7:21). Jesus points out that sinful behavior is not in action alone but in the management of different emotions. These commandments call for a Christ-follower to be connected spiritually in humble submission to God to control one's emotions and actions while maintaining community.

The sixth command honors the value of the physical body through the prohibition of murder (Exod. 20:13). God is protecting the value of the physical body and its well-being as one can cause personal harm to the body through poor health and decisions, even to the point of death. Jesus expands this command to include emotional and verbal outbursts of anger (Matt. 5:21-22). He goes even further, requiring resolution of an argument before you worship God, setting the example that managing interpersonal relationships is intertwined with our ability to worship God (Matt. 5:23-24).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 108.

The seventh command prohibits the act of adultery (Exod. 2:14), which is not only the act of sex outside the marriage covenant but also anything that violates or threatens marriage.⁴¹ Jesus once again redefined one of the Ten Commandments by identifying “looking with lustful intent” (Matt. 5:28) as an act of disobedience to this commandment. Jesus continues, connecting this disobedience as a threat to the spiritual health of an individual. He contends that it is better to give up part of the physical body to obey than to suffer spiritually due to disobedience. Once again, the spiritual element of self-care precedes the care of the physical.

The eighth commandment reads, “You shall not steal” (Exod. 20:15). God calls for His people to honor ownership and be content with what God has provided. This commandment is similar to the tenth commandment of not coveting the possessions and relationships of one’s neighbor. Stealing is an act of rebellion against what God has provided and greed for discontentment. Covetousness follows a similar line of rejecting God’s provision with discontentment. Seeking material possessions and wealth will never satisfy (Eccles. 5:10). Rather it is commanded believers seek contentment (1 Tim. 6:8) and pursue God’s kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33), which describes spiritual self-care. There is also a call to pursue other things and not material possessions or wealth (Luke 12:15) which includes the emotional self-care element by loving your neighbor (Mark 12:31) and the intellectual element by investing in the Word of God (Ps. 119:11).

The ninth command is “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Exod. 20:16). These commands reflect the character of who God is (Heb. 6:18) and the reflection of His character through His people. Honesty is necessary for justice,

⁴¹ Atchley, 130.

obedience, healthy community, and love to flourish. It requires people to communicate to a standard beyond their personal comfort and interests. This requires self-examination to make sure words and actions represent the faith and obedience expected from a follower of God. This includes making an honest assessment and self-evaluation of the elements of self-care.

The Ten Commandments represent the moral law within the rest of the Mosaic Covenant⁴² in how God is teaching Israel, individually and corporately, to live humbly with God at their center. By doing this, it reveals God's character and gives a glimpse of how the *imago Dei* can be seen in humanity. Each command is an act of humble submission toward self-care to fully realize the life God desires one to experience. The spiritual element of self-care, in regard to following God, is foundational to all Ten Commandments, while the other self-care elements of intellectual, physical, emotional, and relational are only represented in certain commands.

The Ten Commandments also represent the three roles of a minister. The primary role of being a follower of Christ is putting their relationship with God as the priority. The Ten Commandments are to be done corporately, identifying the need to be accountable and encourage within a community to reflect the *imago Dei* in one's life more vibrantly, just as a minister is to do as a member in the Body of Christ. Finally, it must all be done with humility towards God recognizing a leadership role does not disqualify a minister from needing God and others to pursue the *imago Dei*.

⁴² Iain D. Campbell, *Opening up Exodus*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 82.

The Perfect Imago Dei, Jesus Christ

The incarnation of Jesus Christ was a blessing to humanity in many respects. It ultimately fulfills the mission of completing the act of salvation (Luke 19:10; 1 John 3:5). In addition to that great blessing, He came to bear witness to the truth (John 18:37), and to live as an example of holy living (1 Jn. 2:6)⁴³. The example Jesus lived includes actions of self-care within the ministry context and exemplifies the three roles of a minister: following God first, seeking support outside Himself, and living in humility

Jesus' examples of self-care are seen primarily during His ministry years. During those three years of ministry the reader sees episodes of Jesus' self-care. Yet within the Gospels another element is at work which did not always coincide with self-care. For Jesus, obedience to God the Father took precedence over His personal self-care. His mission was to suffer and die, which is the antithesis of personal self-care. Because Jesus is the perfect example for living, followers can see how He maintained the tension between self-sacrifice in obedience to God and self-care.

Before Jesus' ministry began, He was the complete human. "[He] increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Jesus was complete in the intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual areas of the human experience.⁴⁴ When He inaugurated His ministry with His baptism, it is clear His life was met with approval by the other two persons of the Trinity, God the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:17).

⁴³ Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, vol. 38, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), 95.

⁴⁴ Howard G. Hendricks and Charles R. Swindoll, "Survival for the Pastor," Pastor's Enrichment Congress (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981), Cassette #3.

Once Jesus' ministry started after His baptism, Jesus became susceptible to the rigors of ministry that many ministers experience today. The Holy Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1), yet Jesus' first act of self-care within ministry was to fast for forty days and nights, spiritually preparing Himself for ministry. He immediately attended to His spiritual needs over His physical needs as He waited for the temptations to come to Him. Yet by attending to His spiritual self-care He was able to overcome His physical hunger and refused to turn the stones into bread. He was able to overcome His emotional need of security by refusing to test God's love by manipulating a rescue. In His refusal to bow down to Satan, He was able to overcome His intellectual need for control as well as His emotional need for power.

In Jesus' refusal to turn the stones into bread, the temptation was not for Satan to see if Jesus had the power to accomplish this feat.⁴⁵ Instead, this temptation challenged Him to complete the 40 day fast God had called Him to endure. To turn the stones into bread would deny the will of the Father for His own personal comfort and gain.⁴⁶ Jesus neglected His physical need for the call and will of God the Father, previewing the test Jesus would have to face in the crucifixion. Jesus prioritizes God's will over physical comfort when He says, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34). This temptation identifies to the minister the fine line between balancing healthy physical comfort and accepting and recognizing the will of God in ministry. Jesus recognizes this basic truth: the will of God does not guarantee protection

⁴⁵ Donald Alfred Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 33a (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), 65.

⁴⁶ Hagner, 65.

from physical, emotional, or intellectual comfort. Nor can a guarantee in spiritual comfort (Ps. 23:4; John 14:27) and provision (John 6:35) be found.

In the second temptation, Jesus refused to jump from the highest point, revealing His secure relationship with the Father. Satan attempted to twist Psalm 91:11-12 as a means for Jesus to prove His sonship and test God's love and protection for Him.⁴⁷ In trying, Jesus refused to entertain whether God would rescue Him because He was stable and secure in His relationship with His Father. Jesus' scriptural response reveals it is wrong to manipulate God for an outcome, and that Scripture is authoritative. It is so authoritative that when it speaks of God's love and protection there is no need to test it. It was not necessary for Jesus to test His secure relationship with God because His spiritual self-care provided enough emotional security in the relationship.

In the third temptation, Jesus' refusal to worship Satan in return for an earthly reign of power and wealth over all the nations revealed Jesus' humble submission to God's leadership in His life. Satan offered the quick way to authority on earth instead of the path God had prepared, which included rejection, pain, and suffering (Phil. 2:8-10). Intellectually, this was a temptation similar to that of Solomon. Jesus could ignore the first of God's Ten Commandments; much like Solomon ignored the commandment to marry foreign wives (1 Kings 11:3). In Solomon's reasoning, disobedience increased power, borders, and wealth, but in return it turned his heart away from God. For Jesus it provided an easier way to power, even though it was lacking in comparison to the

⁴⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 18.

authority He would have after His resurrection (Phil. 3:10).⁴⁸ Though intellectually it appears the quickest means to the end, it was in direct disobedience to the Father God. Jesus knew the consequences of breaking such a command through Scripture and refused the offer, and with authority commanded Satan to leave.

In Jesus' preparation for His temptation, the motivating factor was connecting with God in spiritual formation to meet His spiritual self-care need. Out of His desire to remain a healthy, whole person, this focus of spiritual formation was an act of self-care that also included the areas of physical, intellectual, and emotional care. Through His spiritual discipline of fasting He was able to secure Himself in all the areas of self-care. Emotionally He was secure because His identity with God allowed Him to remain complete when tempted with lies that attacked His identity, security, and relationship with God. Physically He was secure because He recognized God's miraculous provision of physical strength during the 40-day fast. This proved God's word was more edifying to the physical body than food (Matt. 3:4).⁴⁹ Intellectually, Jesus' knowledge of Scriptures gave Him discernment to recognize the twisted truth Satan presented. That knowledge also allowed Him the rebuttal of quoting scripture.

In the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the priority of the spiritual element of self-care positively affected the other three areas of self-care, allowing Him to withstand Satan's attack. The tension between self-care and obedience to the will of God is apparent in this test as, "[Jesus] is called to be obedient to the will of the Father under the

⁴⁸ Bloomberg, 85.

⁴⁹ Wiersbe, 18.

pressure of severe testing and at the cost of self-denial.”⁵⁰ The test resulted in the sacrifice of physical comfort for the benefit of maintaining a healthy spiritual relationship with His Father.

At the end of these passages, God fulfilled what Satan offered in the first and second temptation. At the end of the testing, “Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him” (Matt. 4:11). “Jesus, though victorious, is weak and hungry, and angels provide him with the sustenance he refused in [Matt. 4:4] to commandeer for himself.”⁵¹ Jesus’ trust in the promises of God was vindicated after his refusal to seek the immediate comforts offered through the temptations. Jesus navigated the tension of pursuing self-care while pursuing obedience to God. In the end, both were fully realized because of His faith in the will and promises of God.

Jesus endured many other tests that would risk healthy self-care. Jesus found Himself at odds with the religious authority (Matt. 12:14), His hometown (Matt. 13:57), the demands of the crowd (Mark 1:45; Luke 5:1), the disciples (John 6:61), and those in need (Luke 4:42). In the midst of these pressures, Jesus is the best example in maintaining a healthy balance in all four self-care areas.⁵²

As reflected in the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, His practice of prayer and maintaining His spiritual self-care are shown in the Gospels. The whole town of Capernaum gathered to watch and ask for healing (Mark 1:33-34), which He provided. Yet Jesus made it a priority to take care of His spiritual self-care over the needs of those

⁵⁰ Hagner, 69.

⁵¹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 136.

⁵² Oswald, 17.

around Him.⁵³ He would separate Himself from distractions and connect to His father. One example says, “And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed” (Mark 1:35). The disciples did not know what Jesus was doing so they went out to look for Him, bringing with them a sense of urgency to the immediate ministry needs of the community. When found, Jesus simply states while people were waiting for His help, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out” (Mark 1:38).

This event parallels with Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount about praying, fasting, and giving (Matt. 6). In this teaching it is clear in all three spiritual disciplines that when efforts are given to connect and honor God it must be done in private so these actions “may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt. 6:18). Jesus privately left the company of the disciples to connect with God regularly through prayer (Matt. 14:23; Luke 4:42, 5:16, 6:12) as an example for His followers to do the same to live out *imago Dei*.

Jesus also integrated the intelligence element for self-care. In Luke 2 Jesus decided to stay in Jerusalem and be at the temple instead of going back in the caravan with His parents. When His parents finally found Him, He was “sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers” (Luke 2:46-47). The amazement was that Jesus was able to know things that would not have been covered in His Hebrew education

⁵³ Oswald, 71

yet.⁵⁴ His understanding and use of scriptures (Matt. 7:29), knowledge of what people were thinking (Luke 5:22), and awareness of the spiritual realm (Mark 9:29) were beyond basic human understanding. Yet, they were necessary for Him to be the example for people to know how to use their intellect.

Part of Jesus' ministry was to invest in the intellectual element of self-care. He did this through teaching so He could explain, fulfill, and live out Scripture so humanity can fully understand the Scriptures. In the Sermon on the Mount, He explains more completely some common misunderstandings of the Mosaic Law being taught by the teachers and scribes of the day. In Matthew 5:17 He states, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." This statement starts to redefine some commonly held legalistic interpretations of the Mosaic Law. By redefining these commands Jesus reveals both God's intentions and their importance.⁵⁵ Therefore, Jesus is teaching that Scripture knowledge is not the only necessity for intellectual self-care; it also requires understanding proper intent, motivations, and application.

After Jesus had spent time with the disciples He asked His disciples a question:

Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." Luke 9:18-20

⁵⁴ R. C. Sproul, *A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 44.

⁵⁵ Blomberg, 103.

This question asked the disciples to process intellectually the cumulative amount of information, teaching, and observations they have taken since the time they started with Jesus.⁵⁶ Even though the disciples tried to report what others said, Jesus called for them to process what they understood about who He was. Jesus told them, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32). The intellectual element of self-care includes both knowing and understanding who Jesus is and the content His teachings.

Jesus also successfully integrated the self-care element of emotion in His earthly life. Throughout the gospels Jesus displayed an array of different emotions. G. Walter Hansen summarizes the emotions Jesus felt:

*Jesus felt compassion; he was angry, indignant, and consumed with zeal; he was troubled, greatly distressed, very sorrowful, depressed, deeply moved, and grieved, he sighed; he wept and sobbed, he groaned; he was in agony, he was surprised and amazed; he rejoiced very greatly and was full of joy; he greatly desired, and he loved.*⁵⁷

This array of emotional experience is expected as Jesus was fully human. Yet the difference is that in the midst of all this emotion, Jesus did not sin (Heb. 4:15). In Jesus’ example the believer finds a way to navigate through emotion in a healthy manner that does not produce sin.

Jesus had compassion towards those around Him (Matt. 20:34, 9:36; Mark 1:40-41, 8:2; Luke 7:13). Yet the compassion Jesus had for the people existed within a set of boundaries. While there was a steady stream of people needing Jesus’ help, Jesus was

⁵⁶ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 277.

⁵⁷ G. Walter Hansen, “The Emotions of Jesus and Why We Need to Experience Them,” *Christianity Today*, last modified February 3, 1997, accessed August 24, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1997/february3/7t2042.html>. Emphasis author.

able to differentiate Himself and His health from the needs of others.⁵⁸ Even though there were needs, Jesus understood His mission and removed Himself from the present needs to go help those in another community (Mark 1:38).

Jesus also reveals the emotion of righteous anger. He used a whip to drive out the money-changers and those selling animals for sacrifice (John 2:15). On another occasion He turned over the tables and seats of those doing business in the temple while refusing them access to the temple (Mark 11:15-16). Yet in this He remained without sin.

Jesus experienced and expressed His frustration with His disciples many times. A lack of understanding and faith brought some type of rebuke. When the disciples were not able to rebuke a demon, Jesus responded by saying, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?” (Luke 9:41). When the disciples did not understand Jesus’ “leaven” reference to the Pharisees and Sadducees, He was frustrated with the lack of faith and understanding (Matt. 16:9, 11). When the disciples woke Jesus up to calm the storm He recognized their small faith and questioned the reason for their fear. (Matt. 8:26). Finally, when Peter tried to deter Jesus from going to Jerusalem where danger awaited Him, He rebuked Peter saying, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man” (Mark 8:33).

In Jesus’ compassion, anger, and frustration He maintained a healthy level of emotional maintenance and self-care. In His compassion He never extended Himself to where He might experience compassion fatigue. In Jesus’ examples of anger, He never lost control or sinned. In frustration He continued to mentor and train the disciples. He

⁵⁸ Oswald, 71.

never broke off the relationship, but continued to have a deep desire to fellowship with them (Luke 22:15). Jesus' example shows one can experience a broad range of feelings, even negative ones, yet not threaten the pursuit of *imago Dei*.

Jesus taught His-followers the need to be emotionally healthy. He explained that personal feelings are not to cause relationships to be broken. He explained to Peter there is no limit to forgiving others because the limitless forgiveness has been given by God (Matt. 18:21)⁵⁹. Jesus taught that love must go beyond personal feelings and be shown to enemies just as God shows His limitless love (Matt. 5:43). Jesus exemplified this through how He treated Judas (Matt. 26:50) and even the crowd at his crucifixion (Luke 23:34). He calls His followers to do the same so their emotions might not cause a break between their interpersonal and ministry relationships.

Jesus' urgent call for His disciples to show unlimited love and forgiveness still required the need for boundaries within ministry. Repeatedly He attempted to withdraw Himself and His disciples from the crowds in which He did ministry (Matt. 14:22, 15:39; Mark 6:30, 45). This was for emotional and physical restoration from the rigors of the compassion and teaching ministry they were engaged in.⁶⁰ While the need was always present, Jesus recognized the emotional and physical toll ministry can bring and found times of not only spiritual renewal, but also emotional and physical renewal.

The gospel references to Jesus' example of physical self-care are limited. Jesus experienced tiredness, hunger, and thirst (John 4), and He slept in the back of the boat while the disciples are sailing across the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:38). These references

⁵⁹ Wiersbe, 67.

⁶⁰ H.B. London Jr. and N.B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), 203.

reveal the toll the demands of ministry can take on the physical body. In these instances, Jesus found time to renew His body through food, drink, and sleep.

The need for self-care in the physical element is found in Jesus' invitation to come away and rest: "The apostles returned to Jesus and told Him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves" (Mark 6:30-33). The twelve apostles had just returned from a tour of preaching, healing, and casting out demons (Mark 6:12-13). After they came back to report what had been done, Jesus' first action was to get away to "rest a while."

Jesus recognized the physical need for rest and food in the midst of ministry and taught it to the disciples. The disciples were hungry and started to eat the wheat in the field on the Sabbath (Mark 2). The Pharisees chastise Jesus for allowing His disciples to violate their Sabbath laws by harvesting grain in order to eat. Jesus responds by referring to David taking the Bread of the Presence to fill his hunger, which was against the Law. Jesus says "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2: 27). Here Jesus justified the need for fulfilling the physical needs of the human body, including rest and food. The Sabbath, as taught in the Mosaic Law, was for humanity's physical need. Jesus recognized the physical limitations of humanity, which He himself experienced, and then validated the Sabbath as a vehicle to provide necessary rest. Jesus affirmed the efforts needed to maintain the physical element of self-care.

The focus thus far has been on the individual efforts and examples of how one can be formed into the likeness of Christ, who is the perfection of *Imago Dei*. The minister's

primary mandate is to live as a follower of God. Following God is more important than any other role or desire. Jesus' example of humility to the will of God shows that a leader must remain humble. There are also examples where Jesus recognized he was part of a community just as a minister is part of the body of Christ. These examples exist in Jesus' life, ministry, and teaching. One example of Jesus' need for community and relational support is Jesus taking His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray (Matt. 26:36-45). The scene is set with Jesus telling eight of the disciples to wait while Jesus went elsewhere in the garden to pray. Then Peter, James, and John, who are recognized as the inner circle of Jesus, moved to where Jesus revealed he needed their emotional support at that time.⁶¹ In that moment Jesus revealed to His followers a depth of despair and turmoil that had not been noted before in the Gospel of Matthew. This is one of the few intimate moments where Jesus' physical and emotional weaknesses as a human are shown.⁶² Luke 22:44 speaks of the sweat Jesus experienced, establishing the depth of anxiety placed upon His whole physical being. Jesus' response to this physical and emotional pressure is relational support and spiritual connectivity to God through prayer. The Son of God's humility allows him to call on these three for relational support.

Jesus' perfect likeness to the *imago Dei* includes the relational element of humanity. Jesus' relational need was fulfilled by both His relationship with God and with humans. Unfortunately, in this text Jesus' closest friends would deny Him the support He desired. When Jesus awakened the three disciples with disappointment in His voice

⁶¹ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33B (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1995), 782.

⁶² Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 394.

regarding their lack of support, he tells Peter “Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:40-41). Jesus calls for “spiritual vigilance, which in this case includes physical self-control, to avoid being led into sin.”⁶³ Relational support is secondary to spiritual vigilance, just as Jesus displayed in the Garden. Jesus was willing to overcome and resolve His despair through prayer as His relational support from the disciples failed.⁶⁴ Relational support should still be sought, but it should be sought to encourage spiritual vigilance as Jesus intended.

Jesus’ ministry was based on relationships. He cultivated friendships which influenced His disciples positively toward kingdom of God work.⁶⁵ The Gospels show a progression of friendship between Jesus and His disciples from His invitation to follow Him (Luke 5:1-11), teaching and answering their questions (Luke 8:9ff, 11:1ff, 16:1ff), revealing his power to them (Mark 5, 6:45-52), and celebrating with them (Mark 2 18-20; John 2:1-11). Jesus’ ministry investment in His disciples was to build a trusting and loving relationship. This is seen in Jesus’ words, “You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:14-15). The friendship Jesus offers demands obedience motivated by love and being able to know and understand God’s purpose and

⁶³ Blomberg, 396.

⁶⁴ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 1003.

⁶⁵ Gary D. Kinnaman and Alfred H Ellis, *Leaders that Last: How Covenant Friendships Can Help Pastors Thrive* (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Books, 2003), 125.

divine will.⁶⁶ Knowing, understanding, and showing love to one another are basic benchmarks for all relationships, human and divine.

In Jesus' teaching, relationships were central to the human experience. When asked what is God's greatest expectation for His followers, Jesus answered with the two great commandments to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving your neighbor as yourself (Mark 8:29-31). This prioritizes relationships over obedience, as the more a person loves the greater the obedience will be. It is out of loving relationships that Jesus taught the virtues of integrity (Luke 16:10), forgiveness (Mark 11:25), compassion (Luke 15:20), sacrifice (John 15:13), and unconditional love (Luke 6:32-35).

In this review of the theological basis for self-care we find that the pursuit of God is central to all self-care. Seeking the other elements of self-care is not a vain process. They are not in competition with the spiritual relationship with Christ but rather assist and support its development. A holistic approach in all these areas is necessary to uphold and realize one's *imago Dei* potential.

The Ten Commandments, the failure of Solomon, and the example of Jesus all point towards the necessity and priority of the spiritual connection between a person and God over all other elements of self-care. This does not negate the importance of the other elements of self-care: intelligence, physical, emotional, and relational. Rather it explains the prioritization that the spiritual relationship with God must take over the other elements if they are ever in conflict with one another. Spiritual self-care must be rooted in

⁶⁶ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21*, The New American Commentary, vol. 25B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 150.

a relationship with Christ. This is the primary self-care strategy for every believer, including the minister.

The *imago Dei* includes a relational dimension to experience with God and creation. The Ten Commandments show that following God is not only an individual endeavor, but a corporate one. Jesus was an example that leaders need relationships for support and to share in ministry.

The minister needs to find relationships to sustain and maintain self-care efforts. Local church leadership and the minister have a unique relationship within the body of Christ to influence and encourage the minister towards further development of the *imago Dei*. Through mutual humility and love the minister and the church leadership can build a relationship so the minister can find success as a follower of Christ and a minister.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ABOUT SELF-CARE

Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). This promise of joy and vitality in life is to be part of the experience of every follower of Christ. Unfortunately, anxiety and negative stress are also part of the human experience. While Jesus does not promise the exclusion of anxiety, He does give an assurance that humans can overcome the stress and its effects. When negative stress is not dealt with, burnout occurs. The term “burnout” was first applied in the 1970s by Herbert Freudenberg.¹ Since then the phenomenon has been widely researched and identified as a critical health issue to human service professionals.² John Sanford was one of the first to apply the phenomenon of burnout to religious clergy and their unique circumstances within the human service professions in his book *Ministry Burnout*.³

Christine Maslach is a pioneer in researching the effects of burnout in people who care for other people.⁴ She also developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory which is “the

¹ Todd W. Hall, “The Personal Functioning of Pastors: A Review of Empirical Research with Implications for the Care of Pastors,” *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 25, no. 2 (1997): 245.

² Maureen H. Miner, Martin Dowson, and Sam Sterland, “Ministry Orientation and Ministry Outcomes: Evaluation of a New Multidimensional Model of Clergy Burnout and Job Satisfaction,” *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology* 83, no. 1 (2010): 167.

³ John Sanford, *Ministry Burnout*. (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

⁴ Kelvin J. Randall, “Clergy Burnout: Two Different Measures,” *Pastoral Psychology* 62 (2013), 334.

most widely used research measure in the burnout field.”⁵ The inventory identifies Maslach’s three predictors of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and loss of personal accomplishment. According to Maslach, the process of burnout begins with emotional exhaustion after a prolonged period of being overextended emotionally. This removes the emotional energy needed to develop and/or maintain relationships, resulting in a negative detached reaction associated with depersonalization. Professional accomplishment is then affected as the individual experiences a reduction in feeling competent, his or her productivity drops, and he or she loses effectiveness.

The study of self-care seeks to prevent the effects of long-term stress from becoming the symptoms of burnout. To ignore self-care needs as a minister, or any other human services professional, increases the likelihood of burnout. This often removes the minister from vitalized living, healthy family dynamics, the call of ministry, and personal health.⁶

Limits of Self-Care

Even when a minister vigorously prioritizes self-care into his or her life, it does not guarantee the absence of emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual stress. Jesus promises difficulty and stress for His followers (John 16:33) despite the self-care measures taken. For this reason, Sally Schuer Canning hesitates to practice and teach self-care.⁷ Her concern is a self-centered pursuit of “balance between work and the rest of

⁵ Randall, 334.

⁶ Stephen Muse, “Clergy in Crisis: When Human Power Isn’t Enough,” *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 61, no. 3 (2007): 184.

⁷ Sally Schuer Canning, “Out of Balance: Why I Hesitate to Practice and Teach ‘Self-Care,’” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 30, no. 1 (2011): 70-74.

life, and between the needs of others and the needs of self.”⁸ While accepting the struggle to maintain holistic health for Christian workers, her contention is that the current teaching of self-care revolves around Americanized/Western psychology, with the individual as the center of focus. This hesitancy is consistent with many ministers who refuse to implement self-care into their personal and professional life.⁹

The Rural Pastor Initiative did an 18-month study of rural ministers to address isolation and burnout. In that study, ministers recognized the need for self-care but view the non-spiritual aspects of self-care as a “self-indulgence, an added luxury to life that they simply cannot afford due to the external demands placed on them,”¹⁰ even though they acknowledge they are overworked and unbalanced. The researchers suggest this misunderstanding about self-care is commonly perceived among clergy. For example, ministers assume overextending themselves with time and energy as an affirmation of personal godliness.¹¹

Roy Oswald, a pioneer of ministry self-care, recognizes the danger of self-care as being self-indulgent. He calls for a pursuit of balance while recognizing, “We’ll never get the balance exactly right, and when we do, it won’t last long because some new stressor will tip the scale again. But working at that balance day by day pays off in the long

⁸ Canning, 70.

⁹ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013), 61.

¹⁰ Gregg Scott and Rachel Lovell, “The Rural Pastors Initiative: Addressing Isolation and Burnout in Rural Ministry,” *Pastoral Psychology* (2015): 64, 93.

¹¹ H.B. London Jr. and N.B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), 221.

run.”¹² This defense of self-care recognizes Canning’s hesitancy, admitting that self-care is not the goal but a means to the goal of longevity in ministry. She describes many of the self-care arguments as an individually centered system based on human efforts to maintain health in an attempt to find a static solution for the remainder of one’s life. Due to the constant change in a minister’s personal and professional life, self-care is limited and cannot be a static solution. Canning prefers to describe self-care as “exercising stewardship over my life and the resources and responsibilities God has graciously entrusted to me.”¹³ Her definition makes one a participant with God in an open system, where one’s goal is a vibrant life serving God rather than only avoiding burnout.

Christie Cozad Neuger sees a similar struggle in the definition and training of self-care. She sees self-care as a vehicle to break the “dominant culture belief of self-sufficiency with the theologically popular belief of self-sacrifice which tends to weave its way into the narrative of ministers seeking to be as godly as possible.”¹⁴ Neuger says acknowledging self-care is “recognition of finitude” and recognizes one’s limits and desperate need for God’s grace.¹⁵ This then will challenge the common “personal and ecclesial narratives of works righteousness ... [and establish] a commitment to a theology

¹² Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry* (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1991), 5.

¹³ Canning, 71.

¹⁴ Christie Cozad Neuger, “Establishing Boundaries for Clergy Well-Being,” in *Well-Being in Ministry: A Guide for Pastors, Staff Members and Congregational Leaders*, eds. James F. Cobble and Donald C. Houts (Matthews, NC: Christian Ministry Resources, 1999), 27-28.

¹⁵ Neuger, 28.

that celebrates finitude, believes grace, and entrusts ministry to the whole community, not just the religious leader.”¹⁶

The goal is longevity in ministry while pursuing the *imago Dei*. That is prioritizing a relationship with God over successful self-care measures to avoid burnout and stress. It is based on receiving God’s grace and working with the body of Christ to fulfill the church’s mission. This is a necessary view if one is to accept self-care and the reality of the presence of both positive and negative experiences within a minister’s personal, familial, and professional life. Self-care will not eliminate negative elements or experiences for a minister, but it can assist in overcoming them and maintaining job satisfaction.

Studies in pastoral job satisfaction have considered its relationship with positive and negative outcomes. Job satisfaction has been measured in a single continuum, seeking a balance effect between positive and negative experiences as noted in Bradburn’s structure of well-being.¹⁷ But this method of measurement has been challenged in order to explain the possibility for clergy job satisfaction in the midst of negative experiences. A new model shows the “positive affect and the negative affect are not opposite ends of a single continuum but two separate continua.”¹⁸ Randall was able to affirm this new model using the Francis Burnout Inventory, recognizing that it is possible to have a high positive satisfaction with a high level of emotional exhaustion linked to a negative work experience. While this is possible, the long term effects of high levels of

¹⁶ Neuger, 28.

¹⁷ Kelvin J. Randall, “Clergy Burnout: Two Different Measures,” *Pastoral Psychology* 62 (2013), 335.

¹⁸ Randall, 335.

emotional exhaustion will eventually lead to lower levels of satisfaction and increased danger of emotional exhaustion, which is a sign of impending burnout.¹⁹ Self-care provides prevention for these long-term effects.

Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald Guthrie report their findings in *Resilient Minister: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*. Their goal in researching ministers was to determine how a minister can have a life-long, fruit-filled ministry.²⁰ They found that self-care was one of the five primary themes for leadership resilience in fruitful ministry.²¹ In their explanation of self-care, they recognize the pastor's hesitancy toward its practice but conclude by saying, "Self-care is not *selfish*. It is a necessary part of staying involved in fruitful ministry for a lifetime."²²

It is necessary then to promote preventative self-care measures to maintain clergy health and ministry longevity. This goal is not only for the minister, but also for the local church being served. The pastor, church leadership, and the congregation are intertwined with one another. Rather they are integrally related and can either strengthen or weaken themselves and the church depending on how they interact. Within that eco-system the minister is often the one left to care for the leadership and congregation without anyone caring for him or her. "Self-care is an investment in the future ministry, both for the minister and for the church."²³ For a minister to give of his or her whole self, he or she

¹⁹ Randall, 339.

²⁰ Burns, 7.

²¹ Burns, 16.

²² Burns, 100. Author emphasis.

²³ London, 202.

must be able to function as a whole person taking care of the four areas that are a part of every person's *imago Dei*.

Unfortunately, it is common for both parties to be ignorant of this need and not function as supporting members within the body of Christ. David Keck conducted surveys of pastors and congregations and read through memoirs with the question of how a congregation can help a pastor become healthier. He found that everyone, including pastor and congregation, wants the same thing: a vibrant Christian community. The pastor desires to provide leadership toward this goal while a congregation desires it. Yet within this goal both the pastor and the congregation do not understand or know how to support one another. Pastors are reluctant to ask for help while the congregation does not know how to take care of the pastor.²⁴ The church and the minister both benefit when the minister and church leadership work together as the body of Christ taking initiative to develop self-care practices for the minister. Without such efforts the minister's ministry and personal vibrancy can be hindered which also will negatively affect the church's ministry.

Identified Stressors for Pastors

In 1983, Craig W. Ellison and William S. Mattila administered a needs survey investigating the psychological struggles Christian leaders experience.²⁵ In their results they found lack of time was the greatest struggle, along with stress, frustration,

²⁴David A. Keck, *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors: Covenant Expectations for Thriving Together* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 3-4.

²⁵Craig W. Ellison and William S. Mattila, "The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States," *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 11, no. 1 (1983): 28.

loneliness, isolation, spiritual dryness, and diminished marital adjustment. These results continue to be recognized as common stressors for ministers in recent research.²⁶

Anthony Pappas provides five interrelated areas where a pastor might experience stress: intrapersonal stress, interpersonal stress, pastoral role stress, congregational stress, and environmental stress.²⁷ These sources may act independently or, due to the complexity of the situation, interact to create more stress. Intrapersonal stress is the inner life of the pastor and includes intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual elements. The minister has the most control in the areas of intrapersonal stress and it is also the greatest focus in self-care.

Interpersonal stress results from relationships between the ministers and others. This includes the tension developed in marriage, family, and congregational life. Factors for consideration are personality styles and temperaments where differences can provide tension. The management of balancing the spouse/family relationship with the congregation's relationships can be a source of great stress. One survey states that 66 percent of pastors and their families feel pressure to model the ideal family to their congregations and communities.²⁸ The minister must balance time with family and the overwhelming relational expectations of the congregation. This is exasperated further when an intense relational conflict arises at home or in the congregation.

The third type of stress is pastoral role stress. This stress comes from the different understandings or expectations between the minister and the congregation. Roy Oswald

²⁶ Scott, 73.

²⁷ Anthony G. Pappas, *Pastoral Stress: sources of tension; resources for transformation* (Washington D.C.: Alban Institute, 1995) 9.

²⁸ London, 148.

recognizes this as role ambiguity or role conflict, which leads to role overload.²⁹ Even with a detailed job description, there is often a list of unspoken or undocumented expectations a minister must figure out and live by to keep the congregation or parishioners at peace. This ambiguity brings conflict when the expectations are not met, resulting in the pastor becoming overloaded as he or she attempts to do everything to avoid conflict while consequently adding more stress.

The fourth area is congregational stress. As identified in family systems theory, there are unique dynamics within each congregation's culture. This culture is unknown to the minister prior to her call to the congregation. The culture may consist of power structure, communication styles, conflict management, and family personalities within the congregation. The pastor is an outsider to this system and must learn through experience how to function and minister within the culture. The congregation's culture can have a direct relationship with a minister's health.³⁰ This culture can cause stress if its system is closed to the minister, different from the minister's, or carries too many unspoken rules making failure inevitable for the minister.

The fifth stress is environmental stress in the geographic cultural context of the church. This is the tension between the church and its relationship to the socio-economic influences that surround its ministry. This might also include the church's position on morality, politics, economics, and society. For the minister this will result in tension when there is a disparity in any one of these areas. Some churches experience toxicity

²⁹ Roy M. Oswald, *How to Build a Support System for Your Ministry* (Washington D.C.: Alban Inst, 1991), 37.

³⁰ Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, et al. "A Theoretical Model of Holistic Health of United Methodist Clergy," *Journal of Religion and Health* 50 (2011): 715.

toward a pastor due to dysfunction or a poor church/pastor match. Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell states, “It doesn’t matter how healthy a pastor you send in you’re going to really have a hard time staying healthy because of personal dynamics, ego, territory, unchristian attitudes, that manifest themselves over time.”³¹ In these environments, self-care strategies may only prolong the pastor’s ministry, but the ministry might ultimately prove destructive despite self-care strategies. By acknowledging the types of stressors that come with the unique nature of the minister, both minister and church leadership can work together towards a model of self-care.

Basic Factors for a Self-Care Model

When developing a self-care model, identifying the basic factors is necessary for it to be successful. Stephen Muse identifies the three most significant factors that affect the minister’s vitality and well-being in ministry based on his clinic’s observations and applicable research: personhood, environment, and leadership styles.³² It is important to note that these three factors attend to the five stressors a minister faces. The presence and intensity of the stressors can be influenced by these factors, both positively and negatively.

A minister’s personhood includes the elements that make a person whole: mind, body, heart, and spirituality. Maintaining these four parts is necessary for a minister to function with vitality, first as a follower of Christ and second as a minister. The research of clergy self-care centers on the prevention of these four areas within the context of ministry. Diane Chandler’s survey of 270 pastors used the Maslach Burnout Inventory to

³¹ Proeschold-Bell, et al, 714.

³² Muse, 186.

see if there was a relationship between burnout and the factors of spiritual renewal, rest-taking, and support system practices as potentially preventative or mitigating factors.³³ She discovered that spiritual dryness was the primary predictor of emotional exhaustion, noting the need to nurture a relationship with God to maintain life balance.³⁴ The spiritual element of self-care must then be a priority. This is an important element since it is common practice for ministers to prioritize administrative and ministry duties over nurturing their relationship with God, which leads to spiritual dryness.³⁵

Chandler also focused on the physical need for sleep which is a matter of personhood. She found that lack of rest “was a primary predictor of depersonalization and personal accomplishment and the third predictor of emotional exhaustion.”³⁶ This is of concern when only 56 percent of ministers say they take a day off.³⁷ The lack of attention to taking care of one’s physical self goes beyond rest. The majority of ministers do not have regularly scheduled and implemented exercise routines.³⁸ A study of United Methodist clergy in North Carolina found a 10 percent higher incidence of obesity than the general public and higher rates of diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and arthritis.³⁹

³³ Diane Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-taking, and Support System Practices,” *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (2009): 273.

³⁴ Chandler, 283.

³⁵ Chandler, 273.

³⁶ Chandler, 285.

³⁷ London, 148.

³⁸ London, 174.

³⁹ Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell and Sara H. Legrand, “High Rates of Obesity and Chronic Disease Among United Methodist Clergy. *Obesity* 18, no. 9 (2010): 1867-70.

The intellectual part of the minister's self-care is surprisingly absent from most self-care literature. This is due to the primary role intellect has in fulfilling the role a minister. The preparation of lessons and sermons, along with the need to be the resident theologian means the intellectual element of a pastor is always engaged within the ministry.

Loneliness is an area of great concern for a minister's personhood. This is a primary reason for some ministers' inability to practice self-care as they lack a place to process emotions. Research shows that 70 percent of ministers do not claim close intimate friendships.⁴⁰ In addition, 70 percent of ministers have a lower self-esteem than when they first started their ministry.⁴¹ The emotional side of the pastor is an area of great concern; how ministers process through emotions can determine the probability of suffering from emotional exhaustion.

The second factor is a minister's environment. A minister's environment consists of the setting in which the minister lives, both personally and professionally. Within the professional context, the socio-economics, geographic culture, congregational politics, and systems (both relational and organizational) have a great influence on the well-being of the pastor. Within the personal environment, the family life of the minister greatly affects the success and management of stress in his or her ministry.⁴²

A congregation can greatly influence the environment and outcome of a minister's efforts towards self-care. Maslach has shown in job-fit theory incongruence

⁴⁰ London, 265.

⁴¹ London, 174.

⁴² Muse, 186.

between the person and the job will lead to stress and signs of burnout.⁴³ Additionally, a minister is less likely to participate in self-care practices without church leadership and congregational support.⁴⁴ While many congregations refuse to recognize the issue of clergy burnout, support for a minister and church growth are interrelated.⁴⁵ Church growth may occur in spiritual depth or numbers, but the relationship is in the shared ministry and mission of the local congregation. Church leadership can shape the environment of the congregation and its ministry to assist the pastor in providing quality ministry and longevity. The better the environment for ministry, the more likely the minister will make good professional and personal decisions.⁴⁶ The church leadership's role is working with the minister to develop an environment for the minister to flourish which also allows the church to flourish.

Christine Maslach, in her pursuit to understand burnout and its effects, has studied the influences of the work environment toward burnout. She identified six areas of work-life that can lead to burnout: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values.⁴⁷ Each of these areas can be applied to the congregational environment and influenced by the church leadership to help prevent minister burnout.

Workload is the roles and expectations put on the minister. Excessive role responsibilities coupled with lack of skill or ability can provide an environment where the

⁴³ C. H. Maslach, W. B. Schaufeli, and M. P. Leiter, "Job Burnout," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, no. 1 (2001): 397.

⁴⁴ Proeschold-Bell, Theoretical Model, 715.

⁴⁵ Gary L. Harbaugh, *Caring for the Caregiver: Growth Models for Professional Leaders and Congregations* (Washington DC: Alban Institute, 1992), 74.

⁴⁶ London, 93.

⁴⁷ Maslach, "Job Burnout," 414.

minister cannot recover. Maslach points out that when the employee is required to “display emotions inconsistent with their feelings” it compounds the pressure of the current workload.⁴⁸ Stress can also be found in role ambiguity where there are unclear, uncommunicated expectations added to the current roles producing the feeling of excessive responsibilities.

Control depends on whether the minister has sufficient resources and the authority to carry out the functions of the job. Micro-management, little training, and few resources to complete the job expectations will eventually drain the minister’s being. Allowing him or her sufficient levels of control and support exhibits respect, which is encouraging to that individual.

Reward is hindered when the perception exists that the minister is being underappreciated, leading to the assumption that he or she is ineffective for the organization. This can also include lack of financial support, compensation and recognition. Sufficient compensation, recognition and rewards provide needed relief to an individual with a high anxiety level.

Community requires positive relationships within the context of the workplace. A minister must have relational support and friendships within the congregation to affirm acceptance and effectiveness. Loneliness and unresolved conflict can produce constant negative pressure, threatening the sense of community and the minister’s ability to minister.

Fairness is a perception of justice and an affirmation of self-worth toward the minister by displaying efforts of mutual respect. Mutual respect is usually measured by

⁴⁸ Maslach, “Job Burnout,” 414.

the process of job evaluation, promotions, disputes, delegation of workload, and financial provisions.⁴⁹ Any decisions relating to these topics and are perceived negatively can be seen as an affront to the minister's self-worth and results in negative stress on the relationship.

A conflict in the church's values and vision can affect the minister's contentment in the workplace. The environment's moral values, organizational mission, disparity between mission and practice, and future direction can cause negative stress toward the minister. The unmet expectations and disappointments can lead to burnout if unaddressed.

These six areas can be directly influenced by the local church leadership to provide a better environment for the minister and allow congregation to find better success. The church leadership and the minister must partner together through conversation, compromise, and trust. When this occurs, the environment will benefit both the congregation and minister. Within these six areas, sufficient conversation and space can be made to provide an environment for a minister's self-care to be successful.

Also within the environmental factor is the personal life of the pastor. Burns' research concludes that marriage and family are one of the five themes of resilient ministry.⁵⁰ It is recognized because of its ability to positively or negatively impact the life of a minister. When the marriage and family are healthy, the minister finds a place of rest, encouragement, and escape from the ministerial duties. Conversely, when there is stress at home the minister is then professionally and personally surrounded by stress.

⁴⁹ Maslach, 415.

⁵⁰ Burns, 16.

This can be especially troublesome when 85 percent of clergy depend on their spouses for support.⁵¹

The third element of a minister's wellbeing is how leadership styles affect the outcome and perception of the ministry. This involves the personality style, skills, and agendas a minister uses within the context of their personal and professional lives.⁵²

These areas include the ability to recognize personality traits and how they affect communication, interpersonal tensions, strengths and weaknesses, and understanding the core ideologies and motivations that have developed throughout the life of the individual, healthy or unhealthy.

This element can include more than just leadership styles; it also includes the deep inner workings of a person's emotional and thinking habits. Stephen Muse suggests these could be unconscious dynamics that lead to unexpected actions and thoughts.⁵³

Peter Scazzero identifies this as the shadow which is "the damaged but mostly hidden version of who you are."⁵⁴ These may be incongruent actions for a follower of Christ and appear in times of pressure and conflict.⁵⁵

Attending to this element demands deep introspection and an outside perspective for a minister to work through some of the issues that produce stress. Emotional intelligence is a practical approach to this element. Emotional intelligence is "the ability

⁵¹ G. Lloyd Rediger, "When a Minister is Forced to Resign," in *Well-Being in Ministry: A Guide for Pastors, Staff Members and Congregational Leaders*, eds. James F. Cobble and Donald C. Houts (Matthews, NC: Christian Ministry Resources, 1999), 121.

⁵² Muse, 186.

⁵³ Muse, 186.

⁵⁴ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 55.

⁵⁵ Scazzero, 60-61.

to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions."⁵⁶ While intellectual/cognitive ability is traditionally held in the highest regard for job excellence, studies show that emotional intelligence is a better predictor of success in the workplace.⁵⁷ Increasing one's emotional intelligence can decrease depression, aggression, loneliness, and self-destructive behaviors such as addictions and eating disorders.⁵⁸ These are some of the issues that affect those who are stressed and burned out.

Archibald Hart references a Harvard Medical School study when asked about the erratic behavior that results in burnout and stress.⁵⁹ The four As found within the secular world can be applied to ministers: arrogance, addiction, aloneness, and adultery. All four of these are detrimental if not lethal to a minister's career and family. The results of stress can be prevented with an effort to improve one's emotional intelligence.

To improve one's emotional intelligence, one must develop the five dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.⁶⁰ Each assists a person in navigating how to feel and respond in order to live and work with better effectiveness and vitality. Having high intelligence in one dimension does not guarantee success because it must also be applied correctly. This is where Goleman suggests employing 25 different emotional competencies that apply to the five

⁵⁶ Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, "Emotional Intelligence," *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* 9, no. 3 (1989), quoted in PowerPoint lecture, (Jeanine Parolini, Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, June 17, 2014).

⁵⁷ Daniel Goleman. *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1998), 29.

⁵⁸ Daniel Goleman. *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 231-260.

⁵⁹ London, 179.

⁶⁰ Goleman, 26.

dimensions.⁶¹ These dimensions and competencies can be applied in two areas: self-mastery and relationship skills.⁶²

Three competencies are needed to have the self-awareness dimension which is helping one know her intuitions, preferences, and internal states. The first is having an emotional awareness by recognizing one's emotions and their efforts. The second is to accurately know one's strengths and limits. The final competency for self-awareness is to develop a strong sense of self-confidence in one's capabilities and self-worth.

The self-regulation dimension includes five competencies. The first is possessing self-control by keeping impulses and emotions in check. The second and third include maintaining trustworthiness and being responsible for personal performance. The fourth and fifth is being flexible in change and innovative with ideas, approaches, and new information.

The dimension of motivation has four competencies. The first is a drive to improve for an achievement or meeting a standard of excellence. The second is a commitment to align with the goals of the group. The third and fourth competencies are initiative and optimism to pursue goals despite obstacles.

The fourth dimension is an awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. . These competencies include understanding others by sensing their perspectives and feelings while taking an active concern for them. This leads to a desire to develop others by meeting needs and improving their abilities. The remaining competencies include a

⁶¹ Goleman, 25.

⁶² Goleman, 13.

orientation to serve other's needs, using diversity by providing opportunities for different people, and being aware of a group's emotions and power relationships.

The final dimension of social skills builds adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. The eight competencies include the ability to use effective influence, communication and conflict management. They also include leadership, being a change catalyst, and building relationships. The final two competencies are working together towards shared goals and creating synergy within a team.

The leadership style of the minister does not take the place of God's leadership over the minister. Therefore, the minister must maintain an "elusive balance between one's legitimate human needs while responding to the Divine Energies of Grace to serve selflessly."⁶³ This must be done while keeping in check unwanted and/or unconscious agendas. It is a continual effort to maintain a balance of service to God while being one's complete self.

Identifying the factors that surround the minister's experiences with stress allows a framework for the minister and church leadership to assign responsibilities within a model of self-care. The model should include addressing the factors of the minister's unique personhood, environment, and leadership styles. In addition to addressing these factors attention also needs to be given to relational support and a self-prescribed plan.

⁶³ Muse, 86.

The Need for Relational Support

Daniel Goleman's book *Social Intelligence* is based on the scientific finding that the brain's very design encourages the individual to be sociable.⁶⁴ He makes a case that the human body cannot function emotionally, intellectually, or physically without the presence of healthy human relationships. Because of this, he encourages one to increase her social intelligence through social awareness, the understanding what one senses about others, and social facility—the knowledge of knowing what to do with the awareness.⁶⁵ If a minister is to experience a fulfilled and happy life, Goleman says good quality relationships are a key component to that goal.⁶⁶

The science Goleman presents reveals how the brain functions socially and the effect of this process on the rest of the body. Within this process he describes the high road and low road of emotions.⁶⁷ The low road is the immediate reaction that comes from the amygdala, which process emotions without a filter. The high road is the filter provided by the prefrontal cortex, which takes into consideration the social, relational, cultural, and other factors to provide a more acceptable response. It is necessary for a person to develop the high road through intentional efforts.

When a person is under considerable stress, the ability to take the high road is suppressed due to the amount of energy expended from the anxiety. Positive, supportive relationships provide the added strength needed to minimize the anxiety. Even the

⁶⁴ Daniel Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006), 4.

⁶⁵ Goleman, 84.

⁶⁶ Goleman, 312.

⁶⁷ Goleman, 11.

presence of someone listening provides a sense of security and acceptance allowing a person extra space to take on the challenges they face.⁶⁸ Positive, supportive relationships that provide security can provide the foundation to consistently use the high road for processing which is called, reappraisal.

Negative relationships can cause physical and emotional damage to the individual. Due to the emotional contagion that happens between two people, a person will always be affected by the emotions of others.⁶⁹ This affects physiological health by taking energy from the immune system and making one more susceptible to disease, including the common cold.⁷⁰ Mirroring neurons are used when relating to another person causing the brain to reflect emotions presented to them resulting in the inability to shut off the evaluation of relationships afterwards.⁷¹ Suppression of this negative emotional stress results in negative physiological and emotional problems.

A healthy supportive relationship requires a connection that does not threaten abandonment, separation, or rejection. The minister must be willing to become close, vulnerable, and display empathy. These are identified as “I-You” relationships in contrast to “I-it” relationships.⁷² “I-You” relationships function on a personal, empathetic level where they allow security in the midst of vulnerability. “I-it” relationships keep a level of emotional detachment, hindering vulnerability. These are common among helping

⁶⁸ Goleman, 211.

⁶⁹ Goleman, 69.

⁷⁰ Goleman, 226-229

⁷¹ Goleman, 67.

⁷² Goleman, 109.

professionals, including clergy, who use the shift in thinking to protect their professional judgment and prevent their thinking from being clouded by emotional attachments.⁷³

This is a partial source of the minister's struggle to make intimate supportive relationships. They maintain the "I-it" relationships within the congregations, disqualifying members from needed intimate support. To protect themselves professionally, it is hard to go beyond the "I-it" conversations in any relationship in fear that an honest revelation of who they are might disqualify them from ministry. Finally, there is an underlying fear of abandonment and rejection that keeps a minister from pursuing an "I-you" relationship. This is why most support is sought from the spouse,⁷⁴ because it is an established secure relationship.

In spite of this difficulty, ministers need supportive relationships with others to provide the emotional stability necessary for pastoral leadership.⁷⁵ It is the most effective strategy to ward off the isolation and "lone ranger" mentality experienced by many ministers.⁷⁶ Five different types of supportive relationships for ministers are consistent among the self-care literature: spiritual director, psychotherapist, peer, congregational support team,⁷⁷ and mentor.⁷⁸

⁷³ Goleman, 112.

⁷⁴ Rediger, 212.

⁷⁵ Daniel Goleman, *Primal Leadership* (New York: Bantam Books, 2013), 6.

⁷⁶ Gary D. Kinnaman and Alfred H Ellis, *Leaders That Last: How Covenant Friendships Can Help Pastors Thrive* (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Books, 2003), 74.

⁷⁷ Harbaugh, 41.

⁷⁸ Kinnaman, 93

In earlier self-care applications toward clergy, spiritual direction and psychotherapists were the common answer of how a minister could receive support. The spiritual directors would provide the needed spiritual guidance for the minister. When the toll of ministry became heavy and dysfunction started to show in the minister's life, a season of therapy was suggested.⁷⁹ These suggestions have their limitations for small church ministers. Small Church ministers receive limited financial and benefits packages, making it difficult to have the resources for these services, even if they are of value. The remaining supportive relationships for a minister's self-care include mentors, peer relationships, and a congregational support team. These relationships can express the dependence and encouragement a minister needs as a member of the Body of Christ. The relationships also can be formed without financial resources and each has the ability to provide substantial support for the minister.

Peer support provides the "I-You" relationship and can provide a healthy discovery process in problem solving the unique demands of ministry.⁸⁰ Peer support might be formatted as a group or with another individual. Either way, in order to provide the necessary support it is important to intentionally design the meeting toward the needs of those in the group so self-care may be supported. This can occur through a covenant, an assigned facilitator, or by an approved agenda. The friendship of a peer group provides necessary support to face conflict, crises, and every day stress while addressing the individual changes required to find personal and professional vitality.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Oswald, 159.

⁸⁰ Proeschold-Bell et al., 716.

⁸¹ Kinnaman, 40.

Mentorship as a relationship provides special one-on-one counsel to a minister for the purpose of coming to a better place of well-being. The mentoring relationship assists in clarifying the call of ministry, developing character, and positively impacts spiritual and professional development.⁸² This relationship is recognized as a necessary element for a leader because of his propensity for denial and the need for guidance and direction.⁸³

For a minister to function at a high level, it is imperative he or she have congregation support and support outside of the congregation.⁸⁴ Congregational support teams can function in a number of different roles to fulfill their common relationship as a member of the body of Christ. A personnel committee could deal with professional matters and the financial compensation package. They could also function as a liaison between congregation and minister to discuss concerns, role clarification, and other issues of importance.⁸⁵ No matter the type of congregational support given, it will have limits as the minister may not feel comfortable being vulnerable and honest in this context.

Providing supportive relationships for a minister is only part of the solution to bringing a minister to better health through the necessary practice of self-care. The greater difficulty is the minister taking the initiative in finding supportive relationships. If a minister is under duress from anxiety, they paradoxically have the tendency to move

⁸² Craig Fred Frank *The Impact of Mentoring on Pastoral Development in the Church of God (Anderson)*, D.Min. thesis (Wilmore, KY; Asbury Theological Seminary, 1998), 4-5.

⁸³ Kinnaman, 93.

⁸⁴ Roy Oswald, *How to Build a Support System for Your Ministry* (Washington DC: Alban Institute, 1991), 25.

⁸⁵ Harbaugh, 44.

away from supportive relationships.⁸⁶ Additional hesitancies occur due to a lack of priority for self-care, time availability, personal insecurities, isolation, and prioritizing of ministry roles. Even with these hesitancies, if a congregation encourages and supports a pastor's efforts in self-care, including support groups, the minister is more likely to seek out self-care measures.⁸⁷

The Need for a Self-Prescribed Plan

Supportive relationships coupled with a self-prescribed self-care plan give the minister a better chance at success. Without a plan, it is possible for the minister to maintain emotional health through established supportive relationships. However, growth is less likely in deficient areas of the minister's personhood (physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional) without supportive relationships. The implementation of a plan encourages the minister to function at a higher level of performance by positioning the minister in the zone of creative stress.⁸⁸

According to Goleman, creative stress provides the ability to live in a fulfilled state. This state is where one can experience optimal cognitive efficiency, which provides a place for flourishing and joy.⁸⁹ To achieve this, the individual must avoid boredom and anxiety. Avoiding the opposite polarities of apathy and angst allows the minister to find vitality for life. Boredom is a place of little to no stress, while anxiety with high levels of

⁸⁶ Roy Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry*, (1992), in Diane J. Chandler, "An Exploratory Study on the Effects of spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, Personal Support System Practices on Pastoral Burnout," (D.Min. thesis, Regent University, 2006), 8.

⁸⁷ Proeschold-Bell et al., 712.

⁸⁸ Goleman, *Social Intelligence*, 270-271.

⁸⁹ Goleman, 270.

stress often occur due to expectations of performance the individual feels unqualified or unable to meet. A self-prescribed plan allows a minister to motivate himself or herself toward action while defining roles, limitations, and boundaries to provide protection from overload anxiety.

A self-prescribed plan has documented roots in Christianity. John Wesley promoted the rule of life in his Means of Grace model for personal and spiritual growth.⁹⁰ “A rule of life is an ordered approach to life ... that seeks to incorporate spiritual and personal disciplines ... to facilitate the conscious presence of God in all aspects of life.”⁹¹ Wesley used the integration of a personal spiritual growth plan with weekly accountability meetings to support and encourage spiritual growth. Using this same principle, the self-prescribed self-care plan allows the minister to uniquely shape his or her plan to current self-care needs.

Each minister has a unique set of strengths and weaknesses. The personality type of the minister allows him or her to experience God differently through the inherent preferences given by God and then influenced by culture and upbringing.⁹² Other factors of a minister’s uniqueness, including physical limitations and health, intellectual interests, preferred learning style, interests and hobbies, coping strategies, and relational tendencies, all play a part in the development of the self-prescribed plan for self-care.

⁹⁰ Mindy Johnson, “Learning Resiliency: An Opportunity for Clergywomen,” (D.Min. thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2008), 47.

⁹¹ John Charles Dendiu Jr., “Incarnational Ministry: A Program for Spiritual Formation and Renewal,” (D.Min. thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2005), 50.

⁹² Robert J. Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey* (Downers Grove, IL; IVP Books), loc.729 of 3206, Kindle.

John Charles Dendiu provides a one-year program for the spiritual development of pastors. The first of three elements he recommends to promote spiritual development is spiritual retreats provided teaching, reflection, corporate interaction, and worship. The second is participation in an accountability group that meets every two or three weeks. The third is the development of a rule of life that would be shared with the other members of the accountability group.

When evaluating this spiritual formation program, Dendiu notes some positive outcomes. There was an increase in appreciation for the spiritual disciplines, improved incarnational living, and positive changes in ministry applications.⁹³ He was surprised to find the participants considered the retreats highlights of the year because of the social support and camaraderie experienced and not the teaching or rest.⁹⁴ He also found that those who participated in the accountability groups found them invaluable in keeping with the self-prescribed rule of life and building community.⁹⁵ He describes the accountability groups “as the glue that held the project together.”⁹⁶ A corollary strength of the accountability groups was that those who did not develop a rule of life at the beginning dropped out of the program. This supports the need for both a self-prescribed plan and a support relationship structure for intentional change and self-care to succeed.

⁹³ Dendiu, 68-72

⁹⁴ Dendiu, 77.

⁹⁵ Dendiu, 75, 83.

⁹⁶ Dendiu, 88.

The need for a self-prescribed plan in combination with a support system is included in Dan Goleman's learning model for improving emotional intelligence.⁹⁷ The minister's self-care plan is an emotionally involved venture as it attends to the shortcomings and weaknesses identified as needing improvement. These areas feed into the fears and emotional tendencies of the minister. Goleman's learning model for emotional intelligence takes these emotional and intellectual processes into account. While the model he created is for a management/employee relationship, there is value in applying it to a minister's preparation and implementation of a self-prescribed self-care plan with a supportive relationship.

Goleman's model includes five steps.⁹⁸ The first step is to assess the job and individual, gauging readiness for the willingness to change in each area of needed growth. The second step is finding a source of motivation and then identifying clear goals for the plan. The third step is ensuring a support system is put in place to prevent relapse, give feedback, and encourage practice. The fourth step is seeking continual support, reminding the individual of the desired change. The fifth and final step is evaluation and making necessary decisions on how to improve the plan for better self-care.

Strategies for Self-Care

The self-care factors of personhood, environment, and leadership styles provide the areas where self-care should be applied so the minister can address identified stressors to improve as a follower of Christ. The framework for a successful self-care model must include humility by the minister to recognize the need for a relational support

⁹⁷ Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, 251-253.

⁹⁸ Goleman, 251-253.

system and a self-prescribed self-care plan. He must do this by reaching out to other members of the body of Christ for support. The six strategies of self-care provide the specific areas the minister needs to humbly and honestly evaluate and prescribe methods for improvement. This research has identified six major strategies for a minister's self-care: spiritual development, a relational support system, intellectual development, physical health improvement, marriage and family health, and a self-prescribed self-care plan with accountability. The strategies suggest practices for implementing self-care for the minister with the support of the congregation and church leadership.

Spiritual development is the priority in any self-care plan. Closeness to God has a direct correlation to physical and emotional health⁹⁹ as well as a negative correlation to burnout.¹⁰⁰ This is part of God's design, as He made humanity with the intention of not separating the spiritual, physical, and mental aspects of the individual.¹⁰¹ Therefore, developing spiritual formation practices promotes resiliency in ministry and vitality in life.

The strategic practices for promoting spiritual formation within the pastor/church leader relationship can be difficult to identify. Ultimately the minister has to be intentional and initiate these practices (prayer, bible reading and study, journaling, solitude, silence, and Sabbath) regardless of how much support the leadership provides.

⁹⁹ Carrie Doehring, "New Directions for Clergy Experiencing Stress: Connecting Spirit and Body," *Pastoral Psychology* 62, no. 5 (2013): 626.

¹⁰⁰ Chandler, 273.

¹⁰¹ Bruce Epperly, *A Center in the Cyclone: Twenty-First Century Clergy Self-Care* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 66.

Recognizing this tension, this research seeks to find ways for the church leadership to encourage the minister to practice spiritual formation.

Church leadership can support the minister is developing and providing clarity to the minister's role. This should include the need for personal spiritual formation and allowances in time for this to be accomplished within the weekly, monthly, and annual work cycle. Once the spiritual formation responsibilities are defined, the church leadership must follow through by providing adequate time to accomplish the responsibilities. This involves implementing a weekly routine, use of a weekly Sabbath and additional days for extended spiritual formation. London prescribes the weekly Sabbath for spiritual reflection, and one day of solitude and spiritual reflection per month.¹⁰² The minister should partner with church leadership by creating a plan to make the best use of the time provided.

Prioritizing the spiritual formation of the minister can improve job performance, energy, and longevity in that ministry. Grant Bickerton's study supports the effects of promoting spiritual resources to ministers to facilitate their work-engagement response. Bickerton found that, when church leadership prioritizes and gives resources to their religious workers to improve their relationship with God, the result is improved energy and engagement within the job. Interestingly, when the focus is on enhancing job resources such as skill and knowledge, it has a "deleterious effect on religious workers' spiritual resources and so threaten their ongoing work engagement."¹⁰³

¹⁰² London, 203-205.

¹⁰³ Grant R. Bickerton, Maureen H. Miner, Marin Dowson, and Barbara Griffin, "Spiritual Resources and Work Engagement Among Religious Workers: A Three-Wave Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 87 no. 2 (2014): 370.

The second strategy is forming a relational support system which is necessary for any minister's self-care plan.¹⁰⁴ These support systems provide relief from the isolation and loneliness pastors often feel. In addition, the support systems are a preventative measure for pastors who become vulnerable to negative behaviors and relationships while experiencing burnout symptoms.¹⁰⁵ Support systems provide emotional support and accountability for positive changes in the minister's life, and are only successful when confidentiality, honesty, and reliability are present from all members of the support system.

A support system for a minister can consist of caring relationships, which include: intimacy with the spouse, supportive family members, buddies, mentors, and professional consultants (i.e. spiritual director, counselor, psychotherapist, etc.) when appropriate.¹⁰⁶ Added to this list is the collegial, peer support provided by fellow ministers who can walk alongside the minister.¹⁰⁷ In prioritizing the type of support system a minister should form, the model presented by Richard Frazier provides a basis to developing pastoral care within the congregational framework. This model is an aid for distinguishing what is required for a support network based upon need and availability to the individual minister within a ministry context. Frazier uses the family hierarchy and its roles: father, brother, and son to define his model.¹⁰⁸ Within this model, the minister's responsibilities require

¹⁰⁴ Johnson, 60.

¹⁰⁵ London, 50.

¹⁰⁶ Rediger, *Resign*, 121.

¹⁰⁷ Robert W. Lueck, "Caring for the Caregivers: A Study of Congregational Support for Pastors," (D. Min. Thesis, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, 1992), 50.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Frazier, "The Role of 'Need' in Pastoral Care," *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 1, vol. 27 (1973), 37.

he or she give freely to those in the ministry, taking on the role of the “son” or “daughter.” In order to maintain health, Frazier states a minister must look to the peer level of “brother” or “sister” to share concerns and support one another. The minister should also have a “father” or “mother” with whom he or she can be “utterly weak and receive fully”¹⁰⁹ in order to sustain well-being and healthy ministry. The “parent” and “sibling” roles must be fulfilled to provide a well-balanced support system for a minister.

Every ministry has a unique context which provides relational benefits and challenges to a minister’s relationship. It is difficult for a minister to find intimate, confidential, and caring relationships within the local ministry context for a support system. The minister’s unique personality and emotional being influence the support system’s development. The “father/mother” and “brother/sister” roles provide freedom within these challenges to allow for a support system to be found.

The “father/mother” role for a minister is one where the minister is in receiving mode. This role can be provided by different individuals as needed by the minister in volunteer and/or paid consulting relationships. The first desired outcome of a “father” role is one of ministry guidance and spiritual discernment. A mentor can provide this need, but if one is not available then the literature suggests the role of spiritual director.¹¹⁰ Special circumstances may require additional support within the “father” role, such as physicians, counselors, and other paid consultants to provide necessary guidance in that season.

¹⁰⁹ Frazier, 87.

¹¹⁰ Oswald, *Self-Care*, 134.

The “brother/sister” role consists of the peer level of the ministry. This level of support consists of the spouse, other supporting family members, and ministry peers who can provide the three Cs of social support from an affirming, non-authoritative stance: comforting, clarifying, and confronters.¹¹¹ These three Cs are needed in both the minister’s professional and personal areas of life and provide the affirmation, perspective, loving accountability and constructive criticism needed for the ministry to grow in the likeness of Christ and maintain vitality in life and ministry.¹¹²

Support systems are not accidental, but demand intentionality to benefit the minister.¹¹³ They “can make a significant difference in the quality of a person’s life and work.”¹¹⁴ Church leadership is part of this support system, but must maintain the difficult balance of employer (“father/mother”), co-leader (“brother/sister”), and congregant (“son/daughter”). This complexity of the pastor to church leadership relationship makes it difficult to regulate the appropriate roles for the minister’s support system. The church leadership should exercise their authority in the “father” roles to address the minister’s need for a “father” level mentor for support and peer “brother” support levels by designating the necessary resources.

The third strategy is intellectual development. Intellectual development of the minister is necessary to relieve the stress of the job. A congregation expects the minister

¹¹¹ Marian Coger, *Women in Parish Ministry: Stress and Support* (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1985), 3.

¹¹² Coger, 3.

¹¹³ Bruce N. Ursin, “Ministerial Burnout, Causes and Prevention: A Retreat Model for Clergy Self-Care, Renewal and Support,” (D.Min. thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1989), 82.

¹¹⁴ Schoun, 155.

to maintain professional proficiency in an average of sixteen major tasks.¹¹⁵ To maintain a high level of proficiency in all areas is difficult, and an inability to meet the congregation's expectations of job roles is a source of stress for the minister.¹¹⁶ A minister's effort towards intellectual development can improve personal well-being and reduce stress from role expectations. Advancing in theological and biblical reflection and understanding brings renewal and increased knowledge for teaching and preaching.¹¹⁷ Bruce Epperly finds a "strong connection between ongoing study and joy and satisfaction in ministry."¹¹⁸ In addition, ministers' continuing education provide affirmation to their identity as ministers, new views on their ministry, and a better understanding of the church's interaction with the changing social landscape.¹¹⁹

Personal investment in the intellectual development is just as important as the professional. In addition to increasing knowledge and skill, the minister must find avenues for informal education. This is called "faceting" where one invests in another area of life to avoid a one dimensional life.¹²⁰ This may involve leisure reading, hobbies, and experiential learning.¹²¹ Engaging the brain in this way provides a distraction to the stresses of the ministry workload. These efforts are seen as life-giving and energizing

¹¹⁵ London, 62.

¹¹⁶ Chandler, *Exploratory Study*, 9.

¹¹⁷ Burns, 90.

¹¹⁸ Epperly, 79

¹¹⁹ Epperly, 75.

¹²⁰ Joe Gorman, "Recognizing Our Limitations: The Wisdom of Self-Care," in *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm*, eds. Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2011), 129.

¹²¹ Burns, 90.

because they allow a minister to develop self-identity as a person outside of the ministerial role.¹²²

Church leadership can encourage the minister to advance in skill and knowledge through individual study, seminars, workshops, formal education, and conferences. It is suggested church leadership “fund at least one annual ministry-enrichment experience.”¹²³ Church leadership can also encourage life beyond the ministry roles by helping develop a schedule to allow for self-guided self-development.

The fourth strategy for self-care is maintaining physical health. Ministers struggle to maintain physical health because they lack the boundary-setting necessary for self-care.¹²⁴ This is caused by role ambiguity, overload, and the tendency to self-sacrifice for the sake of the congregation.¹²⁵ It can be difficult for pastors to move in a positive healthy direction because once they start experiencing the emotional exhaustion of burnout it results in poor self-care, unhealthy eating, and a sedentary lifestyle.¹²⁶ Roy Oswald shows why physical care is difficult for a minister to implement:

The research on burnout generally agrees that chronic fatigue and apathy develop from being overly committed and involved in our work. The literature on stress states that there are only so many life changes that we can endure. A clear coping strategy is to remove ourselves from an agitated, changing environment and take some time for ourselves. Yet, because the role of religious authority is often ambiguous, we clergy have difficulty knowing when we have done enough and

¹²² Gorman, 129-130.

¹²³ London, 205.

¹²⁴ Proeschold-Bell, 715.

¹²⁵ Neuger, 27.

¹²⁶ Doehring, 624

can take time for ourselves. It often seems more prudent to do ‘just one more thing’ before taking time out.¹²⁷

Four components are needed to maintain physical well-being: diet, exercise, rest, and Sabbath experiences.¹²⁸ Little information exists in current literature regarding the need for good nutrition for pastors so they can maintain their health. Studies have shown pastors tend to be overweight and at a higher risk for diseases associated with poor health choices.¹²⁹ Reversing this would include both exercise and diet. Eating in an unhealthy manner can complicate and compound difficult issues directly associated with stress and burnout.¹³⁰ Exercise can increase immunity, manage chronic stress, improve sleep, boost memory and alertness, decrease possibility of diabetes and heart disease,¹³¹ and provide emotional and mental recovery.¹³²

Rest can be identified as sleep, the weekly Sabbath, vacations, and extended sabbaticals. Rest provides healing for the physical body and the mind. A person is supposed to sleep approximately one third of his life.¹³³ Lack of sleep reduces the ability to work efficiently, exercise, eat healthy, and enjoy sex and leisure activities.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ Oswald, 152.

¹²⁸ Burns, 60.

¹²⁹ Becky R. McMillan, “The View From Pulpit & Pew: Provocative Findings on Pastoral Leadership in the 21st Century,” (presentation to the Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry, February 21, 2003), 5.

¹³⁰ Oswald, 152.

¹³¹ Leclerc, 134.

¹³² Burns, 117.

¹³³ Gorman, 130.

¹³⁴ Ashley Davis Bush, *Simple Self-Care for Therapists* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2015), 6.

Investments in sleep can therefore affect the physical, mental, and emotional functioning providing restoration, energy, and the prevention of burnout.¹³⁵

Another area of rest that provides physical and mental rejuvenation is Sabbath experiences where the minister finds time to release from church duties and live life outside of the ministerial role. This Sabbath rest can be experienced in three ways: the weekly Sabbath or day off, vacations, and an extended study leave or sabbatical. The weekly Sabbath is what Peter Scazzero describes as the “sacred rhythm” God designed for humanity to experience life and work.¹³⁶ He defines the Sabbath as when one can “stop work, enjoy rest, practice delight, and contemplate God.”¹³⁷ Experiencing this on a weekly basis gives the human body the energy to maintain spiritual, mental, and physical self-care to maintain vitality. Even though ministers are highly inconsistent in this matter,¹³⁸ the consistency of its inclusion in the literature shows this practice as foundational to vitality and longevity in ministry.

Beyond a minister removing himself or herself each week for self-care through a day off, there are also extended times of rest and renewal. The two suggested by Burns are vacations and extended leave for study, commonly called sabbaticals.¹³⁹ Vacations allow the minister to leave the burdens of ministry for a time of refreshing for both the minister and family. Extended study breaks should be carefully designed periods of time for the minister to rest and focus on intense study. Both of these provide elements of

¹³⁵ Bush, 94.

¹³⁶ Scazzero, 145.

¹³⁷ Scazzero, 146.

¹³⁸ Burns, 93.

¹³⁹ Burns, 94-95.

renewal for a minister's private and professional life, yet both are rarely used in their entirety.¹⁴⁰ Ministers hesitate to take all of their vacation leave due to the church's role expectations and dependency on the minister. Church leadership is hesitant to provide extended leave for study and renewal due to questions of resources, validity, and necessity for a healthy minister when compared to other occupations.¹⁴¹

In order for the minister to pursue the necessary rest needed to function with vitality and longevity, he or she must receive support from church leadership. Support and encouragement for a weekly day off provides protection and permission. Leadership can identify and reorganize conflicting needs and scheduling that hinder the minister from healthy sleep patterns and the weekly Sabbath. While a sabbatical is suggested, it is difficult for a small church to afford it. Church leadership and the pastor can work together creatively to find an alternative addressing concerns, responsibilities, area of study and available resources. When church leadership makes an effort to provide additional care for their minister, it results in higher job satisfaction and emotional renewal.

The fifth strategy is balancing marriage and family with ministry. Ministers recognize the toll ministry stress can have on their family and marriage. Eighty percent of ministers see ministry negatively affecting their family.¹⁴² This stress is due to the "glass house" in which the family must live while attempting to meet high standards and

¹⁴⁰ Burns, 94-96.

¹⁴¹ Burns, 96.

¹⁴² London, 20.

unspoken expectations.¹⁴³ Additional stress is added with the time demands and the minister's difficulty in maintaining healthy time boundaries for the family.¹⁴⁴ These stresses on the family and marriage have a direct result on the abilities of the minister and his or her performance as he or she ministers to the congregation.¹⁴⁵

In order to maintain proper health and protection from stress, proper boundaries and expectations should be provided for both the minister and family. Since time has been recognized as the largest struggle,¹⁴⁶ church leadership can assist in setting the proper boundaries for the minister so time is spent with the family without punishment or guilt. This can be done by limiting work hours,¹⁴⁷ providing more time off through vacation time and/or a periodic extended sabbatical, and assisting in organizing a predictable schedule for both the church and family.¹⁴⁸

Other areas of family and marriage stress affected by the church leadership include expectations, privacy, and financial support. Church leadership can provide protection and defense from unreasonable expectations from the congregation. They can communicate to the congregation the boundaries that protect the privacy and personal time of the minister and family. Finally, the church can make efforts to the best of their ability to provide an adequate financial package within the church's economic context.

¹⁴³ Cameron Lee Balswick and Jack Balswick, *Life in a Glass House: The Minister's Family and the Local Congregation* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Seminary Press, 2006), 15.

¹⁴⁴ Proeschold-Bell et al., 707.

¹⁴⁵ London, 89.

¹⁴⁶ Balswick, 273.

¹⁴⁷ Oswald, 57.

¹⁴⁸ Balswick, 273.

The sixth strategy is a self-prescribed self-care plan which is encouraged for the first five self-care strategies to be implemented. As Doehring found, a completed self-prescribed plan increases the likelihood of successful implementation. Using Goleman's learning model which employs self-evaluation, goal setting and accountability would be beneficial in developing the self-prescribed plan.

Implementing self-care is an exercise a follower of Christ can do as an exercise of living in faith and grace to experience a fuller *imago Dei*. The stressors a minister and his family experience within the ministry can diminish vibrancy of life and ministry satisfaction. The minister needs to draw in the church leadership and other supportive relationships to experience the support the body of Christ can offer. In order to do this, the minister must humbly address the deficient areas and seek accountability and support to encourage needed self-care practices.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH METHODS

Project Overview

The execution of this project used both qualitative and quantitative research. The project used some mixed methods research knowing that the quantitative portion of the research would be limited. The sole purpose of the quantitative research was to identify participants to be interviewed. Subsequently, the project's results were primarily found through the qualitative research conducted.

Achieving the project's goal, finding a general framework in how people are experiencing the common phenomenon¹ through grounded theory, occurred by targeting the phenomenon of CCCC churches supporting their minister's self-care. Using the "inductive and comparative process"² through interviews provided a better understanding to develop a model for churches to replicate. The progression of processing through and coding the interview data reflects the outline given by Sharon Merriam.³ She suggests organizing the data into categories using patterns and themes, followed by defining the properties of the categories. A hypothesis is then formed by drawing from the

¹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Choices*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln, NE: Sage, 2013), 88.

² Sharon Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 175.

³ Merriam, 30.

relationships between the properties and categories, producing a model for other churches to replicate.

Survey Description and Method

To initiate the project, the researcher used the list of congregations and ministers in Minnesota and Wisconsin provided by *The Directory of the Ministry*⁴ to identify who would receive the survey. The researcher chose to survey ministers rather than church leaders because of the different perspectives between the minister and church leadership. William Branham's research found a significant gap between the perception of the congregation and the minister when it came to congregational support.⁵ He consistently found the congregation reported providing more support than the minister reported receiving.⁶ Maslach's work, as previously mentioned, identified the work environment as an influencer of burnout based upon control, workload, reward, values and vision, community, and fairness factors.⁷ The main determination of proper adjustments and success by the leadership in these factors is the minister's perception of their presence. The researcher decided to survey ministers rather than the church leadership, seeking their perceptions of self-care support from their congregation and church leadership.

The researcher found there is no accurate list of ministers or churches for either Minnesota or Wisconsin. The national directory list is based on self-reporting by the

⁴ J. Noll, ed., *Directory of the Ministry* (Springfield, IL: Specialized Christian Services, 2016).

⁵ William T. Branham Jr., "The Congregational Care of Pastors," (D.Min. thesis, Bethel Seminary, 1993).

⁶ Branham, 87.

⁷ C. H. Maslach, W. B. Schaufeli, and M. P. Leiter, "Job Burnout," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, no. 1 (2001): 397.

churches. Due to lack of reporting, the list included 5 closed churches, one of which had been closed for more than 20 years. Much of the church contact information including the current ministers was outdated. This resulted in the need to collect names, addresses, phone numbers, and emails. This effort took more than 20 hours of phone calls, emails, and web searches. This list underscored the loose organization and communication between the CCCC churches, and their independence in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The final list consisted of churches the researcher understood had an attendance of under 125 with all of the ministers being male. This number was decided on based on the research of Nelson Searcy of Church Leader Insights. Churches of less than 125 have specific needs for ministry that larger churches do not.⁸ An effort to contact the ministers on the list was attempted, confirming contact information. The phone calls also included an invitation to participate in the study and a limited explanation of the survey that would be sent to them. Often the minister asked for more information about the specific questions of the survey and details about the project. A consistent and minimal explanation was given to each possible participant to avoid introducing researcher bias into the survey. Due to time constraints and the inability to contact some on the list, only 40 of the original 45 were contacted.

An online survey was prepared to quantify positive support measures church leadership could provide. The list contained actions a supporting church could offer in relation to the six self-care strategies. Qualtrics was used in the survey's development and analysis. The 23-question survey can be seen in Appendix A. The first five questions

⁸ Nelson Searcy, "5 Barriers to Church Growth," *Outreach Magazine*, last modified November 14, 2012, accessed January 6, 2017, <http://www.outreachmagazine.com/features/3501-nelson-searcy-5-barriers-to-church-growth.html>

were demographic and context based. These questions asked name, context of ministry, length of current ministry, type of ministry, and size of church. The remaining questions asked for the minister's perception of how the church leadership supports him in the six self-care strategies. Two or three questions addressed each of the six strategies. The participant had a choice of answering yes, occasionally, or no to each question. The final question asked the participant to grade their church leadership on a sliding scale in the support they receive, ranking them from A+ to F.

The seventeen questions measured specific types of support ministers received from their church leadership and congregations. General questions included were: if efforts of appreciation have been shown, if there was an annual review, and if they felt the congregation made an effort to adequately pay them. To measure support for spiritual formation the ministers were asked if they were encouraged and supported in daily spiritual formation practices, allowed freedom for spiritual retreats, and have plans for or have provided a sabbatical or extended study leave.

The questions asked to measure support for maintaining physical health included if paid vacation and a weekly day off were provided. It was asked if any concern has been shown towards eating, sleeping, or exercise habits. To measure support for intellectual enrichment the questions of whether time and/or resources toward ministry enrichment events are provided. These would include seminars, conferences, or continuing education. It was also asked if any allowance was provided for professional growth materials. To measure support for balancing marriage and family it was asked if family time was encouraged and/or protected and whether encouragement was provided for marriage enrichment activities.

The questions asked to measure support for a relational support system and self-prescribed self-care plan included if there was encouragement for personal and professional goals. It was asked if there was a congregational group where concerns, goals, and needs for both the minister and congregation could communicate. Another question was if there was encouragement to have personal accountability. It was also asked if supportive relationships were provided or encouraged outside the church. These would include mentors, peer support groups or spiritual direction.

The survey was tested by the researcher's current Doctor of Ministry cohort and local ministry peers. Ten individuals tested the survey, resulting in some minor wording changes. On October 21, 2016, an email containing the finalized survey was sent to a list of 45 ministers whose church attendance was assumed to be 125 or less. The survey participants were given until November 1 to complete the survey. Two reminders were sent out on October 26 and October 31. Only 40 of the 45 emails sent out were successfully delivered. There were 30 surveys completed out of the 40 emails received resulting in a 75 percent completion rate.

The results of the survey were evaluated in two areas. The first area was evaluating the minister's perception of the support provided by the church leadership in question. A numeric value was given to the answers: "no" was given the value of one, "occasionally" was given the value two, and "yes" the value three. Those who scored higher were considered to have a positive supportive relationship with their church leadership. Once tallied, the researcher looked at the demographic information of the ministers with the top eight scores.

The researcher used three demographics to finalize the list of participants. The first was the size of weekly attendance. One church had a weekly attendance of over 125 disqualifying him from the participant pool. The church is also a campus church for a megachurch in California, which the researcher concluded would not represent the smaller church culture and leadership structure in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The second demographic was length of current ministry. Two ministers had been in their current church ministry for less than a year, one of whom had the highest overall score. The researcher chose to remove these ministers from the list of potential participants to avoid a possibly skewed perspective due to what is commonly called the honeymoon period. This was substantiated by the survey results with those ministers within the first year of their current ministry scoring the highest average among the five groups.

The other demographic used was the identified ministry position. Twenty-one respondents identified themselves as full-time and nine considered themselves part-time, bi-vocational, unpaid, or ministering at more than one church. The researcher acknowledges through personal experience a difference in congregational dynamics, compensation, and ministry between those who are in part-time/bi-vocational and full-time ministry. To maintain consistency within the ministry context, only those full-time and in multiple church ministries remained on the list. This reduced the list to five potential participants for interviews.

The top five participants varied in age, experience, socio-economic context, and education. Minister A has been in ministry for over three decades and is currently at a church near a city. He has been at his church less than ten years and has a youth minister

on staff. His weekly attendance is between 90 and 125. He has an advanced ministry degree and no longer has children in his home. His church is the only one included in the study that has initiated a covenant that includes supporting Minister A's self-care.

Minister B has been in ministry for eleven years and has been at his current ministry for seven years. His church is in a regional city and has an attendance between 65 and 90. He currently has young children at home. His experience included a church elder who initiated an accountability relationship to support self-care.

Minister C has been a minister in small rural towns for over three decades and has been at his current ministry for over fifteen years. He has an advanced degree in ministry and ministers to a congregation of less than 90. He and his wife no longer have children at home. In addition to the interview, he provided an accountability tool he developed to keep track of his time.

Minister D is in a regional city and is a multi-church minister to two small congregations. His primary employment is with a Christian para-church ministry and not a church, which was unknown to the researcher until the interview. Minister D has over three decades of experience and no longer has any children at home. The two churches where he preaches average less than 40 in attendance each.

Minister E has been in ministry for over two decades and has been at his current church less than five years. His church is a recent church plant near a regional city that has an attendance between 90 and 125. He has an advanced degree and currently has one child still at home. Due to the development stage of the church plant, he has not established a church eldership yet.

Interview Description and Method

Once selected, the researcher called the five participants to request an interview. All five participants agreed and the interviews took place November 3 through 10, 2016. The questionnaire prepared for the interviewees consisted of a semi-structured format of 23 questions (see Appendix A). Each of the six strategies was discussed through three questions with an additional question about accountability. The three questions included the current practices of the minister, how those practices were developed, and how the church leadership supports them in this area. The final two questions asked about strength and growth areas in regard to the support received from church leadership.

Each interview was conducted over the telephone and was recorded to aid in the analysis of the interviews. The interviews ranged from 43 to 83 minutes. The researcher attempted to closely follow the script unless clarifying questions or additional dialogue was needed to bring the interviewee back to the subject matter of the question. All five interviews were conducted with some minor variances from the predetermined order.

The interviews were transcribed into a Word document. In the interview with Minister D, the recording device was on but not recording, resulting in the inability to produce a transcript of the conversation. Detailed notes were taken during the interview and transcribed to substitute for the lack of interview transcript. Once all of the transcripts were completed, they were uploaded into a program called Dedoose for coding and analyzing.

The researcher initiated coding by seeking out general themes. This began in the transcription phase by listening and noting themes and corresponding connections. The researcher listened to the interviews twice before starting the coding phase. Once

finished, the researcher reviewed the codes and used selective coding in an effort to condense the data in search of core categories. A total of 16 parent codes were formed out of the 51 initial codes. The codes were also analyzed with the results of the survey taken. Due to the low interview participant numbers, there were no notable results in reviewing the data from a mixed-method approach.

Reliability and Validity

The primary goal was reliable and valid research. Qualitative research has widely accepted the notion that “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, substitutes for internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity.”⁹ The researcher’s goal has been to provide data and findings that meet these demands. Triangulation through multiple sources is the primary effort towards this goal. These multiple sources are the interviewees who are in different states, churches, stages of life, educational backgrounds, and socio-economic contexts. Their connection to the same phenomenon provides validity to the data collected. The common categories found between them will provide reliability so the phenomenon of church leadership supporting their minister’s self-care might be transferrable.

Researcher Biases

The small number of CCCC churches within Minnesota and Wisconsin make the ministry community quite small. The researcher has ministry experience in both states, making it difficult to find people or churches the researcher did not know. In the selection of the five interviewees, the researcher has a relationship with all five, with three

⁹ Merriam, 211.

spanning more than 20 years. Within the researcher's current and former ministry networks, the researcher also knew four of the individual congregations personally, including some of their leaders.

The researcher made a concerted effort to commit to the prescribed questions during the interview process, only asking questions of clarification and redirection. The researcher also maintained control in using the data given through the interviews without adding additional comments.

Summary of Findings

The data was analyzed and the following findings summarize the data that was collected through the interviews.

- The first finding is self-care is a developmental process that must be custom fit to the individual's preferences, stage of life, and experience.
- The second finding is a general avoidance of ministers pursuing healthy habits and church leadership providing support for it.
- The third finding is ministers have a desire for accountability from their church leadership.
- The fourth finding is ministers who perceive self-care support are in a church leadership environment that displays trust, encouragement, and genuine concern for them.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS

Survey Data Analysis

This section takes a more detailed look at the survey used to assess the population and choose the five interview participants who have churches supporting their self-care. In addition to finding the five participants, the results from the data provided some notable information about the integration of self-care. The researcher realizes that the low number of responses (30) limits the validity of the interpretation of the statistics.

The researcher limited his analysis by comparing the demographic questions (2 through 5) with the 17 responses in question six. The results of these 17 questions can be seen in figure 1. Two numbers are given in the analysis. The first number represents the cumulative of the 17 individual mean scores in relation to that specific demographic. The second number represents the average of the cumulative score with the range of one to three. A lower score suggests lower levels of support and a higher score suggests higher levels of support.

Figure 1: Support Provided By Churches and Church Leadership

At any time has your current church or church leadership...							
Question	Yes (v=3)		Occasion- ally (v=2)		No (v=1)		Total
1. Provided annual paid vacation time?	90.0%	27	0.00%	0	10.00%	3	30
2. Provided at least one weekly day off?	86.67%	26	3.33%	1	10.00%	3	30

3. Shown any concern for your eating, exercise, and/or sleep habits?	16.67%	5	30.00%	9	53.33%	16	30
4. Encouraged and supported you to invest in your daily spiritual formation?	40.00%	12	36.67%	11	23.33%	7	30
5. Allowed freedom for personal spiritual retreats?	66.67%	20	13.33%	4	20.00%	6	30
6. Provided or have plans for a sabbatical/extended study leave?	6.67%	2	0.00%	0	93.33%	28	30
7. Provided time and/or resources towards ministry enrichment events?	46.67%	14	36.67%	11	16.67%	5	30
8. Given allowance for professional growth materials? (books, subscriptions, etc.)	33.33%	10	13.33%	4	53.33%	16	30
9. Encouraged and/or protected family time?	60.00%	18	13.33%	4	26.67%	8	30
10. Encouraged marriage enrichment activities? (e.g. dates, overnights, seminars, etc.)	16.67%	5	23.33%	7	60.00%	18	30
11. Set up a congregational group to share concerns, goals, and needs for both minister and congregation?	6.67%	2	23.33%	7	70.00%	21	30
12. Made an effort to adequately pay you?	70.00%	21	20.00%	6	10.00%	3	30
13. Made an effort to show appreciation?	76.67%	23	20.00%	6	3.33%	1	30
14. Provided an annual evaluation?	20.00%	6	23.33%	7	56.67%	17	30
15. Provided or encouraged supportive relationships outside the church? (e.g. mentors,	26.67%	8	30.00%	9	43.33%	13	30

peer groups, spiritual direction)							
16. Encouraged establishing professional and/or personal goals?	16.67%	5	33.33%	10	50.00%	15	30
17. Encouraged the practice of personal accountability?	40.00%	12	33.33%	10	26.67%	8	30

The first demographic comparison was the type of minister employment as seen in figure 2. There were 21 full-time ministers and one bi-vocational. Two ministers had ministries with two or more churches. The researcher made the assumption this would be equivalent to a full-time ministry, even though it was not specified in the survey. There were six part-time ministers, with one unpaid and four bi-vocational. One minister listed himself as bi-vocational. The researcher is aware of this minister and church, and grouped him with the part-time ministers for analysis.

The most notable outcome from this demographic section was the difference between the questions attributed to compensation and relational support. The score for the full-time ministers was 35.44/2.084 while the part-time ministers scored slightly lower at 33.27/1.957. When analyzing the 17 areas individually, the part-time ministers averaged an equal or higher score on all areas that show relational support (spiritual, supportive relationships, and direct encouragement) with the exception of encouraging family time. The areas registering higher scores for the full-time ministers were associated with full-time compensation: paid vacation, weekly day off, resources and monetary allowance towards professional enrichment, an established representative group to assist the minister, adequate pay, and annual evaluation.

Figure 2: Current Type of Employment

What best describes your current ministry? (Click all that apply)			
Q#	Answer	%	Count
1	I am a minister full-time	70.00%	21
2	I am a minister part-time	20.00%	6
3	I am bi-vocational (I have a job outside of the ministry)	16.67%	5
4	I minister at more than one church	6.67%	2
5	I do not get paid	3.33%	1
	Total	100%	30

The next demographic question asked about the socio-economic context of the ministry with the options: rural, suburban, and urban (Figure 3). There were seven urban, seven suburban, and 16 rural churches represented. The overall results in descending order were suburban (38.42/2.26), rural (34.39/2.023) and urban (32.7/1.923). The suburban ministers reported the highest mean for each category except for two. They were the lowest in showing appreciation to the minister and second in encouraging goal setting. The urban and rural minister's results showed each having an equal number (eight) of lowest average responses and one being tied statistically.

Figure 3: Location of Ministry Results

Question 3: Where do you minister?			
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Urban	23.33%	7
2	Suburban	23.33%	7
3	Rural	53.33%	16
	Total	100%	30

There were four options for length of ministry as seen in figure 4. The most significant finding was the perceived support from those in ministry less than a year compared to those longest tenured. There were four ministers at less than 1 year, four at

2-5 years, 13 at 6-10 years, nine at 11-20 years, and six at their churches for more than 20 years. Statistics showed a descending score from newest scoring highest to most tenured showing lowest. Those serving 2-10 years were statistically even. Those 11 years to more than 20 were also statistically even. The scores were as followed: less than a year (39.25/2.309), 2-5 years (35/2.059), 6-10 years (35.69/2.099), 11-20 years (32/1.882, and over 20 years (32.18/1.891).

Figure 4: Length of Ministry Results

Question #4: How long have you been at your current church?			
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than one year	13.33%	4
2	2-5 years	13.33%	4
3	6-10 years	43.33%	13
4	11-20 years	20.00%	6
5	More than 20 years	10.00%	3
	Total	100%	30

The fourth demographic was the average weekly attendance of the congregations served. Eight ministers serve churches smaller than 40, 6 ministers serve churches with an attendance of 41-65, 13 ministers with 66-90 in attendance, and 3 ministers with 90-125. The scores were as follows in ascending order: 66-90 (31.870/1.87), 41-65 (34.34/2.02), 91-125 (37.35/2.197), and less than 40 (38.15/2.244). The largest deviation of 1.10 in the 17 responses was in the annual evaluation (Figure 5). This was the only response that progressively increased with the size of the church.

Figure 5: Survey Statistical Chart

Q#	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	Count
2	1	4	1.423	0.900	0.170	30
3	1	3	2.300	0.837	0.153	30
4	1	5	3.000	1.145	0.209	30
5	1	5	2.200	1.215	0.222	30
6.1	1	3	2.800	0.600	0.360	30
6.2	1	3	2.770	0.620	0.380	30
6.3	1	3	1.630	0.750	0.570	30
6.4	1	3	2.170	0.780	0.610	30
6.5	1	3	2.470	0.810	0.650	30
6.6	1	3	1.130	0.500	0.250	30
6.7	1	3	2.300	0.740	0.540	30
6.8	1	3	1.800	0.910	0.830	30
6.9	1	3	2.330	0.870	0.760	30
6.10	1	3	1.570	0.760	0.580	30
6.11	1	3	1.370	0.600	0.370	30
6.12	1	3	2.600	0.660	0.440	30
6.13	1	3	2.730	0.510	0.260	30
6.14	1	3	1.630	0.800	0.630	30
6.15	1	3	1.830	0.820	0.670	30
6.16	1	3	1.670	0.750	0.560	30
6.17	1	3	2.130	0.810	0.650	30
7	3	13	9.640	2.510	6.310	25

Another finding in the fourth demographic showed that ministers feel positive that their churches are making an adequate effort to pay despite their size. It should be noted there is a general progression from smallest to largest church size in the responses (2.46, 2.67, 2.6, and 3.0). A number over 2.5 suggests a high majority agree their church makes an adequate effort to pay them.

The final note of interest is the question of whether the church has provided or has future plans for a sabbatical or extended study leave. Out of the 30 respondents, 2

answered yes. One was from a church of 41-65. The other minister was from the church of over 125, and was not included as an interview participant because his church attendance was greater than the predetermined 125.

Case Studies

Through the interviews, the researcher discovered one of the churches had developed a covenant including self-care elements. In another interview, a church leader had informally taken the initiative to provide support for the minister's self-care. Case studies of these two churches provide examples in how to formulate a model for church leadership to support their minister's self-care.

Case Study One: A Covenant Created

Minister A started ministering to his church near small city with his family almost a decade ago. Minister A has developed efforts to maintain his personal self-care in over 40 years of vocational ministry experience. Due to the different stages of life and his uniqueness as a person his self-care practices have continued to adapt. Each of his six self-care strategies includes a continual discovery process.

In the first self-care strategy of spiritual formation, he has found that it “is not so much a time issue as it is a priority issue.”¹ When his spiritual formation struggled it was a problem of desire rather than time. He found the more he stays connected to his faith through prayer, worship, reading and studying scripture, and participating in Sunday school or small groups as a participant, the better he is as a minister.²

¹ Minister A, phone interview by author, November 14, 2016.

² Minister A, interview.

He has not only developed how he does spiritual formation, but has realized the value of it for ministry from past mistakes he has made. He has discovered its necessity for ministry.

I see when I am faithful to those priorities. I see the growth that happens. I see that I have a fuller tank to offer to others. I have a better overall frame of mind and it fills a sense of dependence upon God. ... Anyone who has been in ministry very long [knows] it's easy to become familiar with the task, that you can do it in your sleep almost ... without dependence on God. I have to continually remind myself of that. ... I see the difference when I pray...I see this in results rather than when I try to do it just on my own.³

Minister A uses a second self-care strategy of supportive relationships. He developed these relationships to provide support for himself as a person and minister. He acknowledges that he has had to “intentionally work at it” especially after he left the college campus for the church office.⁴ He felt a deep sense of loneliness so he decided “to intentionally build some relationships for support.”⁵ His support system includes those in his immediate circle: his wife, the elders of the church, and his associate minister. He has also sought out support from groups outside of his church. He is a part of two peer groups of ministers in the area, one with those within the CCCC and one with the evangelical pastor community. He meets with a weekly men’s group and two individuals who provide deep discussion about faith, biblical understanding, and culture. He has several different groups he feels comfortable confiding in.⁶

³ Minister A, interview.

⁴ Minister A, interview.

⁵ Minister A, interview.

⁶ Minister A, interview.

He has also taken a role of mentor seeing “a need [and] recognizing where I am in life and deciding what do I need and what can I offer.”⁷ He has found two former students who are ministers to mentor. He also attends peer groups to offer himself as a resource and encouragement to the younger ministers attending.⁸

The third self-care strategy Minister A has learned to implement is maintaining healthy marriage and family relationships. Minister A and his wife enjoy life as “empty-nesters.”⁹ There was a time when he had to learn how to balance ministry and family life. Early in his ministry career he worked with someone who was a “workaholic” and thought he had “to keep up.”¹⁰ This resulted in four or five years of lost memories with his kids. Learning from his mistakes and recognizing the frustration from his wife, he started to find ways within his flexible schedule to be with his kids. He did this by attending field trips, daytime school events, and recognizing the family as a priority. Today he is more aware of the church’s expectations for hours worked allowing him to take the time he once was hesitant to take for himself and family.¹¹

Minister A has more than forty years of ministry experience, which includes a great deal of the fourth self-care strategy: professional enrichment. In addition to graduating with his doctorate, he continues to seek out intellectual and professional enrichment opportunities. The opportunities he now desires are different from when he was younger. He recognizes he no longer desires nor benefits from the week-long

⁷ Minister A, interview.

⁸ Minister A, interview.

⁹ Minister A, interview.

¹⁰ Minister A, interview.

¹¹ Minister A, interview.

conferences where travel is involved. Instead he finds intellectual enrichment in his conversations with peers, working with other ministers on sermon series, and attending one or two-day seminars on issues relevant to the church and culture. He also finds enrichment in the leadership retreat at Pine Haven Christian Assembly and the day long prayer summit sponsored by a local ministry. These provide both professional and spiritual enrichment.¹²

The fifth self-care strategy Minister A attempts to implement is maintaining healthy habits for physical health. This is the area in which Minister A is most deficient. When asked, his initial answer was simple and short, “I don’t.”¹³ He admits, “We try to watch our weight, our diet ... I do work on that stuff.”¹⁴ He also attempts to get enough rest, get regular checkups and immunizations, and is cautious when sickness comes.

He believes he can do better, like he did when he was younger and regularly exercising at an all-year swimming pool a couple blocks from his home. His healthy habits “have been different throughout the years.”¹⁵ He finds walking, especially with his wife, most beneficial. He says, “It not only helps with physical and emotional health, it helps our relationship as we talk to one another.”¹⁶ He and his wife are not competitive, and they do not play sports, so they look for exercise they can do together.

When it comes to developing the sixth self-care strategy—a self-prescribed self-care plan—Minister A does not have anything specific in place to follow outside of what

¹² Minister A, interview.

¹³ Minister A, interview.

¹⁴ Minister A, interview.

¹⁵ Minister A, interview.

¹⁶ Minister A, interview.

the church leadership expects of him. He prefers to set personal goals informally. He has found when he invests a big effort to develop a formal organized plan it is not carried out. Instead he thinks ahead to what is coming and plans accordingly. When he meets with the elders at his annual review he talks about goals for the next year. They keep him accountable through a “ministry covenant” that has been developed over the past three years.¹⁷

In 2013, the church eldership saw the benefit in clarifying the expectations for the ministry staff. The initiator of the covenant was an elder who is a former pastor and Bible college professor who moved into the area. He is “really good at process and organizing processes” and was given the task to develop a ministerial covenant between the church elders and ministry staff.¹⁸ Once the core of the covenant was developed, Minister A was invited to give input. Together, the elders and Minister A completed the ministry covenant. Working together on the covenant forced Minister A to do some personal evaluation and hear honest input from the elders.¹⁹

The basis of the ministry covenant is the same for both positions, but the expectations are specific to the ministry role of Minister A and his associate minister. Minister A’s covenant is included in Appendix B. The covenant has specific expectations of behavior for Minister A, along with measures for accountability. The covenant covers, at least in part, five of the six self-care strategies, excluding only physical health. Each of

¹⁷ Minister A, interview.

¹⁸ Minister A, interview.

¹⁹ Minister A, interview.

the strategies expected are topical, with some guidelines and little direction. This allows Minister A the freedom to meet the expectations as he desires.²⁰

The covenant is currently in its second year, and Minister A has found it refreshing. He states, “It has given me a sense of freedom and trust to know that obviously there are certain things I have to get done, but beyond that, they have given me a way to shape and mold my ministry around my gifts.” The covenant has provided a means for Minister A to know exactly what is expected of him, which frees him up when those expectations are met. This has allowed more time off for him and his wife because they “don’t expect you to work 60 hours a week.”²¹

When asked how he felt about the minister covenant being introduced, Minister A answered, “I welcomed it. I never really had that from anywhere else. I welcomed it from the standpoint that I know my weaknesses and I know I can be deceptive and I get to be accountable to somebody. [It will] help me be better at what I do.”²² Minister A summarizes his thoughts on the covenant saying,

I have found out undoubtedly, it has been one of the best things for creating some energy for change. You know, you probably may be hearing, after a while, you get tired, and you begin to think that’s not worth the amount of energy it’s going to take. I’ve been there, done that. So this process has helped from that standpoint to kind of get me focused again on things I still can do. . . . I am glad for those reasons that [the elder] introduced this idea and gone in that direction. It’s not that I have not wanted it in the past, I just haven’t had a group of elders who were thinking in those terms who would work together to devise a plan and put some accountability in place. It has been something I have always wanted, but I have not had someone willing and able to do it.²³

²⁰ Minister A, interview.

²¹ Minister A, interview.

²² Minister A, interview.

²³ Minister A, interview.

Minister A appreciates the initiative the eldership took to make the covenant. He describes a leadership environment where he is trusted and allowed to flourish. He perceives a freedom to carry out the ministry duties as it fits his gifts and abilities. He views the eldership as “being unselfish,” because they allow him to minister beyond the local reach of the church on the board of a New England church planting organization. The leadership cared for him when he was at an emotional and physical low by praying and checking up on him. They even were willing to intervene when an outside ministry responsibility was taking a physical toll on Minister A. He also knows through the experience of his associate minister that when a crisis comes, family comes first even if the ministry responsibilities cannot be met. He feels supported because in the covenant they prioritize his spiritual formation and his family while encouraging professional enrichment and supportive relationships. He feels provided for as they provide for him financially.²⁴

Case Study Two: An Elder’s Initiative

Minister B came with his wife to the regional city where his church is located just less than a decade ago. Minister B’s development of self-care practices and support from the church leadership differs from Minister A. Minister B is in his eleventh year of ministry, compared to the over forty years of Minister A. His wife stays at home nurturing their three young children. He enjoys technology and finding ways to incorporate it into his everyday life.²⁵

²⁴ Minister A, interview.

²⁵ Minister B, interview.

Minister B's development of self-care practices revolve around the self-care strategy of a self-prescribed self-care plan that intentionally organizes his time and priorities. He uses evening and morning routines as a vehicle to accomplish his daily priorities, including time for himself, spiritual formation, professional enrichment, family and marriage activities, and healthy habits (see Appendix C). His routines are the bookends to the work he plans to accomplish for the day. These routines also include "anchor points" that help him make sure he "can do the other habits" within his routines.²⁶

Another part of his routine is the weekly review. He "takes time to look at [his] weekly outlook ... and lay out what [he calls] an ideal week."²⁷ This includes his schedule and his personal, family, and work responsibilities. He then plans the week accordingly, organizing it in blocks of time. When completed, he reviews it with his wife.²⁸

He admits these efforts to plan and organize are a result of how his personality functions. His plans do not always follow through as desired, and the routines are constantly changing by "trial and error."²⁹ But when he is managing his life through the routines he has found great success.

A second self-care strategy he implements is spiritual formation. In his spiritual formation he is "at his best" when he keeps to the routines allowing him adequate time

²⁶ Minister B, interview.

²⁷ Minister B, interview.

²⁸ Minister B, interview.

²⁹ Minister B, interview.

for this.³⁰ He has found the need to separate his work from his personal devotional life. This allows “God to speak to [him] with whatever [he] needs to hear in whatever way [in order] to be shaped in an area of [his] life.”³¹ His self-care practices for spiritual formation are “times of prayer, journaling, being in scripture, ... hearing sermons, or reading some sort of spiritual book.”³²

He has discovered typing out prayers is beneficial. It allows him to focus and have an extended time of prayer. Without typing out his prayers, his prayer time suffers because of distractions and the inability to be still for very long. A beneficial outcome of this practice is his ability to organize and save the prayers. He uses two prayer lists that outline his prayer time to assist in keeping focused. One is focused on the ministry and congregational needs while the other is a personal and family needs list.³³

Another area of spiritual formation for Minister B is a paid annual trip to a conference. This was a negotiated benefit when Minister B first came. He has found the conference provides “a time to focus on spiritual things and ... to be very enriching to [him] spiritually and refreshing to be away from the day to day of both family life and ministry.”³⁴ This also provides professional enrichment for Minister B.

The third self-care strategy Minister B practices is intellectual enrichment. In addition to the annual conference, Minister B likes to read books and use the technology available for his professional enrichment. A main form of enrichment for him is the use

³⁰ Minister B, interview.

³¹ Minister B, interview.

³² Minister B, interview.

³³ Minister B, interview.

³⁴ Minister B, interview.

of podcasts. He was introduced to podcasts by a visitor at his church. He listens to podcasts on leadership, productivity, and sermons during everyday tasks like showering, getting dressed, and driving. He also uses an application called Pocket which conveniently saves and stores articles to read later.³⁵

The fourth self-care strategy implemented revolves around a major part of Minister B's life: maintaining healthy marriage and family relationships. Keeping balance with his family and its demands is a high priority. His children's ages are eight months, three years, and five years. He has set his morning and evening routines around taking care of his marriage and family. Two of his anchor points are to have every Monday off and supper is at six o'clock. His Mondays off are "sacred space."³⁶ In the second year of his ministry, he asked the elders to take phone calls on Monday so he could have a true day off. The elders agreed and communicated it to the congregation so it protects him and his family time.

The anchor point of a six o'clock supper allows for valuable family time before the bedtime routine is started. This time allows for fun, prayers, a Bible story or devotion, and a sharing time about the day. Minister B's desire is to have this time "even when it is no fun" with small kids because it will "teach and develop that rhythm" for the future.³⁷

A new venture this year has been a weekly date night with his wife. It was an experiment for the remainder of the year to see if it was possible and how it might benefit

³⁵ Minister B, interview.

³⁶ Minister B, interview.

³⁷ Minister B, interview.

their marriage. Each week they go out and are “kid-free.”³⁸ The dates are simple and not “super-fancy but, just having time together and adult conversation without interruption.”³⁹ Before the weekly date night there was a sense of “not being on the same page a lot” in regards to raising the kids and other things.⁴⁰ Since beginning this practice it has “helped out” and communication is better.⁴¹ The church has supported them by providing childcare for these nights. Due to the success of the weekly date night, Minister B and his wife plan to continue this practice.

Another way Minister B balances his marriage is to be more intentional in communicating with his wife. After his weekly review he communicates what is coming up in the week ahead. When he remembers, he tries to incorporate questions to help his wife and connect with her. When he comes home, he asks, “What is the best thing I can do for you right now?”⁴² When the kids are in bed, he asks, “How is your heart doing?”⁴³

The fifth self-care strategy is healthy habits for physical well-being. These are a struggle for Minister B. His initial response about maintaining healthy habits was the same as Minister A: “I don’t.”⁴⁴ Five years ago he lost a lot of weight through diet and exercise but has since gained most of it back. His prior discipline towards being healthier

³⁸ Minister B, interview.

³⁹ Minister B, interview.

⁴⁰ Minister B, interview.

⁴¹ Minister B, interview.

⁴² Minister B, interview.

⁴³ Minister B, interview.

⁴⁴ Minister B, interview.

has wavered. Minister B mentioned, “You know, right now, it is kind of hard to talk about it.”⁴⁵

When Minister B was actively pursuing healthy habits he was exercising regularly and counting calories to manage his diet. He has found physical exercise to benefit his body and mental health. It provides “mental clarity and refreshes well-being.”⁴⁶ Another habit is maintaining enough sleep as you cannot “under discuss how important sleep is.”⁴⁷ Other healthy habits included morning and evening routines of drinking water and dental care. Minister B emphasizes the need to drink an adequate amount of water to stay hydrated. He also spends time before bed doing proper dental care.⁴⁸

The sixth self-care strategy Minister B maintains is supportive relationships. To encourage him in his physical well-being, Minister B has a couple of supportive relationships providing accountability. A close friend within the church regularly invites him to exercise at a nearby gym. One of the elders asks him “very specifically about [his] weight [and if] he has exercised” even though “it is annoying at times.”⁴⁹ These two individuals make up the core of Minister B’s primary supporting relationships and accountability.

One of the primary supportive relationships is the church member who invites him to the gym. He “sees things like [Minister B] sees things.”⁵⁰ This bond is still

⁴⁵ Minister B, interview.

⁴⁶ Minister B, interview.

⁴⁷ Minister B, interview.

⁴⁸ Minister B, interview.

⁴⁹ Minister B, interview.

⁵⁰ Minister B, interview.

developing and has allowed them to share life together through exercise, reading books, and talking “about accountability issues.”⁵¹ There are other supportive relationships that Minister B has initiated. In the past he has sought out a mentor who was either a minister or business professional.⁵²

The other primary supportive relationship started when Minister B first came. An elder within the church approached him “right away” and said “he was a pastor to pastors.”⁵³ The elder’s initiative “to push” and “develop” this relationship over the past six years has resulted in him becoming a best friend to Minister B.⁵⁴ The elder has taken it upon himself to make sure the minister is cared for, supported, and held accountable. He holds him accountable with his marriage, family, spiritual formation, physical health, and time management. His accountability can “dig pretty deep” and is initially unwanted, but Minister B recognizes its value in retrospect.⁵⁵

The elders as a group do not offer similar accountability. They have provided an atmosphere of freedom and trust. Minister B does not have set office hours, providing him “flexibility to schedule and plan things.”⁵⁶ This flexibility reflects how the eldership trusts Minister B. He is expected to plan and preside over the elder’s and ministry

⁵¹ Minister B, interview.

⁵² Minister B, interview.

⁵³ Minister B, interview.

⁵⁴ Minister B, interview.

⁵⁵ Minister B, interview.

⁵⁶ Minister B, interview.

leader's meetings. To encourage more participation in the meetings, Minister B was given the freedom to reformat and change the dates of the scheduled meetings.⁵⁷

The elders and congregation have provided a welcoming environment by showing great care and concern for Minister B and his family. His wife and family are consistently encouraged by the friendships developed and help received for the family and date nights. Minister B spoke of the strengths of the church saying they show "personal care and concern ... whether that be calling us, checking in on us and ... praying for us on a regular basis. Just being authentic, genuinely caring about us as people and not just the professional."⁵⁸

Minister B enjoys the freedom and trust he has from his elders and congregation. When asked about what his current church could improve upon he said, "[They] could be better about accountability and asking me about the questions on the survey. There might have been an annual review for example."⁵⁹ He continues to say in the elders meetings he would prefer "professional accountability, and [questions about] how certain things are going, or where we are heading, or if I said I was going to do something, ask me about that. Or give me a performance review. You know."⁶⁰ Minister B acknowledges the elders are diligent in their support to him. They protect Minister B's day off by taking on any emergencies that may arise. They provide adequate housing, salary, conference

⁵⁷ Minister B, interview.

⁵⁸ Minister B, interview.

⁵⁹ Minister B, interview.

⁶⁰ Minister B, interview.

allowance, and personal business expenses. They also provide a special offering during Christmas for the family.⁶¹

Interview Data Analysis

An analysis of the interviews, including the two case studies, revealed some similar themes within the self-care experiences of the five ministers interviewed. There were four findings that were common themes in all five interviews when describing their experiences with self-care practices and ministry.

Table 1

	Preferences	Stage of Life (frequency of responses)	Experience
Minister A	5	8	7
Minister B	3	3	12
Minister C	5	4	6
Minister D	5	6	4
Minister E	5	3	8

The participants recognized that their stage of life affects their self-care practices. Minister C used to be disciplined in the area of physical exercise, but due to joint issues and age that is no longer the case. Ministers A, B, and D all recognized that their impending retirement would result in changes to their current self-care practices.

⁶¹ Minister B, interview.

Experience was the largest influence on how self-care practices are formed. Multiple ministers used “trial and error” or “mistakes” when describing how their self-care practices were developed. Minister C has a tool to keep track of all 168 hours of the week to the quarter hour. It took him ten years to develop the tool to its currently used form. Minister D spoke in general terms about how he has had to “develop” practices introduced in seminary about goals and accountability.⁶²

All five participants recognized through experience the importance of balancing spiritual formation to sustain good ministry outcomes. Minister A “sees a difference” when personal spiritual formation precedes ministry opportunities because he has a “fuller tank to offer.”⁶³ Minister B’s discovery about writing out his prayers has encouraged his prayer life, resulting in being “more attentive” to the needs of those in his congregation.⁶⁴ Minister C identified his spiritual formation as his “bread and butter” recognizing the correlation between less personal spiritual formation and his ministry starting to “slip” and “being less prepared.”⁶⁵ Minister D’s experience has shown personal spiritual formation provides his sermons with a “depth” that cannot be replicated through sermon preparation.⁶⁶ Minister E said when he balances his spiritual formation, his ministry “becomes easier and easier.”⁶⁷

⁶² Minister D, phone interview by author, November 4, 2017.

⁶³ Minister A, interview.

⁶⁴ Minister B, interview.

⁶⁵ Minister C, phone interview by author, November 5, 2016.

⁶⁶ Minister D, interview.

⁶⁷ Minister E, interview by author, November 4, 2016.

The second finding is the avoidance of pursuing healthy habits by the minister and providing support for it by the church leadership. There was a general negative response when it came to the self-care practices to maintain health. Three of the five initial responses said, “I don’t” and one sarcastically asked to skip to the next question. Minister C said he is currently in an unhealthy state due to a slow recovery to shoulder surgery. Minister D has a neurological disorder. All of the ministers, with the reasons given, identified this as a need to improve upon.

It was not only the ministers who avoided pursuing healthy habits. Each minister recognized little to no support for pursuing this self-care practice from the congregation or church leadership. Ministers D and E both saw support through the church providing healthier food at their gatherings. Minister C said about the lack of church support for pursuing healthy habits, “I would guess that is pretty much passé. It’s not because anybody doesn’t care. It is such a universal struggle that nobody is out there asking why aren’t you doing any better because they are looking in the mirror.”⁶⁸

Within this area, there was also a discrepancy on the healthy habits the ministers talked about. The researcher identified three main areas for health: diet, exercise, and sleep. All five recognized exercise, four mentioned diet, but only two recognized sleep as a healthy habit. Other practices mentioned were doctor visits, immunizations, and vitamins and supplements.

The third finding is ministers have a desire for more accountability from their church leadership. The five participants voiced a desire for more accountability, from what they are currently receiving, 33 times during the course of the interviews. There

⁶⁸ Minister C, interview.

were 18 occurrences where the minister desired more accountability and was willing to take the initiative to have it. There were 14 instances, all coming from Minister A's case study example, where the elders took initiative to meet the minister's desire for accountability.

The desire for improved accountability varied from minister to minister. In both case studies, Ministers A and B welcomed and sought out accountability relationships. Even with accountability present with their church leaders, Minister A noticed a deficit in accountability for healthy habits. Minister B desired more formal accountability in his professional performance and a more developed accountability relationship.

Minister E is a church planter and is still developing his eldership. As a minister, he will provide accountability and encouragement for his leaders, and "invite the leadership to do the same for us."⁶⁹ One of his goals is to have a church environment that is "open and honest," holding each other accountable, including him.⁷⁰ In the meantime, he has sought accountability in other relationships.

Minister C has initiated accountability with his elders even though it has not been openly understood or accepted. He recounts a typical experience early on when he initially provided the elders with a typed monthly report of his time use. They "roll their eyes saying [things like] 'we don't expect this from you,' 'we are not asking this from you,' 'thank you for sharing it.'"⁷¹ Minister C continues to provide the report to help keep

⁶⁹ Minister E, interview.

⁷⁰ Minister E, interview.

⁷¹ Minister C, interview.

his “focus” and “feet to the fire” recognizing “they are used to it now.”⁷² He said, “I have just taken it upon myself” when it comes to fulfilling his desire for accountability.⁷³

The fourth finding is ministers who perceive self-care support are in a church leadership environment that displays trust, encouragement, and genuine concern for them. The five participants were chosen because their results showed they had a positive experience or perception of how the church supports their self-care. All five participants recognized a positive relationship with the church leadership and a respect and appreciation for the leadership environment.

The environment of trust shared between the church leadership and the minister is seen in the freedom and flexibility within the job. Minister A is given “freedom and trust” to accomplish the responsibilities given to him.⁷⁴ Minister B and D do not have set office hours.⁷⁵ Minister C is frequently encouraged at the monthly meeting to just “get it done.”⁷⁶ Minister E appreciates the flexibility in his “good schedule.”⁷⁷

Each participant, when showing their appreciation for their church leadership, made a negative comment about how other churches might do it. Minister A says when he presents his monthly reports that they have a “conversation” and they do not have a “slave driver mentality.”⁷⁸ Minister B refers to the trust and flexibility given to him in his

⁷² Minister C, interview.

⁷³ Minister C, interview.

⁷⁴ Minister A, interview.

⁷⁵ Minister B, interview; Minister D, interview.

⁷⁶ Minister C, interview.

⁷⁷ Minister E, interview.

⁷⁸ Minister A, interview.

schedule. He says, “I didn’t expect that.”⁷⁹ Minister C made multiple comments about his monthly meetings, that they do not make him feel he is “under the microscope, like in the past.”⁸⁰ He also mentions that when he is not making his stated goals the leadership does not make his report into “a club” but is “patient and grace-filled.”⁸¹ He mentions that the stressful anticipation of an elders meeting at his former church would cause his chest to tighten, not allowing him to take a deep breath.⁸² Minister D mentions that he works with his leadership team and does not “ever feel singled out.”⁸³ Minister E explains his church uses accountability to be proactive to avoid future problems rather than a “traditional church that is reactive.”⁸⁴ These comparisons show trust towards their church leadership, inferring it is different than other churches.

The ministers are encouraged through the genuine concern shown to them by the church leadership. Minister A states that if there is a problem he trusts the leadership to have a “proper reaction” in the discussion.⁸⁵ Ministers B and D both have people regularly praying for them and making sure they and their families are taken care of. Minister C’s annual evaluation consists of going out to lunch and “talking about life” and

⁷⁹ Minister B, interview.

⁸⁰ Minister, C, interview.

⁸¹ Minister C, interview.

⁸² Minister C, interview.

⁸³ Minister D, interview.

⁸⁴ Minister E, interview.

⁸⁵ Minister A, interview.

how “we are doing.”⁸⁶ Minister E hasn’t found a reason to ask for anything because “they are aware and they provide for the need.”⁸⁷

The responses from the interviews show that each minister has learned that a separation needs to be in place between being a follower of Christ and minister. Prioritizing faith and spiritual formation has allowed them to find more success as ministers. That success is supported by a team effort between the minister and the church leadership. Working together as the body of Christ through mutual support and care has developed appreciation and an environment of trust, freedom, and genuine concern. This is possible because each minister has brought a humble attitude as the ministry leader, seeking and accepting help and accountability.

⁸⁶ Minister C, interview.

⁸⁷ Minister E, interview.

CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

Evaluation of Project Design and Implementation

A review of the project design and implementation begins with an evaluation of the progression through the six assigned steps: biblical and theological review, literary review, survey, interview, and analysis of the data collected. The development of the model, as explained later, is a direct outcome of the six steps. Each step built a foundation for the creation of a transferrable model to initiate and understand the process for church leadership as they support their pastor's self-care. The researcher was intentional in maintaining a sequential order to allow the project to evolve. This also kept the researcher honest, allowing the research and data to guide the project rather than preconceived ideas.

The biblical and theological review provided a foundation for the project. Self-care was proven to be more than an attempt to increase productivity. It is necessary for a person to fulfill a part of their created being, the *imago Dei*. The purpose of self-care is connecting with the Creator God and living life while realizing how the *imago Dei* is a part of one's spiritual, emotional, relational, physical, and intellectual life. This is true of every person, but the one who humbles oneself to be a follower of Christ allows for the saving grace of God and the help of the Holy Spirit as He assists in this pursuit.

The literary review narrowed the research to the implementation of self-care within the life of a minister and local church setting. This identified the necessary strategies of initiated self-care: spiritual formation, intellectual enrichment, physical

health, supportive relationships, marriage and family health, and a self-prescribed self-care plan with accountability. These findings formulated the development of both the survey and interview questions.

The survey used the six strategies to format the questions. The questions were phrased as measurable examples of the six strategies so ministers could identify support from their church leadership and congregation. The responses collected from the survey showed both strengths and weaknesses. There was a response rate of 75 percent for those who received the email survey invitation. Unfortunately, having only 30 responses limits the interpretive statistics as the results might not be representative of other pastors' experiences.

One strength of the survey was its ability to identify the five interview participants. The researcher found a broad cross-section of ministers that varied in socioeconomic setting, experience, education, length of ministry, church size, and age. The survey also identified three participants who used tools to help in accountability and self-care, one of which was initiated by the church leadership.

In the future, the researcher would suggest three changes to the survey. The first is additional time to secure contact information. Response success significantly increased when ministers were contacted by phone to confirm email addresses. Due to time constraints, the researcher was not able to reach all of those on the list. This resulted in five emails that were undeliverable. The two other changes would be in the survey questions. In question two, the researcher would instead ask if the minister considered their ministry full-time or part-time to simplify the data. In the final question, the researcher would provide a simple multiple choice instead of a sliding scale for grading

church support. The presentation of this question was confusing and might be the cause for the five no-responses.

The literature review also provided a framework for the interview questions. Each of the six strategies identified in the literature review was included in the interview process. The strengths of the interview process included the completion of all five interviews within a week and the use of a script to avoid bias. This kept the process consistent and on task. An additional strength of this part of the project was the use of the Dedoose program to organize and code the interviews. This allowed for a thorough examination of the data collected from the interviews.

There were some weaknesses within the interview process that the researcher would suggest improvements to for the future. Preparing an introduction for the interview, explaining the project and format of the interview, would have been a better strategy and removed all bias. The second weakness was the absence of faceting or non-professional enrichment (i.e. hobbies, non-ministry interests) from the questions. The prepared interview question asked specifically about professional enrichment, neglecting the need for other forms of intellection enrichment outside of the ministry. An additional question would have been beneficial. The third weakness of the interviews was the inability to integrate a mixed-methods approach due to only five participants.

The literature review results guided the formation of both the survey and the interview process. The survey responses provided a list of participants to interview. Once completed, both of these data streams were analyzed (as reported in Chapter 5). The researcher discovered four findings based on the themes and codes within the interviews.

These four findings provide a core understanding for the model developed by the researcher.

Discussion of Findings

Through the research and analysis of the data, three relationships have come to the forefront for a model supporting a minister's self-care. These three relationships are supported through the biblical and theological reflection, the literature review, and the completed research. The three relationships are: the minister and self-care practices, the minister and church leadership, and church leadership and the minister's self-care practices.

The Minister and Self-Care Practices

The relationship between a minister and self-care practices is the primary relationship of the three. The minister's primary responsibility is to be a follower of Christ. Their secondary responsibility is their role as minister to the local church. Self-care practices allow for this prioritization of roles. To establish self-care practices, the minister must take initiative. The minister takes initiative by integrating the six strategies while acknowledging the process of discovery and humbly finding support within the body of Christ.

In all three streams of research, the minister's initiative is the primary influence on integrating self-care practices into one's life. Even within a perfect church leadership environment with clear expectations and accountability, the minister still has the choice to participate. Israel made the choice to disobey God in spite of the blessings promised when they obeyed the Ten Commandments. Jesus took initiative and chose self-care

despite the outside pressures for Him to publicly perform miracles and teach. Self-care is a choice that ultimately rests with the person.

When taking initiative, a minister should incorporate six strategies to form a complete self-care practice: spiritual development, a relational support system, intellectual development, healthy physical habits, marriage and family health, and a self-prescribed self-care plan. The relationship and integration of these strategies are theologically and practically proven in the biblical review, literature review, and through the conducted research.

The importance of making spiritual formation a priority over the other strategies was consistently apparent. In the biblical review, humanity is the only part of creation made with the *imago Dei*. This unique dynamic suggests there is a human spiritual element that cannot be found in the rest of creation. The *imago Dei* refers to all parts of self-care, but is grounded in the connection made with the Creator. We find this priority in the Ten Commandments, where the first four prioritize relationship with God over all other actions. In Solomon's example, his choice to disobey the first commandment caused severe consequences. In Jesus' example, his choice to die on the cross was led by prioritizing his relationship with His Father over maintaining other elements of self-care.

The literary review showed that spiritual formation practices can cause some prevention from spiritual dryness, which can lead to burnout¹ When an environment adds spiritual resources for the minister it increases not only spiritual well-being but also

¹ Craig W. Ellison and William S. Mattila, "The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11 (1983): 33.

engagement in the ministry.² These findings were supported by the interviews, where each minister identified the need for spiritual formation as a priority separate from ministry preparation and responsibilities. They also identified the relationship between spiritual vibrancy and vocational effectiveness. Out of all the strategies, spiritual formation was the only one to have that influence.

The five remaining strategies must still be integrated as they have a direct relationship to spiritual formation vitality. Most notable is the extra effort needed to integrate physical health habits. Both the literary review and the interview participants show a culture of avoidance and an unbalanced focus on exercise. Healthy physical habits should also include sleep, rest, and a balanced diet. Efforts in any or all of these areas will increase health, but also affect the other areas of self-care.

Unfortunately, the researcher was unable to find any participant who was satisfied with their current practice of all six strategies. Two of the interviewees experienced all six strategies at satisfactory levels for a period of time. Both found that period of time beneficial and it proved a time of vibrant life and ministry. All participants practiced the six strategies, in varying degrees, and found benefits to those efforts. The researcher concludes that taking the initiative to employ the self-care strategies, no matter the degree, can improve one's life.

Self-care strategies are developed over time through a discovery process. Experience, stage of life, and personal preferences are guiding factors towards implementing self-care practices. Experiences can bring changes in interests,

² Grant R. Bickerton, Maureen H. Miner, Marin Dowson, and Barbara Griffin, "Spiritual Resources and Work Engagement Among Religious Workers: A Three-Wave Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 87 no. 2 (2014): 370.

relationships, and bring about positive or negative consequences that can change the effectiveness of current self-care practices. Different stages of life can change current self-care practices due to the change in commitments, responsibilities, physical abilities, and resources. Both stages of life and experiences have the ability to change personal preferences which will then change self-care practices. This is supported by the biblical review. Jesus' itinerant lifestyle dictated how He engaged in His obedience, self-care, and ministry. As His life and call to ministry dictated His environment, He still had to dictate His priorities. Even when self-care was not easily manageable, Jesus didn't give up due to His priorities. The discovery process, with continual adjustments, is a reality for implementing self-care practices. Both the literary review and the interviews express acknowledgement for a continual pursuit rather than finding a self-care destination.

The final factor to review for the relationship between the minister and self-care is the need for supportive relationships. The *imago Dei* within humanity provides the privilege of having a relationship with the Creator, unlike the rest of creation. This relationship is formed and often influenced by the human relationships shared. The literature review showed supportive relationships are necessary and supported by the actions of those interviewed. Intentionally developing supportive relationships provides an environment for self-care practices to positively impact the minister as a follower of Christ and a leader in the church.

The Relationship between Church Leadership and the Minister

Church leadership and the congregation have a significant influence on the health of the minister. All parties are a part of the body of Christ, but interaction between the two does not guarantee a positive experience. Even though self-care is a choice, the

church community environment can use its influence to encourage and develop self-care practices. Conversely, the influence of the environment can diminish or paralyze self-care practices. The literary review found a negative environment can cause significant stress and initiate symptoms of burnout. A positive environment can cause both the minister and the church to flourish. The relationship between the church and the minister's health are interrelated, suggesting the care and health of the minister should concern the congregation and church leadership.

It can be difficult to identify the balance of involvement church leadership should have in the minister's self-care practices. In the literary review, limits were given in how the church leadership should encourage self-care practices. This is supported by the interviews, when the participants acknowledged the need for supportive relationships outside of the church. Both sources recognize a balance between the professional work environment and intimate personal care. It is up to each minister to decide the boundaries and limits of the relationship between church leadership and minister. As seen in the interviews, Minister D desired a fully open relationship with his future leadership while Minister A maintained a line between professional and private.

Wherever the minister determines the line to be, the interviews show a desire for church leadership to provide some accountability. This was primarily within the realm of the professional role. There was some willingness from the ministers to discuss issues outside the professional role; three of the ministers interviewed suggested willingness to receive some accountability towards their healthy physical habits from the church leadership.

The environment identified in the interviews suggested the need for trust, flexibility, and genuine care. Trust was identified as respect for the minister as a person and a professional. Flexibility was a result of the respect for the minister as a professional. The ministers were allowed freedom to use their judgement, abilities, and preferences to meet the professional expectations and shape their ministry. Genuine care was identified because the church leadership and the congregation treated them as a person and fellow follower of Christ, not just an employee.

Providing this environment is best reflected by utilizing Maslach's integration of job-fit theory and burnout prevention. Her six identified areas are workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values.³ Efforts to invest in these areas will provide the environment desired by the minister and promote an environment for self-care practices. The survey questions reflected practical ways to develop these areas and can be used as an evaluative tool within the current church environment, as seen in Appendix E.

The first of the six areas is identifying the workload of the minister. The literature review found expectations, both personal and professional, and role ambiguity are primary stressors. A mismatch between expectations and the minister's ability causes the relationship between church leadership and minister to be stressed. Identifying clear roles and expectations within the minister's abilities and resources provides protection against such stress. The minister and the church leadership should identify these together, as was the case for Minister A. His positive response to the ministry covenant was affected by his participation in its development and his wish to have clearly defined expectations.

³ C. H. Maslach, W. B. Schaufeli, and M. P. Leiter, "Job Burnout," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, no. 1 (2001): 414.

The second area is control, which allows the minister the authority to carry out job responsibilities and be shown respect. This produces the freedom and flexibility noted by the interview participants because the leadership recognizes the minister is capable. All of the ministers interviewed appreciated this respect and flexibility instead of being micro-managed by the leadership. Maslach does warn this is dependent upon the minister being able to carry out the functions of the job. This would necessitate a discussion and review with the minister about workload and possible investment in training.

The third and fourth areas are reward and fairness. Decision making by both the church leadership and the minister can improve or deteriorate the environment. The interviews reflected they trusted their leadership due to past decisions on compensation, appreciation shown, evaluation, and difficult situations. These decisions allowed the minister to recognize their leadership as consistent, trustworthy, and fair.

The fifth area is community. It identifies the need for positive relationships within the work environment. Those interviewed experienced more than an employee/employer relationship. There was a genuine concern for them as individuals and fellow members of the body of Christ. This is best seen in how they were held accountable to their expectations. The church leadership showed concern for the minister through discussion rather than punishment.

The sixth area is values and vision. The church leadership and the minister must define, identify, and share the values and vision of the church. The ministers interviewed experienced a partnership with the leadership in their church. This partnership fulfills the vision and values of the church as mutually understood. This type of partnership allows for mutual input into the vision and values of the church.

These six areas provide a template for how church leaders and the minister can develop a healthy environment. The researcher recognizes that even with these efforts, the environment is influenced by both the minister and the church leadership. Both parties attending to this relationship with humility and genuine concern can build a positive environment. Either party can make choices to build or sabotage this environment.

The Relationship between Church Leadership and the Minister's Self-Care

The minister and church leadership both have a direct relationship with the minister's self-care. The minister's responsibility is to initiate and develop the self-care strategies. The minister also has the responsibility of investing in the environment shared with church leadership. Church leadership has a great influence on the environment that will encourage self-care practices. These relationships show how a healthy minister, church leadership, and church are all interconnected.

The relationship between a healthy vibrant minister and a healthier church was noted in the literary review. Caution was given regarding the intimacy of how involved the church leadership is with the minister's personal self-care. In Minister C's experience, when asking for accountability for all 168 hours of the week, his elders were hesitant. In the interviews, the ministers desired accountability with the church leadership about their self-care practices. The researcher understood this to mean church leadership could offer more accountability. These two findings suggest a unique balance a minister and church leadership must navigate to determine the church leadership's involvement.

The minister must do an honest assessment about supportive relationship needs and the role of those relationships in self-care practices. This assessment should include

the church leadership, which holds a large amount of influence upon the management of ministry stress factors. The minister, even though a leader, must remain humble and determine how the body of Christ can support self-care practices. The finding of desired accountability suggests the minister is waiting for church leadership to take an active role in their self-care. Meanwhile the literary review suggests the church leadership is unaware and uneducated in how to do this.

The ministry covenant developed by Minister A's church leadership provides one possible example. There are two areas identified and agreed upon between the church leadership and the minister: expectations and accountability. The fact that the elder who proposed this covenant idea was a former minister is no accident. The elder's understanding of clear expectations from previous experience reveals an innate desire among ministers. The elder also understood dialogue with the minister's input is needed when identifying the expectations. Because of the changing nature of ministry, self-care, and environment the ministry covenant continues to be evaluated year by year to ensure effectiveness and realistic expectations.

Expectations are supported through the biblical review. The initiation of the Ten Commandments, along with the rest of the Mosaic covenant, set a list of expectations for the followers of God. These expectations were held accountable with God as judge. Throughout Jesus' ministry, His teachings and life explained the expectations of those who would follow Him. Expectations are a part of being a follower of Christ.

In the literary review, one of the suggested strategies was to develop a self-prescribed self-care plan as a tool to identify expectations and goals. The ministry covenant between Minister A and his church leadership became Minister A's self-care

plan. It was partially self-prescribed, due to his participation in its development. It became a tool for church leadership to evaluate and encourage professional standards and expectations for ministry while providing self-care strategies.

The expectations and benefits within the covenant provided an environment for the minister to pursue personal self-care practices. Identifying the expected work hours allowed the minister freedom to invest in marriage and other activities once that expectation was met. Identifying time for vacation, other ministry, and compensation provided Minister A with resources to pursue self-care practices. Identifying spiritual formation and family as an expectation helped Minister A prioritize his activities towards these self-care practices.

As the ministry covenant identified ministry and self-care expectations, it also provided relational support through accountability. This accountability provided structure to the expectations because the minister would now be evaluated by them. Both the expectations and accountability were clearly defined. The accountability measures provided clear instruction on how that expectation would be reported and measured.

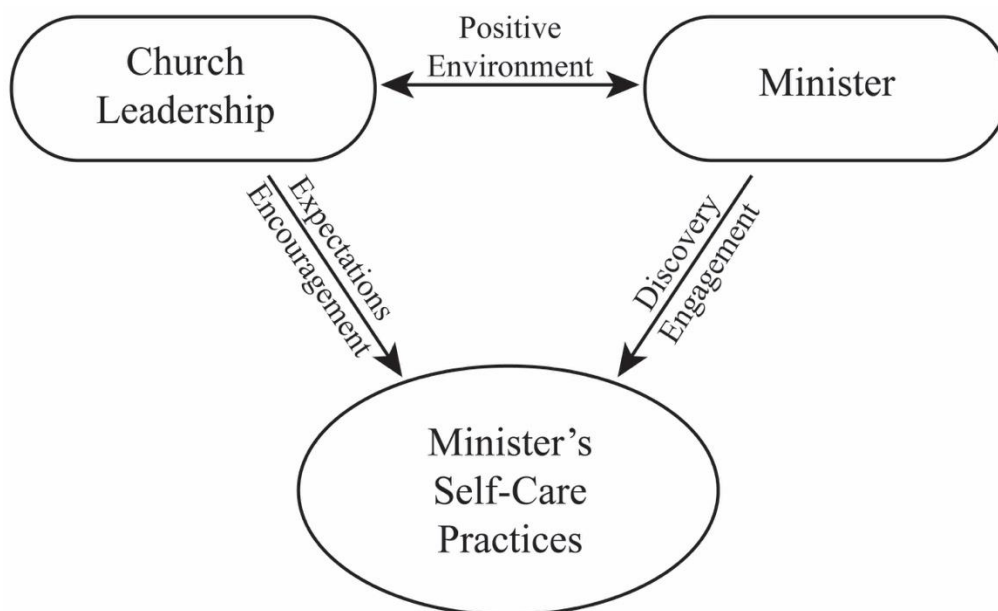
Even though the ministry covenant was initiated by the church leadership it provided benefits to all three relationships. The relationship between the minister and church leadership produced an environment of trust, flexibility, and genuine concern. This was strengthened by the ministry covenant's development and implementation process. The covenant improved the relationship between the minister and self-care producing a minister experiencing vibrant life and ministry. The ministry covenant clarified the church leadership's responsibilities in regard to the minister's self-care. This

allowed the church leadership to provide support, encouragement, and accountability for the minister to have the resources and success in his self-care practices.

A Model for Supporting Minister Self-Care Practices

The biblical and literature review, in conjunction with the research completed, has produced a model representing the relationships between the church leadership, minister, and minister's self-care practices. The functioning of these relationships can positively and/or negatively influence the minister's self-care practices. The goal of the model is to illustrate how the three relationships influence the minister's self-care. The model is shown in figure 2 below with application questions for each relationship.

Figure 2: A Model for Supporting Minister Self-Care Practices.



Relationship One: A Minister's effort into Personal Self-Care Practices:

- What has the minister discovered to be effective self-care practices?
- What efforts is the minister using to engage self-care practice? (Appendix D)

Relationship Two: A Minister and Church Leadership's Environment:

- What efforts has the church leadership made to provide a positive professional environment for the minister?
- What efforts have the church leaders made to connect with the minister on a personal level?
- What efforts has the minister done to encourage trust as a professional?
- What efforts has the minister done to connect with the church leaders on a personal level?

Relationship Three: The Church Leadership and the Minister's Self-Care Practices

- What efforts has the church leadership made to clarify expectations for the minister as a person and professional? (Example in Appendix B)
- What efforts has the church leadership made to resource and encourage the minister to practice self-care? (Appendix E)

This project's goal was to understand and develop a model for church leadership to support their minister's self-care. The discovery of the three relationships revealed how minister self-care practices can be influenced. Separating any one of these relationships limits successful integration. Thus, the model assigns two roles responsible for integrating a minister's self-care: the minister and church leadership. Understanding the roles and their responsibilities provides understanding and steps for both to positively influence a minister's self-care practices.

There are some points that should be explained. The first is that the goal of this model is to improve the integration of self-care, recognizing its dynamic nature. Ministry and life consistently change with demands for energy, time, and resources. These result in

self-care being dynamic and a discovery process that rarely remains static. Changes to a minister's self-care are expected, so the model helps identify relationships that will maintain and improve self-care in spite of the changes that will occur.

The second point is that improving self-care can be initiated from either the minister or the church leadership. As seen in Minister A, the church leadership initiated a plan for self-care. Because of the positive environment and the willingness of the minister it successfully improved self-care practices. Church leadership can initiate an effort to improve self-care practices, but the research suggests if there is not a positive environment its effectiveness could be limited.

The minister can also initiate this model for improved self-care practice. As seen in Minister C, training and education of how to keep the minister accountable will need to be done. Also, if there is a negative environment, it is possible for the minister to only focus on self-care without the participation of the church leadership. A positive environment is the primary factor for there to be a partnership for improving a minister's self-care. The better the environment and relationship the higher probability of successful improvement of self-care practices.

The two active parties in this model, church leadership and minister, each have roles and responsibilities for improving all six self-care strategies. These roles and responsibilities are divided into two areas, personal and professional. Each minister and church leadership team will have to determine the interaction between these two areas.

For the minister, it is necessary to discover the personal preferences and ability to implement the six strategies of self-care. Once this process starts and self-care is initiated, evaluation must continue. This evaluation is ongoing and should evaluate current

practices, preferred practices, desired practices, available practices, and resources available to each strategy. A tool for discovery and evaluation of self-care practices is available in Appendix D. The tool is designed to recognize the changing environment, resources, and stage of life experienced. It also allows for the minister to recognize current practices, seek changes to those practices, and then follow through those practices by seeking accountability. It can be used to initiate and or to evaluate periodically self-care practices.

In addition to the personal preferences, the minister must allow for professional responsibilities to be a part of the self-care plan. The stressors identified were caused when personal and professional expectations and responsibilities were in conflict. The minister must examine the practices and boundaries between personal and professional. Mismanagement of the professional responsibilities and expectations can sabotage the personal self-care efforts.

The discovery process must be continually engaged to bring a healthy balance to the minister. The minister's responsibility is to keep the self-care practices fresh and relevant to maintain their effectiveness. This can be done through a self-prescribed, self-care plan that is shared with a supportive relationship for accountability. It is recommended that a minister seek out supportive relationship on three levels: parent/mentor, sibling/peers, and child/mentoree.

The second relationship is between the minister and church leadership. Each party has a responsibility to the environment. This relationship has two components: professional and personal. The first component is the professional relationship that reflects the minister as an employed church leader. This relationship recognizes the

mutual effort between the church leadership and the minister to fulfill the vision and values of the church. The minister contributes to this relationship and environment through his or her knowledge, ministry aptitude, efficiency, integrity, communication, and effectiveness. These build professional trust and respect with the church leadership and can improve the environment.

The church leadership contributes through its interaction with the minister. This interaction necessitates a balance between being the employer and a partner in leadership. As an employer, maintaining the vision and values while being stewards of the church's resources holds the minister accountable. As a ministry partner, integrating the vision and values using the church's resources is accomplished in partnership with the minister. The church leadership contributes to a positive environment by partnering with the minister to accomplish the vision and values in sharing decisions, communication, respect, integrity, trust, and authority. A positive environment can result in the minister giving energy to the church and its vision while the leadership gives to the minister guidance and appropriate compensation.

The second component is the personal relationship between the minister and the church leadership. This relationship consists of followers of Christ building each other up as expected within the body of Christ. A minister contributes to this relationship the same as a church leader, in practicing a genuine Christ-like love for each other. These actions provide the relational security and trust beyond what the professional elements can contribute. Therefore these actions should be done inside and outside the professional setting of the church and meetings.

The final relationship is between church leadership and the minister's self-care practices. This relationship also involves professional and personal components. The model primarily reflects the professional influence the church leadership will have on the minister's self-care practices. As noted in the literature review, hesitancy often exists regarding the eldership taking on an intimate, accountable relationship. This type of relationship with the church leadership can only be initiated by the minister. Therefore, the model suggests church leaders identify measures to positively influence the minister's self-care practices. A tool was developed from the survey questions that allows for a congregation and church leadership to evaluate their expectations and encouragement towards a minister's self-care practices (see Appendix E).

The church leadership's primary responsibility in its relationship with self-care is to influence self-care practices by clarifying expectations and providing accountability for those expectations. The expectations and encouragement should reflect the six areas provided by Christine Maslach: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values.⁴ Minister A's ministry covenant stands as one example of a church leadership's efforts to accomplish these areas. The ministry covenant provides expectations that help provide boundaries for five of the six self-care strategies while maintaining professionalism. Any covenant made should maintain the same goal of influencing self-care practices but will differ due to the uniqueness of ministry context and the minister's personality and needs.

⁴ C. H. Maslach, W. B. Schaufeli, and M. P. Leiter, "Job Burnout," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, no. 1 (2001): 414.

Providing clear expectations for the minister removes false assumptions and expectations by both the church leadership and minister. The research suggests there is a process to identifying these expectations. The first step is to include the minister so expectations reflect decisions by both the church leadership and the minister. The second step is to write the expectations in general terms, allowing the minister to accomplish them by using his or her unique abilities, preferences, and personality. The third step is to make them measurable so they can be reported without subjectivity. By setting clear, understandable, and realistic expectations with the minister, the church leadership gives the minister permission and space to accomplish self-care practices.

The second effort church leadership can make to influence a minister's self-care is encouragement. Beyond identifying expectations, the church leadership can provide encouragement so self-care practices can be accomplished. Giving permission and encouragement increases the likelihood of ministers practicing self-care.⁵ The encouragement can be divided in three areas: appreciation, accountability, and resources.

Church leadership can show encouragement by showing appreciation, which can be seen as affirmation. Affirmation can be verbal, written, or monetary and expressed individually or corporately by the church. Affirmation can be expressed by the type of compensation package provided to the minister. Affirmation provides the minister a positive work experience even when negative stress is being placed upon the minister.

The church leadership can also show encouragement through accountability. In order for the expectations for ministry and self-care to be met, the church leadership

⁵ Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, et al. "A Theoretical Model of Holistic Health of United Methodist Clergy," *Journal of Religion and Health* 50 (2011): 715.

should provide appropriate accountability for the minister. The research providing accountability should be out of personal concern and desire for the minister to flourish. A couple of the interviews suggested a conversation with encouragement rather than a rigid impersonal formal review process.

The final area to show encouragement for self-care practices is by giving resources for self-care to flourish. Many of these are recognized in the evaluation tool found in Appendix F. Monetary resources that can be provided are: sustainable compensation, allowances for convention, professional enrichment materials, spiritual direction, and budgeting fill-in ministers during vacation allowed. Non-monetary resources can be boundaries for hours expected, type of work expected, mandatory time for spiritual formation and vacation, annual evaluation, and time for developing outside supportive relationships.

Steps for Model Implementation

Implementation of this model can be initiated by either the church leadership or the minister to improve the minister's self-care practices. The following steps will address how to implement to model:

Step One: Initiate the Process and Identify Desired Outcome.

When one of the parties has decided to initiate the process, an invitation should be given to the other party. The minister and the church leadership should discuss together the process and desired outcomes. The depth and expectations of these outcomes will be determined by the type of personal and professional environment between the church leadership and the pastor.

Step Two: Take an Initial Assessment and Review Together.

Once the desired outcomes are identified, an initial assessment can be done using the questions and related appendices within the model. This assessment can be done together or individually. Once the assessment is completed, discuss the results of the assessment together identifying each party's responsibilities and possible actions to engage the minister's self-care practices.

Step Three: Identify Core Responsibilities and Expectations Together.

The minister and church leadership should work together to identify and clearly articulate the mutually agreed upon responsibilities and expectations of the minister's role and self-care practices and the church leadership's role in supporting these. The responsibilities and expectations should include measurable ways for accountability. These should be written and agreed upon by both the minister and the church leadership.

Step Four: Implement, Review, and Change Together.

Once completed, implement the agreement following through with regular reviews and accountability. Accountability is best received from the personal level rather than professional. When reviewing the agreement, look for ways to improve or keep its relevance due to the changing nature of life and ministry.

The Model for Integrating Minister Self-Care is in constant motion due to the dynamic nature of relationships and self-care. The model seeks to provide both the minister and church leadership with an understanding how self-care can flourish in this relationship. When each party invests and strives to develop their personal and professional responsibilities within the model, the researcher is confident it will provide the support needed for a minister to engage and improve self-care practices.

CHAPTER SEVEN: REFLECTION

Opportunities for Future Research

This project provided a model for how church leadership can provide self-care support. There are several possibilities for further research with this project. The first would be to expand the project's research limits beyond CCCC churches, small churches, and the geographic area of Minnesota and Wisconsin. This would help identify if the findings are specific to just CCCC small churches and the Upper Midwest or if this model applies to other churches.

Another area of research would be to retrieve more interview data from the survey participants. Interviewing a larger portion and including both positive and negative support results would inform the research findings. It would also allow for enough data to do a mixed methods approach with the survey and interview data. One area of interest would be the correlation between church environment and its relevance to a minister experiencing high levels of support.

Additional research could include interviewing the church leadership to corroborate with the interviews of the ministers. Since the study was limited to the perspective of the minister, adding the other perspective might bring more clarity and understanding to church leaders supporting their minister's self-care. This would also help validate the presented model.

The final area of research is testing the effectiveness of the model presented. Finding a number of churches to participate and following the process would provide

data to measure the model's effectiveness. This would allow for further development on how the model can be used in a church setting.

Personal Reflection on the Thesis Experience

This project experience started at the beginning of the doctoral program at Bethel Seminary. The researcher desired from the start to find a way to promote and encourage spiritual formation in his personal life and improve his understanding of how ministry can be most effective. The researcher has followed a philosophy of ministry that states, "When we abide in Christ, we will then acquire what we need to advance God's kingdom in us and our world." The responsibility in this philosophy is to make an effort to abide. It is in that abiding relationship that one will acquire whatever necessary to advance God's Kingdom. The researcher's quest has been to find a way to provide an atmosphere to wholeheartedly abide within ministry.

In the past five years, the researcher has integrated different elements of self-care. A strict, 18-month diet provided energy and health to help balance educational pursuits, ministry demands, and family responsibilities. Accountability partners and peer groups have been initiated and developed to provide the needed support. Difficult decisions had to be made in regard to maintaining limits and boundaries so the researcher could maintain ministry, family, and education. These actions did not just affect the immediate self-care area, they positively influenced all of them, especially spiritual formation. This broadened the researcher's view of abiding to include all of the self-care elements. Because of the great support the researcher received from church leadership it became apparent how that support can help other ministers become better followers of Christ and ministers.

This thesis was a place for the researcher to explore how this could develop and benefit all ministers. It was written as an attempt to show how church leaderships improving their support of the ministers which would improve their longevity. This premise originated because the support the researcher has received from current leadership encourages his abilities and has resulted in ministry longevity.

This project has greatly encouraged the researcher in his current ministry. A frequent theme appears throughout the project process: “My church does that too!” To confirm what the researcher already knew, Sheldon Church of Christ is a special place to minister. The support, environment, and friendships that the researcher has experienced was confirmed and appreciated all over again.

The researcher also learned how to trust the process and God’s participation in it. He was intentional in working through each stage, allowing both God and the information to help generate the path. The biblical and theological reflection took its form through prayerful guidance, allowing the literary review to take shape. Those two steps shaped the research survey and questions. The data created findings that corresponded with certain areas of the literature review and biblical and theological review. The data and prayer allowed the relationships and the model to develop. The researcher appreciated this process as it allowed the project to take shape and guide him as a follower of Christ and minister. In the end, the researcher is pleased with the outcome of both the model and the formation God has done through this process, so he can become both a better follower of God and minister.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Questions for Interview:

Goal: To identify successful ways Church Leadership can support their minister successfully.

Strategy: To do this, I will be asking about the six areas in which a pastor should care for self and see how the Church leadership assists in these practices. I will ask their personal practices, its development, and the church's participation and support in these areas.

Objectives:

1. To find practical ways church leadership supports their minister.
2. To understand the relationship balance between the Church leadership and the Minister to accomplish these tasks.
3. To understand the development of how the support for these areas originated.
4. Identify the willingness of the pastor to pursue these practices.

Questions to Ask:

1. How do you balance your personal spiritual formation with the demands of ministry?
 - a. How did you develop these?
 - b. How has your church and its leadership supported you in this? (Follow up if necessary: Can you give me some specific ways?)
2. What Kind of supportive relationships do you have in your ministry?
 - a. How did you develop these?
 - b. How has your church and its leadership supported you in this? (Follow up if necessary: Can you give me some specific ways?)

3. How do you manage your marriage and family with your ministry demands?
 - a. How did you develop these?
 - b. How has your church and its leadership supported you in this? (Follow up if necessary: Can you give me some specific ways?)

4. How do you maintain healthy habits for physical health?
 - a. How did you develop these?
 - b. How has your church and its leadership supported you in this? (Follow up if necessary: Can you give me some specific ways?)

5. How do you invest in professional enrichment?
 - a. How did you develop these?
 - b. How has your church and its leadership supported you in this? (Follow up if necessary: Can you give me some specific ways?)

6. How do you use accountability, personally and professionally?
 - a. How did you develop these?
 - b. How has your church and its leadership supported you in this? (Follow up if necessary: Can you give me some specific ways?)

7. How do you proactively pursue personal and professional improvement?
 - a. How did you develop these?
 - b. How has your church and its leadership supported you in this? (Follow up if necessary: Can you give me some specific ways?)

8. In what ways do you feel your current church excels in how it supports you?

9. In what ways could your current church improve the way it supports?

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Minister A's Ministry Covenant**For the Position of Preaching Minister***REFLECTIONS ON COVENANT¹*

We believe in ministry covenants, as opposed to job descriptions or contracts. A covenant “is an agreement enacted between two parties in which one or both make promises under oath to perform or refrain from certain actions stipulated in advance.”² They were used in the context of the biblical community to define relationships and the expectations in those relationships. Included in covenants are rewards or blessings for the keeping of one’s promises, as well as reprimands and consequences for the breaking of one’s promises.

Covenants are promises, not contracts. As such, both the church and the Minister Agree that as a matter of Christian character and truthfulness, they must keep their collective promises, including those related to the expectations of the preaching minister, even when they do not feel like doing so. It is also agreed that, if deemed necessary, the stipulations of this covenant may be modified, expanded, or changed in any way by the

¹ Headings and ideas taken and adapted from Tom Tanner, *Faculty Covenant* (Lincoln, IL: Lincoln Christian College and Seminary, August 2007).

² George E. Mendenhall and Gary Herion, “Covenant,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 1:1179.

consent of both the leadership and the preaching minister, in order to better ensure that the stewardship of the church continues in an excellent way.

The purpose of the Preaching Minister, for the purposes of this covenant, is to encourage and strengthen the congregant's faith in Jesus Christ through the primary tasks and skills of preaching, teaching, and modeling a life of faith based on sound biblical doctrine.

RELATIONSHIPS

1. Minister's relationship to God.
 - a. First and foremost, the preaching minister is accountable to God. Therefore, he is expected to maintain regular time for Bible study, prayer, fasting, meditation, and other spiritual disciplines necessary to nurturing a healthy and vibrant spiritual journey. All issues in the church and regarding the preaching minister will be addressed in the context of this relationship, as outlined in scripture. **Accountability:** The elders will inquire about the spiritual vitality of the preaching Minister At each month's elders' meeting. The preaching minister should include a brief report of this in the monthly elders' report.
2. Minister's relationship to Family.
 - a. We believe that church leaders cannot lead the church if they are not leading in their homes. Paul's assertion of such in 1 Timothy 3:4-5 is the basis of this section in the covenant. Therefore, it is expected that the minister carefully shepherd his own family by balancing his time and energies to ensure their spiritual growth. **Accountability:** The elders will inquire about the minister's use and balance of time each month at the elders' meeting. The preaching minister will include a report of his time use in the monthly elders' report.
3. Minister's relationship to the Church Leadership.
 - a. As the group with whom the minister most closely works, it is expected that a high degree of respect and honor be given to the leadership of the church. Because the position of preaching minister is highly regarded, the same respect and honor is afforded him from the leadership. All conversations and meetings of and among church leaders will be governed by this respect and honor. Any breach of this respect is grounds for a serious grievance with this covenant.
 - b. The preaching minister is directly responsible to the elders regarding the carrying out of this covenant and living a Christian life.
 - c. **Accountability:** The preaching minister may, if he feels someone has committed a breach of respect, bring this concern to the attention of the elders as soon as possible, without fear of retribution. The elders

will work in a spirit of respect to mend such an offence. The elders are expected to do the same in the case of an offence against the elders. The elders will work to ensure that the preaching minister fulfills this covenant and lives an exemplary Christian life.

4. Minister's relationship to Other Staff.
 - a. At times, the church may have more than one staff person involved in the ministry of the church. This may include other ministers, secretaries, treasurers, or other positions appointed by the church. The minister is expected to treat these staff members as co-laborers in the kingdom of God, rather than adversaries to be feared or envied. Competition between staff members or adversarial relationships will not be tolerated as they violate the covenant of brotherly love. In our church, although the elders are ultimately responsible for the job performance and evaluation of all staff, they rely on the input of the preaching minister. The preaching minister is the staff supervisor and has the authority to hold other staff accountable for their behavior, performance, and covenant responsibilities. **Accountability:** The preaching minister will provide a brief description of his contacts with other staff in a supervisory capacity and express encouragement or concerns to the elders regarding said performance.
5. Minister's relationship to the Church.
 - a. Because the minister is a shepherd among shepherds, he is expected to deal with the members of the flock lovingly, patiently, and gently, even as he seeks to instruct, rebuke, and encourage them with God's word. He is to treat church members with the dignity and respect they deserve as God's children, even when, as sheep, they do not afford their shepherds the same respect. **Accountability:** The preaching minister will report, as the need may arise, any concerns regarding this relationship to the church, to the elders as soon as possible.
 - b. Additionally, since the minister will primarily be serving this congregation, he should place his membership with the congregation according to the guidelines outlined in our by-laws.
6. Minister's relationship to the Community.
 - a. Because the communities from which the church members come are numerous, it is expected that the minister, when and where possible, will become involved in the lives of the communities. Community members, whether church members or not, are to be treated with the same gentleness, love, and respect afforded to the church members listed above. It is also expected that the minister set the same example of Christian character to those in the community as well as those in the church. **Accountability:** The preaching minister will report on community activities, including ministerial associations, in his monthly report the elders.
7. Minister's relationship to the Stone-Campbell Movement.
 - a. The preaching minister of the Marion Church of Christ must completely associate himself within the historical movement known

as the Stone-Campbell movement or the Restoration Movement, particularly the independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. Ordination by one of these churches is preferred, although non-ordained ministers will be considered case by case. If the minister should ever feel the need to depart the traditional beliefs and practices of this movement, he shall make it known to the elders immediately. ***Accountability:*** By signing this covenant, the Minister Agrees that he identifies as a member of the Stone-Campbell movement or Restoration Movement, and with the traditional teachings of the Independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. For this full-time position of Senior Minister, the church expects 40-45 hours each week. ***Accountability:*** In order to remain above reproach, and to ensure that the elders' are shepherding the preaching minister's family, the minister will provide a monthly report of hours worked to the elders at their regularly scheduled monthly meetings. The preaching minister is expected to attend these meetings, unless negotiated with the church. This report may not need to detail all the hours worked, just a summary of hours per week, unless indicated by the elders. This report should outline the dates, times, and general descriptions of all ministry activities. It serves to hold the Minister Accountable to himself and his family, as much as the church.
2. The primary task of the preaching minister will be to act as the primary preacher and teacher for the church.
 - a. The preaching minister shall preach no less than 38 Sundays a year, allowing for vacation time, missions trips, revivals, camps, and missionary speakers.
 - b. It is expected that the preaching minister will spend adequate time researching, studying, writing, and generally preparing his sermons in order to guide the church. While this depends on each minister's ability, 6-10 hours is a minimum expectation. Sermons should reflect theological and contextual soundness. Expository/theological preaching is preferred, though not required. ***Accountability:*** The preaching minister should include in the monthly report the average time spent in preparation each week.
 - c. Similarly, at our current size and developmental stage, the church expects the preaching minister to lead an adult Sunday school class that focuses on equipping others to live and lead in their Christian faith. Naturally, the preaching minister will want breaks from time to time, in addition to vacation time, and can expect to teach not less than 28 weeks a year. ***Accountability:*** The preaching minister will provide a description of the classes taught each month in his monthly report, as well as ideas for future classes.
3. The preaching minister will also be expected to act as the primary shepherd of the church, maintaining a regular schedule of visitation with the members

of the church, as well as any possible new converts or members. This includes visiting with those hospitalized, sick, or in special need of care. These duties are shared with the elders, who at the discretion of the preaching minister, will also make shepherding, visitation, and sick calls. Although the number of calls may change based on the size of the congregation, given the current size of around 120 members, the minister should have a pre-determined visitation strategy in place for calling on member families at least once every two years and will make not less than eight calls per month.

Accountability: The preaching minister will report the number of visitations each month, including the name, date, location of the visit, and mileage, in his monthly report. These names should only be given to the elders and not the general board in order to protect the privacy of the shepherding process.

4. The preaching minister is expected to attend the monthly meetings of the leaders at which he will provide not just a report of his activities, but also a monthly ministry outlook. The report should detail the minister's activities from the previous month, and the outlook portion should look forward to and outline the next month's goals. In this way, the minister can keep track of which monthly goals he has achieved, which goals he needs to continue working towards, and which goals either need to be eliminated, changed, or added. **Accountability:** The preaching minister will submit a written report in advance of the monthly elders' meeting for review and evaluation.
5. The preaching minister is expected to attend other ministry meetings of the church, such as education, missions, etc. as necessary to help shape and cast the mission and vision of the church. Attendance at all meetings is not required, but is negotiated with the elders.
6. The preaching minister may take up to two weeks of paid time representing the church at a church camp, preaching revivals, or participating on the board of directors for other ministries. **Accountability:** The preaching minister shall request in his monthly report, with sufficient advance notice, time off for such activities.
7. The preaching minister is expected to engage in ongoing education and development for the purposes of gaining knowledge, challenging assumptions, honing leadership skills, and enriching his theology. **Accountability:** The preaching minister shall request time off for such events as conferences and classes and report on books and articles read which contribute to this development.
8. Other than the above responsibilities, the minister, together with the leaders, is free to determine what other priorities and responsibilities should be pursued within the minister's giftedness, passion, calling, and time restrictions.

ROLES

1. According to our by-laws, it is the role of the elders and/or a search committee to thoroughly examine the preaching minister before his calling to

the church. However, given the often truncated calling process, the Minister and leaders shall continually and informally engage in biblical conversations to ensure the soundness of the church's teaching.

2. Additionally, in keeping with the best legal practices, the church shall conduct a background check on any minister eligible for the position. In order to allow the leaders to carry out this role, it is expected that the minister will submit to all necessary processes.
3. In keeping with the by-laws, it is the role of the leaders/nominating committee to recommend a preaching minister candidate to the church and the role of the church to affirm this recommendation with a 2/3 vote of the active church membership.
4. In keeping with the by-laws, it is solely the role of the elders to dismiss the preaching minister for serious and/or continual violations of this covenant, according to the procedures outlined in the by-laws. The preaching minister may also be dismissed for failure to live according to the standards outlined in the membership covenant of the by-laws or failure to live in a moral manner consistent with the church's teachings from scripture.
5. It is the role of the preaching minister to carry out the details of this covenant as the preaching minister. In some cases, the preaching minister may serve in the role of an elder of the church. In such cases, the preaching minister must abstain from voting on matters of remuneration for himself and other ministers. The preaching minister, serving in the role of an elder, must also abstain from voting in matters of dismissal regarding himself and other ministers or staff.

REMUNERATION

1. The preaching minister's covenant is a yearly agreement, renewed annually by the elders and the preaching minister.
2. The preaching minister's remuneration package, as a matter of principle, should reflect the minister's education, experience, and competence, as well as the church's ability to remunerate him based on its budget.

a. Salary

- i.** The preaching minister possesses a Doctor of Ministry degree.
- ii.** The preaching minister possesses 21 years of experience.
- iii.** The preaching minister's salary shall be: _____ a year.
- iv.** The preaching minister's housing allowance shall be _____ a year, as designated by the preaching minister with the elders.
- v.** The preaching minister's vacation time shall be 28 days (4 weeks) a year, including 4 Sundays a year.
- vi.** The preaching minister's sick days shall be as needed in communication with the elders. No set number at this time.
- vii.** The preaching minister's personal days shall be as needed in communication with the elders. No set number and additional days for emergencies or extenuating circumstances may be negotiated with the elders.

- viii. The preaching minister's paid time for camps, revivals, and other ministry organizations shall be 14 days a year.
 - ix. The preaching minister's time for mission trips is paid time as communicated with the elders.
- b. Benefits**
- i. The preaching minister's health insurance allowance shall be _____ a year.
 - ii. The preaching minister's disability insurance allowance shall be _____ a year.
 - iii. The preaching minister's retirement allowance shall be _____ a year.
 - iv. The preaching minister's book allowance shall be - _____ a year (included in business expense allowance).
 - v. The preaching minister's convention or continuing education allowance shall be _____ a year (included in business expense allowance).
 - vi. The preaching minister's business expense allowance shall be _____ a year.
 - vii. The preaching minister's mileage shall be reimbursed for business directly related to the carrying out of his duties, with an average of around _____ per year. Mileage is paid on the basis of miles from the church to the point of the event or from home, whichever is shorter. Mileage from home to the church can never be reimbursed per IRS rules. Mileage for events such as camps, revivals, and other ministry associations needs preapproval from the elders.

The signees below agree to the covenant and its stipulations:

Preaching Minister/Date

Chairman of Elders or Board, as
Representative of the church/Date

APPENDIX C

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Minister B's Routines*Morning Routine School*

- Wake Up (6a)
- Start Coffee
- Fill Water
- Weigh
- Chug 1 L of water while listening to Audio Bible
- Change into exercise clothes
- Walk Listen to Worship(6:30a)
- Prayer Time (7a - 7:15a)
- Shower & Get Ready (7:15a-7:45a)
- Breakfast / Kids Read (7:45a - 8:15a)
- COLE to school (8:15-9am)

Evening Routine

- 8pm Get Kids Ready for Bed
- 8:30pm Tuck In
- 9pm - Check on Wife/Pray
- 9:15pm Plan Next Day
- 9:45pm Read
- 10:30pm Sleep

APPENDIX D

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Minister Discovery and Evaluation Tool for Self-Care Practices

Strategy #1: Spiritual Formation
1. What are my current practices?
2. What are my preferred practices that seem to work for me?
3. What is available for me to do or try?
4. Is there something new to experience or practice that I would like to try?
5. What will be my “new” or current practices?
6. How am I going to engage these practices?
7. Who am I going to tell to help me follow through?

Strategy #2: Healthy Physical Habits
1. What are my current practices?
2. What are my preferred practices that seem to work for me?
3. What is available for me to do or try?
4. Is there something new to experience or practice that I would like to try?
5. What will be my “new” or current practices?
6. How am I going to engage these practices?
7. Who am I going to tell to help me follow through?

Strategy #3: Marriage and Family
1. What are my current practices?
2. What are my preferred practices that seem to work for me?
3. What is available for me to do or try?
4. Is there something new to experience or practice that I would like to try?
5. What will be my “new” or current practices?
6. How am I going to engage these practices?
7. Who am I going to tell to help me follow through?

Strategy #4: Professional and Non-Professional Enrichment
1. What are my current practices?
2. What are my preferred practices that seem to work for me?
3. What is available for me to do or try?
4. Is there something new to experience or practice that I would like to try?
5. What will be my “new” or current practices?
6. How am I going to engage these practices?
7. Who am I going to tell to help me follow through?

Strategy #5: Self-Care Plan
1. What are my current practices?
2. What are my preferred practices that seem to work for me?
3. What is available for me to do or try?
4. Is there something new to experience or practice that I would like to try?
5. What will be my “new” or current practices?
6. How am I going to engage these practices?
7. Who am I going to tell to help me follow through?

Strategy #6: Supportive Relationships
1. Who are my current supportive relationships?
2. Are the relationships meeting my needs for support?
3. What is available for me to improve support?
4. Is there a new relationship to start or a current relationship to develop?
5. What will be my “new” or current practices?
6. How am I going to engage in these relationships?
7. Who am I going to tell to help me follow through?

APPENDIX E

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**Evaluation Tool for Congregational and Church Leadership Support for
Ministers**

1. Do we provide annual paid vacation time? Is it sufficient?
2. Do we provide at least one weekly day off?
3. Should we be concerned for our minister's eating, exercise, and/or sleep habits? How can we help?
4. Do we encourage and support our minister to invest in daily spiritual formation? How?
5. Do we allow freedom for personal spiritual retreats?
6. Do we provide or have plans for a sabbatical or an extended study leave? How long? What would it look like?
7. Do we provide time and/or resources towards ministry enrichment events? (seminars, conferences, continuing education) Is it enough to cover expenses?
8. Do we give an allowance for professional growth materials? (Books, subscriptions, etc.) How about other professional expenses?
9. Do we encourage and/or protect our minister's marriage and family time? How could we do better?
10. Do we encourage marriage enrichment activities for our minister? (E.g. dates, overnights, seminars, etc.) How could we support this?

11. Do we have a group our minister can go to share concerns, goals, and needs for both minister and congregation? Who is it?
12. Do we make an effort to adequately pay our minister? Is it sufficient for the local cost of living?
13. What efforts do we make to show appreciation? How often?
14. Do we provide an annual evaluation?
15. Do we provide or encourage supportive relationships outside the church?
(e.g. mentors, peer groups, spiritual direction)
16. Do we encourage our minister to establish professional and/or personal goals? How?
17. Do we encourage our minister to practice personal accountability? How?

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