

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A STUDY OF THE CONFLICTS WITHIN CHURCHES THAT LEAD TO THE
TERMINATION OF PASTORS WITHIN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST
CONVENTION, ACCOMPANIED BY A PROPOSAL OF PREVENTIVE AND
INTERVENTIONAL SOLUTIONS

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BY

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This paper is dedicated to the Southern Baptist pastors, church members and denominational leaders who have gone before me and who have journeyed with me in my endeavor to help churches and pastors be at peace with God and each other and work out church conflict through Biblical resolution before it leads to termination of a minister.

My best friend, supportive wife and partner in ministry, Tricia, who has always believed in and encouraged me since we were in high school. She encouraged me, gave advice and edited this paper.

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE CONFLICTS WITHIN CHURCHES THAT LEAD TO THE TERMINATION OF PASTORS WITHIN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, ACCOMPANIED BY A PROPOSAL OF PREVENTIVE AND INTERVENTIONAL SOLUTIONS

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010

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Since 1984, LifeWay of the Southern Baptist Convention has collected data through the Pastoral Ministries division of LifeWay from state conventions to determine how many pastors were being fired each year from their churches. They discovered that approximately two hundred pastors were being fired from their churches each month. Leader Care was formed in 1996 in order to find solutions to this problem. Throughout the last decade some progress has been made educating and helping churches and ministers in conflict, as well as ministers and their families who were terminated from the churches they served. In 2008, LifeWay disbanded LeaderCare, thereby ceasing support to pastors and their families currently experiencing personal and professional crisis. This project will be a study of the conflicts within churches that lead to the termination of pastors within the Southern Baptist Convention, accompanied by a proposal of preventive and interventional solutions.

Abstract Length: 146 Words

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The author was ordained at Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee on January 30, 1985 by Dr. Adrian Rogers. The author was a little nervous as he walked into Dr. Roger's board room, but the nervousness dissipated when Dr. Rogers gave him a warm handshake. Dr. Rogers, the author's father, and five other ministers asked the author questions and gave him encouragement for the next one and a half hours. During the ordination service, on a snowy Tennessee evening, Dr. Rogers preached on "What It Means to Suffer in the Ministry," and the text was II Corinthians 1:1-7. Dr. Rogers said during the sermon, "Don, I pray that God would bring just enough tribulation into your life that you may know the comfort of God, and that you may be able to comfort others with the same comfort God gives you." At that time, the author did not know what God had in store for him and his family.

The author was the pastor of a large Southern Baptist Church in Central Florida that God was blessing with incredible spiritual and numerical growth. It was amazing to see what God was doing in and through the church's ministries. The church had 450 additions in two and one half years. Half of the additions were people who trusted Jesus as their Lord, and Savior, and were baptized. People were drawn to the church through outreach and strong Biblical teaching and preaching. Another testimony to God's hand at

work was the significant decrease of the debt of the church—dwindling from \$1.1 million to \$400,000. God had His hand on the church, and no pastor could have asked for more.

Unfortunately, not all stories remain pleasant. The eruption of destructive church conflict ultimately led to the author's forced termination. The author never envisioned that a small group of people in a church could cause the kind of destructive church conflict that lead to the forced termination of a pastor because they opposed his leadership, church growth, and were doing everything within their power to cover up the past and present sin of some of the church members.

When the author was in college and seminary, he received no training in church conflict except one class taught by Dr. Larry McSwain at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary which opened his eyes to typical and normal church conflict and how to deal with it. However, the author had not heard of the three types of conflict as described by Dr. Lloyd Rediger in his book about clergy killers. The author, throughout his ministry years, experienced normal and abnormal conflict, but he never experienced the type of conflict in which a group wanted to destroy him. Furthermore, the author did not attend seminars, read books, or hear any preachers address the issue of resolving conflict in churches through a healthy approach.

One day, while undergoing severe personal attacks during the conflict, the author received a letter from Dr. Jim Chavis, Director of Pastoral Ministries of the Florida Southern Baptist Convention, containing an article about clergy killers by Lloyd

Rediger.¹ After reading that article the author fell on his face before God and wept. The author began realizing that nothing was wrong with him, but he was being attacked by a small group of clergy killers. The author was not being attacked by the church; rather, it was a small number of people who were attacking him and the church. The author wishes he knew then what he knows now.

As a result of the experience that the author and his family had to endure, the author started studying conflict between churches and pastors. It was not long before the author realized that information surrounding this subject was practically non-existent. This realization birthed a new burden for a ministry—helping pastors and churches understand that conflict within the church can be worked out with a Biblical solution (Neh. 1:3-4). Christ can be honored by confronting conflict biblically, and health and restoration can be experienced in a healthy manner.

Through further study the author found that conflict was not limited to only his church, but that the problem is national. Recently there has emerged an intense interest in

¹ “Clergy killers typically have intimidating power because they are willing to violate the rules of decorum and caring the rest of us tries to follow. This is powerful at a subconscious level, for we sense such persons are willing to escalate the fight, and use tactics we forbid to use ourselves. In fact, most of us clergy do not even know how to do survival fighting (street fights); much less have the necessary resources and networks for such showdowns. Clergy killers are masters of disguise. They can present themselves as pious, active church members who are only doing this for the good of the church. Naïve and gentle (‘peace at all costs’) parishioners may be deceived by such camouflage, and they typically advocate for the CK’s (clergy killers) by urging the pastor and church board to be patient, make allowances, or not to misjudge such folks. CK’s can convince members they are raising legitimate issues for those who might do battle with them. CK’s use bluster threats and terrorism to appear as unstoppable giants. They even have allies of opportunity, i.e., parishioners who do not advocate the cause CK’s are espousing, but wish to punish the pastor for their own hidden reasons. Clergy Killers are evil.” The Clergy Journal. Reprinted from the August 1993 Issue of the Clergy Journal-This appeared in the Florida Baptist Witness newspaper 1994. See the complete article by Dr. Lloyd Rediger in Appendix A.

the problem of pastor-church conflict. For years the problem of conflicts in churches has been talked about, but few solutions have been offered and/or provided to churches and pastors. In fact, it seems that church members are embarrassed to talk about it and do not want to deal with it (Jer. 20:1-9). According to Dr. William Blosch, the Directors of Missions and Church Minister Relations Directors of the SBC seem to be powerless to stop the epidemic (which is quickly becoming a pandemic) of conflict between churches and pastors that lead to forced and pressured termination of pastors.²

Unresolved church conflict is destroying pastors and churches, and is causing the name of Jesus Christ to be mocked. Unbelievers, therefore, are being turned away from Christ, and the church, because of church conflict. There are many Christians who have stopped attending church, while pastors and their families are being destroyed because of the sinful corrupt decisions of a local body of Christ. It breaks the author's heart to see conflict destroy the church. We must remember that the church is the Bride of Christ and the pastor is appointed as the under shepherd, teaching the church to: love, teach, convict, protect, and equip the people to do the work of the Lord.³

This author will explore the causes and preventative/innovative solutions to conflict between pastors and churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. It is not the intent of the author to hurt the Southern Baptist Convention, its churches, or to ignore

² William Blosch, *Clergy Overboard: A Biblical Response to Pastoral Termination* <http://www.21stcenturypress.com/clergyoverboard.htm>, (accessed Feb. 20, 2010).

³ Ephesians 4:11-12 (HCSB): "And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ." And II Timothy 3:16-17 (HCSB): "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

problems within other denominations. It is within Southern Baptist Churches that the author was saved, learned the Bible and missions, met his wife and was married, became licensed to preach, was ordained to preach (pastor for 20 years) and has been a transitional pastor for thirteen years. The author has also served on several Southern Baptist Convention committees on national, state, and local levels. The author loves the Southern Baptist Convention and the pastors and churches within it. It is for them that the author writes this paper to expose the conflict between churches and pastors, and to propose preventive and interventional solutions for church conflict.

In the last fifteen years, the author has ministered to over one thousand SBC pastors, along with over one hundred SBC churches. This paper is to help propose solutions to the church-pastor conflict in the SBC now and in the future. The future of our churches and the hope of millions of unbelievers being reached for Christ are dependent upon a solution for the conflicts currently destroying churches and pastors in the SBC. We must stop destructive behavior and learn how to Biblically resolve church-pastor conflicts. It is the author's desire that the pain endured and lessons learned, while he and his family experienced destructive church conflict, may be used to help other pastors and churches through conflicts of their own.⁴

⁴ Genesis 50:19-20 became encouraging verses for the author and his wife. Joseph was mistreated but he did not seek revenge. When his brother was standing before him and he had the power over them and could have destroyed them, he said, "Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people (HCSB)."

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to study the conflicts within SBC churches that lead to the termination of pastors within the Southern Baptist Convention, accompanied by a proposal of preventive and interventional solutions. The research for this paper reflects what is destroying the average SBC church and pastors, and has played a key role in redefining the burden that God placed on the author's heart thirteen years ago. That burden is to help churches and pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention identify and have Biblical solutions to conflicts in the church before the conflicts destroy both church and pastor. Nehemiah was given a burden for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem for the protection of the people. This burden quickly evolved into a passion, then a vision, which ultimately led to the rebuilding of the wall. All of this began with Nehemiah being informed of the need for the wall, and with that information, God placed the burden in his heart to rebuild the wall in order to protect His people.

This author hears the needs of pastors and churches daily, and does whatever possible to minister to them. It all started when someone informed this author of a wall that needed to be built to protect both pastors and churches from being destroyed. When God places a burden on someone's heart, it can never be taken away—it must be obeyed! This author understands this and has come to understand that some burdens can be managed independently; but others, such as the protection of pastors and churches, must be managed by many in order to be accomplished.⁵ This author, as the latter states, is

⁵ The Bible says in Galatians 6:2 (HCSB), "Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

proclaiming the call of God for all of the pastors and churches of Southern Baptist Churches to join together to build a wall—a wall that will surround, protect, and provide accountability for them while standing against the evil one. Satan, the great deceiver of the world, is the one who led a rebellion against God with the support of fallen demonic angels of heaven. However, he has been defeated by Jesus Christ’s death, burial and resurrection—thrown into the world for the time being, in order to accomplish one purpose: destroying the Bride of Christ and the men whom God has called to lead local congregations as pastors. The Bible says that God defeated the rebellion of Satan in heaven and caused him to fall to earth.⁶

Statement of the Problem

Many years and millions of dollars have been spent to develop a solution to church/pastor conflict in the churches of the SBC. The problem was addressed quietly until the 1983 annual Southern Baptist Convention held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when a resolution was made.⁷ Another resolution was made in 1988.⁸ Years later at the SBC Convention, a greater attempt was made to address the problem. Then in 1994, LeaderCare was created and launched to address the termination of pastors and how to

⁶ Isaiah 14:12-14 states, “Shining morning star, how you have fallen from the heavens! You destroyer of nations, you have been cut down to the ground. You said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to the heavens; I will set up my throne above the stars of God. I will sit on the mount of the assembly, in the remotest parts of the North. I will ascend above the highest clouds; I will make myself like the Most High (HCSB).’”

⁷ Annual, Southern Baptist Convention 1983, 67.

⁸ Annual, Southern Baptist Convention, 1988, 68.

minister to them and their families, along with establishing healthier conflict resolution practices in churches.

LeaderCare was defunded and disassembled by LifeWay in 2008. After this, the state conventions have had little convention-wide direction or support from LifeWay to address the problems of pastor termination and church conflict. Each state convention is doing the best they can to handle this epidemic. SBC pastors have been left without a national platform to help and assist them and their local congregations in the area of church conflict and pastor termination. They have been forced to go outside of the SBC for help, counseling, retreats, and resources to help them. In most cases, these organizations do not understand SBC polity, thus resulting in even more destructive conflict, which is leading to more termination ministries.

Special Terminology

The following special terms are used throughout this thesis:

SBC refers to the Southern Baptist Convention.

CMR indicates the Church Minister Relation's Director in each state convention.

DOM refers to the Director of Ministries.

Termination is synonymous with being fired in secular terminology. This occurs when the pastor is being voted out of the church by the majority of the members in a business meeting summoned for that purpose.

Forced termination is when the pastor is told that if he does not resign voluntarily, he will be terminated. Thus, he is given a choice in determining the most optimal course

of action for him and his family.

Pressured termination is when the pastor feels pressured to resign because he knows that a group of people within the church want him terminated. With this knowledge, he will resign because he believes that without that action, he will be terminated in a matter of time, regardless of his course of action.

Pastors/ministers are used interchangeably in the proceeding paper. This refers to vocationally called and trained men who serve in the local church.

Normal conflict is when standard functioning persons interact and find themselves in disputes over issues such as gender, ethnicity, age, class, and vocational differences. These conflicts are largely the result of miscommunication and/or misunderstandings between two or more parties.⁹

Abnormal conflict is when at least one of the participants in the conflict suffers from a mental disorder.¹⁰

Spiritual conflict is when instigators have an intentionally unhealthy agenda and resort to sinful tactics without showing a bit of remorse. These individuals have a persistent energy for their nefarious causes and thrive on misguided ambitions to wear good people down.¹¹

Conflict is a difference of opinion or purpose.

Church Conflict in the congregation is “a situation in which two or more members

⁹ Rediger, G. Lloyd. *Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations under Attack*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, 6.

¹⁰ Ibid, 7.

¹¹ Ibid, 8.

or factions struggle aggressively over what is, or appears to be mutually exclusive beliefs, values, assumed powers or goals.”¹²

Destructive Conflict is a difference of opinion or purpose by a person or group who maintain that their way is the right and only solution.

Clergy Killers are marked by intentional destructiveness. They don’t just disagree or criticize, they insist on inflicting pain and damaging their targets. Their tactics include sabotage, subverting worthy causes, inciting other to do their dirty work and causing victims to self-destruct.¹³

Psychological Terror, mobbing or bullying can be compared to bullying at the workplace. Mobbing denotes, however more specifically a ‘ganging up’ by co-workers, subordinates or superiors to force someone out of the workplace through rumor, innuendo intimidation, discrediting, isolation, and particularly humiliation. Mobbing is a grave form of nonsexual, nonracial harassment.¹⁴

LeaderCare was a ministry of LifeWay that assisted SBC ministers with personal and professional needs.

Sunday School Board – previous name of LifeWay.

CMR – Church Minister Relations

DOM – Director of Missions

¹² Lloyd Elder, professor and Director of the Moench Center of Church Leadership at Belmont University, Nashville, TN; <http://www.belmont.edu/moench> (accessed Nov. 15, 2009).

¹³ *Clergy Killers*, 9.

¹⁴ Noa Zandli Davenport, Ruth Disther Schwartz, Bail Purcell Elliott, *Emotional Abuse in the American Workplace*, (Civil Society Publishing: Collins, IO, 1999), 10.

Basis for Topic Choice

The author has spent the better portion of fifteen years studying church conflict and forced termination in hopes of understanding its dynamics and relationships among pastors and churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. This interest has led to the writing of this project—to explore the reasons, causes and possible solutions to the explosion of destructive conflict. This conflict has devastating results not only to the pastors involved, but also to their families and the churches that endure it. Reputations are destroyed, testimonies lost, and pain on physical, emotional, and spiritual levels are rarely avoided. The author advocates that the evangelistic and ministerial trust of the SBC has been severely damaged because of unresolved conflict between pastors and churches. It is his firm conviction that unresolved conflict is the number one problem in the SBC. Churches and denominational leaders wonder why baptisms and tithing are significantly lower; and ironically, one need not look far: the reason seems to be the way in which SBC churches and pastors handle conflict.

Throughout progressive research, the author has clearly seen that past efforts, such as LeaderCare, have indeed been implemented to deal with this problem. However, they have since been dismembered and now leave a great vacuum to be filled with how to correctly handle church conflict. It is the author's desire to point out what has been done to cure this issue, and what can be done presently as well as in the future for the kingdom's sake so that SBC churches and pastors can focus on the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

Statement of Limitations

This thesis serves as an overview of the problem and solutions for pastor/church conflict in the SBC. Several papers, theses, and books could be written about this subject, and perhaps need to be. Due to the scope of brevity associated with this paper, several limitations must be articulated.

First, not all of the scriptural research performed on these subjects is able to be presented. Second, SBC churches are all autonomous, which means that they are self-governed. The churches are in the unique position to invite people in to help them with their conflict situations. Third, each state convention uses different tools to aid in current conflict with their pastors and churches. There is not a uniform way of handling, and reporting, conflict within the SBC. Fourth, in the survey done by LifeWay, many times a low percent of state conventions participated in the yearly surveys concerning the termination of their pastors. Fifth, there has never been a formal scientific study or survey of pastors on why they were terminated. Lastly, this study does not survey members of churches for their opinions. It is based primarily on research of articles, books, and interviews with leadership within SBC churches, state conventions, associations and the national convention agencies.

Theoretical Basis

The theoretical basis for this project is to uncover and understand the conflict between pastors and churches in the SBC that lead to the termination of pastors. This is accompanied by a proposal of preventative and interventional solutions that would be

agreeable to SBC churches and pastors—possibly becoming standard procedure for SBC policy in the future.

Statement of Methodology

Finding the answers to conflict resolution between churches and pastors in the SBC is being approached by research of church conflict, church/pastor relations, how the SBC denomination has aided in the research, and possible solutions in the past, present, and future; and research derived from books and articles pertaining to the subject. Along with research, surveys have been performed among Church Minister Relation Directors of SBC state convention, SBC Pastors, as well as interviews of individuals who have worked in Leader Care, Pastoral Ministries Department at LifeWay, and other SBC denominational leaders and Agencies.

Review of Related Literature

In review of related literature, the author quickly realized that there is only one book on forced termination in the Southern Baptist Convention. It is entitled, *Forced Termination: Redemptive Options for Ministers and Churches*. The author, Brooks R. Faulkner who was the former director of LeaderCare for LifeWay in Nashville, TN writes,

Anytime a minister or church staff member is forced to resign from a church, both the minister and the church suffer the loss. The minister may question his calling in addition to working through the problems of unemployment; the church may gain a negative reputation and experience a diminishing of Christian fellowship. This book is for anyone who has suffered such a loss, offering redemptive options

to God's people.¹⁵

In a study conducted by the Missouri Baptist Convention entitled, "Views of Forced Termination," given in 1989, they found that at least 53 Missouri Baptist (SBC) Ministers and perhaps as many as 85-90 had experienced termination in the previous three years. The Dehoney Center for the Study of the Local Church, a center affiliated with Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, was perhaps the most comprehensive study of a Southern Baptist State Convention performed. Numerous articles were found on Baptist Press, the official news agency of the Southern Baptist Convention.¹⁶

In the fall of 1990, "Search," a professional journal for Southern Baptist pastors, staff members, and denominational leaders published a journal which addressed "Forced Termination: Scope and Response, a Historical Look at Forced Termination, Conflict Ministry and Forced Termination, Healthy Ministers, Forced Termination Emotions, Forced Termination of Staff Ministers, Ethical Factors in Forced Termination, and God's Wounded Army." This journal did a fairly good job in helping ministers and churches understand the basic idea of what was taking place in the church about forced termination of pastors.¹⁷

Church Administration, an SBC magazine, published a Journal for Effective

¹⁵ Brooks R. Faulkner, *Forced Termination-Redemptive Options for Ministers and Churches* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1986), 6.

¹⁶Henderson, Trennis, "Study Documents Minister's Views of Forced Termination," Baptist Press News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention, (12-19-89), 29-30 (accessed October 7, 2009 @ Lifeway.org).

¹⁷ *The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention* 21, no. 1 (Fall 1990).

Ministry for Forced Termination covering subject titles such as: When Termination seems Inevitable, They Really did this to Me?, Making a Comeback from Forced Termination, Following the Termination, When You are Fired: What Helps and What Doesn't and When You Have Been Terminated.¹⁸

“Leaving: Why Ministers Leave the Ministry,” by Brooks R. Faulkner, Senior Specialist, Pastoral Ministers is another resource. In this paper, Dr. Faulkner deals with why SBC ministers leave the ministry. It was given to an advisory group on, “Why Protestant Ministers leave the Ministry.”¹⁹

In the 1980's “Pastor Survey” was compiled by Church Minister Relation Director, Jim Lowry. This survey was taken in 1984 and was reported by the Baptist Press which included the results of a survey sent to terminated pastors. Out of 400 SBC pastors, 267 responded and the article explains the results.²⁰

Thesis Construction

The construction of the following thesis will be presented in the following order: Chapter One introduces the research by identifying the essential rationale for the thesis, along with the basis and motivation for the research. Chapter two presents the

¹⁸ "Forced Termination," *Church Administration: A Journal for Effectiveness in Ministry* (Nashville: Baptist Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention), February 1994, vol. 36, number 5, 4-5.

¹⁹ Brooks R. Faulkner, "Leaving-Why Ministers Leave the Ministry" (Lilly Foundation and the Catholic University of Washington D.C, 2001, presented paper).

²⁰ Jim Lowry, “*Survey Portrays Fired Ministers*” (10/25/84), Baptist Press, 9-10, (accessed August 10, 2009 @ Lifeway.org).

Biblical/Theological foundation of the Biblical view of conflict, conflict and sin and Barnabas: a picture of a peacemaker.

Chapter three presents the nature of the problem of church conflict. It defines church conflict and poses the question of whether conflict is good or bad. Also explained are the causes of conflict, conflict possibilities within the church organization and the expectation of conflict for churches and pastors. Types and levels of conflict are discussed, including characteristics of constructive conflict and destructive conflict, concluding with benefits of responding to conflict biblically and issues worth battling over.

Chapter four explores the scope of the problem including statistics of all pastors, historical termination data of pastors in the SBC, historical SBC remedies and addresses the consequences of the problem. Chapter five contains the causes of termination in SBC churches. It explores forced terminations of pastors, including a termination study of all pastors, SBC top reasons for termination, what a minister loses in forced termination, pathological antagonists, clergy killers and the most congregational toxins.

Chapter six presents preventative solutions for training seminary students, training for pastors and churches, pastor/church covenant agreement, proposed bylaws for church conflict, dealing with conflict in small churches, transitional pastor, checklist for pastors and questions pastors should ask. Chapter seven suggests interventional solutions that will be effective in church/pastor conflict. In conclusion, chapter eight of this thesis will solidify recommendations for the SBC churches, pastors, and SBC denominational leaders.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

As the author of this paper has studied the Bible both formally and informally, he has come to understand that the Bible has addressed conflict from Genesis to Revelation. Story after story in the Bible is about healthy and unhealthy conflict, and how to handle it with a Biblical solution. Dr. Ken Sande says that “many of the problems associated with the approaches to conflict can be prevented if we learn to look at conflict biblically. God has explained in the Scriptures why conflicts occur and how we should deal with them. The more we understand and follow what he teaches, the more effective we will be in resolving disagreements with other people.”¹

Both the New and Old Testaments have examples of conflicts. Some Old Testament examples are:

Table 1 : Old Testament Conflict

Tension in the Family	Cain and Abel
Focus on Self	Jacob and Esau
Power of Desire	David and Uriah
Seduction of Power	Saul and David

¹ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 19.

New Testament examples are numerous and include:

Table 2 : New Testament Conflict

Religious Traditionalism vs. Christ	John 8:1-11
Struggle of Self-Interest vs. Servant Hood	Mark 10:35-45
Diversity in Membership and Prejudice	Acts 6:1-3
Partners in Ministry Split over Disagreement	Acts 15:36-40
Personal and Spiritual Immaturity	1 Corinthians 3:1-3
Churches Full of Cliques	1 Corinthians 1:10-12, 11:17-22
Individual Responses to Issues and Values	Galatians 2:11-12
Prominent Women Could not Get Along	Philippians 4:2-3
People Treat Rich Believers Better than Poor Believers	James 2:1-9
Self-Will Along with Rebellious Spirit	James 4:1-3

It is important for the Christian to study the Biblical view of conflict. Christians will handle conflict in the church similar to the way their family handles conflict in family and social environments.

Patterns of conflict can be either ongoing or isolated conflict. Ongoing conflict refers to issues that continue over a period of time, while isolated conflict means there are several distinct and separate issues over time. Some good examples of these are Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15), Paul and Peter (Gal. 2), and Paul and Alexander the metal worker (II Tim. 4).

The Bible does not teach that conflict is bad. Instead, it teaches that some

differences are natural and beneficial. Since God has created us as unique individuals, human beings will often have different opinions, convictions, desires, perspectives, and priorities. Many of these differences are not inherently right or wrong; they are simply the result of God-given diversity and personal preferences. When handled properly, disagreements in these areas can stimulate productive dialogue, encourage creativity, promote helpful change, and generally make life more interesting. Therefore, although we should seek unity in our relationships, we should not demand uniformity.² Instead of avoiding all conflicts or demanding that others always agree with us, we should rejoice in the diversity of God's creation and learn to accept and work with people who simply see things differently than we do.

There are certain truths about conflict that we cannot ignore. The truths of conflict are important in every area of our lives. We must remember that church conflict will not be any different. There are ten "Truths about Conflict:"³

1. Conflict is inevitable
2. Conflict is neutral
3. We need to confront conflict as soon as possible rather than deny or ignore it
4. You cannot have healthy change without conflict
5. If you do not manage the rate of change appropriately, you will produce destructive conflict
6. The pastor's leadership style is a key factor in whether conflict is constructive or destructive
7. God is not the author of chaos, but the provider of qualities that lead to peace
8. Prior unresolved church conflict exists as a key ingredient in most current church conflict situations.
9. When people grow spiritually and emotionally they are less likely to be the initiator of destructive conflict
10. We need to pray more and talk less about issues for church approval. We should not seek an answer from our human reason but from the revelation of

² Ephesians 4:1-13

³*Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual*, LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, (LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN, 2000), 51.

God's Word.

Conflict and Sin

A context of Christian perspectives on human sin suggests at least two faulty meanings for one's understanding of conflict. First, Christians believe that all human beings sin at times by seeking to "lord it over" others to control them. Second, Christians believe that these sinful behaviors of parties in conflict create evil forces that both predispose parties to sin and hold them hostage to communal structures of deceitfulness, greed, tyranny, violence, exploitation, or injustice.⁴

Not all conflicts are neutral or beneficial. Ken Sande states, "The Bible teaches that many disagreements are the direct result of sinful motives and behavior."⁵ James 4:1-2 says, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but you don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want...you quarrel and fight." When a conflict is the result of sinful desires and actions that are too serious to be overlooked, we need to deal with them in a straight-forward manner.⁶

Matthew 18:15 states, "If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private (HCSB)." Loving confrontation is often the key to repentance, which can remove the root causes of conflict and open the way to genuine peace. The Bible says that we should see conflict neither as an inconvenience nor as an occasion for selfish gain; but

⁴ Hugh F. Halverstadt, *Managing Church Conflict* (Louisville: Knox Press, 1991), 25.

⁵ Ken Sande, 20.

⁶ *Ibid*, 20.

rather as an opportunity to demonstrate the power of God.⁷

Paul told the Christians at Corinth the following when religious, legal, and dietary disputes threatened to divide the church, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory. Give no offense to the Jews or the Greeks or the church of God, just as I also try to please all people in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” (I Cor. 10:31-33 HCSB).

Look at the example of how Paul confronted the Christians in Corinth: “Now in giving the following instruction I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For, to begin with, I hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. There must, indeed, be factions among you, so that the approved among you may be recognized.” (I Cor. 11:17-19 HCSB).

Order in the Church

In Southern Baptist Churches the question should be asked, “Who invited Robert’s Rules of Order to rule in the church?” One must practically be a lawyer to understand and apply Robert’s Rules of Order in a church. Sometimes conflict that becomes destructive comes from the use of Robert’s Rules of Order. When the pastor or another is overseeing a business meeting when no one understands Robert’s Rules of Order, someone misuses it for the benefit of a person or a group within the church. Sometimes a simple mistake can cause serious problems. Southern Baptist Churches should consider using the following principles of an orderly business meeting and

⁷ Sande, 21.

embrace what the Bible says, “But everything must be done decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40 HCSB).”

1. Provide orderly procedure
2. Give justice to all
3. Show courtesy to all
4. Uphold the rule of the majority
5. Recognize the rights of the minority
6. Encourage teamwork rather than individual agendas
7. Make the business meeting a time of joy and celebration
8. Remember that Jesus is the Head of the Church
9. Focus on the Lordship of Christ and His kingdom growth
10. Always ask what Jesus would want us to do
11. Pray for and about all decisions
12. Put off decisions to another meeting if a decision cannot be made until you have more information⁸

We should look at conflict as an opportunity to glorify God, to serve others, and to grow to be like Christ. This perspective may seem naïve and foolish at first glance, especially to anyone who is presently embroiled in a dispute. Sometimes persons in the church are more interested in what they want. They want their way and claim that priesthood of the believer gives them the right to say what they want, when they want, and about whom they want.

Noted Baptist historian Dr. Jerry Sutton in *The Baptist Reformation* writes,

The primary emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, both biblical, historical, and Baptist material, is that a Christian does have direct access to God. It is a privilege that one does not have to go through a priest other than our Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we have the right to read the Word of God for ourselves.

The problem with the distorted priesthood of all believers and the argument for the purely egalitarian congregationalism which insisted that all believers have equal rights and responsibilities in the church is that it makes no latitude for

⁸*Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual*, LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, (LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN, 2000), 36.

immaturity or carnality in the church.⁹

Biblical Portrait of a Peacemaker

As one studies the Bible, it does not take long to identify Barnabas as one of the prime examples of a peacemaker. Jim Soft states that “one of the most profound and rare eulogies in all the Bible is ascribed to Barnabas: ‘He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith’” (Acts 11:24). This passage continues, “and a great number of people were brought to the Lord,” no doubt in part because of Barnabas’ encouragement and peacemaking mission. Scripture clearly teaches that when a man has been justified by faith, he will have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1). Therefore, the primary goal of the Christian peacemaker is to point men that are in conflict to the Savior.”¹⁰

Barnabas identified problems and gave resolution in four different levels: between an individual and group (Acts 9:20-23), between two ‘races’ of people (Acts 11:19-26), between two churches—Jerusalem and Antioch (Acts 15:1-35), and between two individuals—Paul and John Mark (Acts 13:13, 15:36-40, 2 Timothy 4:11).

Rather than providing a method or teaching the mediation process, Scripture provides a profile of the character of the person who was used of God to bring people together. Although techniques of mediation are important, the best technique will fail if

⁹Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 434, 436.

¹⁰ Jim Soft, *Portrait of a Peacemaker*, Christian Conciliation Procedures, (Institute for Christian Conciliation, Billings, MT, 1993), 3-1.

the mediator lacks qualities exemplified in Barnabas' character:¹¹

Table 3 : Barnabas' Character

He was a man of encouragement	Acts 4:36
He was a man who rejoiced	Acts 11:23, 15:3
He was full of the Holy Spirit	Acts 11:24
He was a man of courage	Acts 9:26-27
He was a man of perseverance	Acts 14:50, 14:21-24
He was a man of observation	Acts 11:25-26
He was accepting	Acts 11:22-23
He was a man with a sense of timing	Acts 9:30-31, 11:25-26
He recognized John mark was not ready for the mission field	Acts 13:13
He was willing to confront others	Acts 15:2, 36-37
He and Paul confronted non-believers with the Gospel	Acts 15:2
He was discerning	Acts 11:22
He was submissive and accountable to others	Acts 4:36-37
He was trustworthy	Acts 11:27-30
He was humble	Acts 4:8-14
He was a man of faith	Acts 11:24
He recognized his limitation and capacities	Acts 13:7
He was anointed by God	Acts 13:2-4

¹¹ Soft, 3-2:3-6.

Paul had his share of dealing with conflict in the church. Notice what he told the church at Corinth, “I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is not one wise person among you who will be able to arbitrate between his brothers (I Cor. 6:5 HCSB)?” We must ask God for wisdom when we deal with church conflict, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without favoritism and hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (James 3:17-18 HCSB). The pastor and church members need to realize that we must depend on God. He gave us a promise: “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” (I Thess. 5:23-24 HCSB).

Summary

The Bible addresses conflict and how we should address it and how to bring it to a biblical solution. Biblical peace is more than a cessation of hostilities; it only exists when wrongs have been righted. Our responsibility as Christians and church leaders is not to find fault and correct it, but to identify the problem and provide a biblical solution. Galatians 6:1 teaches how to confront a Christian in sin and Matthew 18:15-17 provides guidance for church discipline. The Bible tells us how a servant of the Lord should handle persons who need to be corrected and what kind of servant can do this:

The Lord's slave must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able to teach, and patient, instructing his opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant

them repentance to know the truth. Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will.¹²

Conflict took place in the first church, all churches of the New Testament, and all churches throughout church history. Conflict takes place between Christians in and out of the church. We need to understand as Christians that conflict will come and the Bible is clear about how we are to deal with it.

¹² II Tim. 2:24-26 (HCSB).

CHAPTER THREE

CHURCH CONFLICT

Church Conflict Defined

Ken Sande says that “conflict is a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone else’s opinion or purpose.”¹ This is a very good definition of conflict, especially for the purposes of understanding church conflict. The Bible says that “The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out” (Prov. 20:5).

It is interesting to note that 60 pastors surveyed by the author answered the following question: How do you handle church conflict? The answers were as follows: talk about it (44%); prayer (25%); kindness (18%); church discipline (18 %); read Bible (5%); fasting (2%); and run away (2%). It appears that pastors need a better idea on how to handle conflict in their life and that of the church and how they can integrate a Biblical approach to conflict management and resolution to church conflict. (Pastor Survey Appendix I)

Hugh F. Haverstadt in his book, *Managing Church Conflict*, makes the following observation,

Christians not only fight, they also often fight dirty. Issues are personalized. Gossip and hearsay fog up reason and common sense. Enemy-making wounded parties separate and shred long standing friendships. Moralistic judgments vaporize trust. Labeling parties suppresses openness and candor. Robert’s Rules of Order are

¹ Ken Sande, “Christian Conciliation Procedures,” (Institute for Christian Conciliation, Billings, MT, 1993), 9.

misused to polarize members of governing bodies, making political alliances more influential than reason or spirituality in determining leader's votes.²

A forced pastoral exit is a process by which a congregation, a personnel committee, or individual leader within a church terminates, or forces the resignation of a minister from a position of ministry.³ Furthermore, a pastor may abdicate his post due to the constant negativity found in personal attacks and criticism from a small function within the congregation from whom the minister feels psychologically pressured to step down from his service.⁴

Statistics reflecting the extent of church conflict are articulated in the following:

24% of ministers experienced a conflict in the last two years that was serious enough to call a special meeting.

25% experienced a conflict in the last two years that resulted in people leaving their congregations.

9% experienced a conflict that led leaders to leave the congregation

7% were classified as 'persistently conflicted.'

35% of congregations reporting conflict indicated that it was about clergy.

12% stated that their conflicts were about church leadership, which may or may not refer to clergy.

8% indicated that their conflicts were about money.

48% of congregations surveyed selected the catch-all 'other' category to describe the nature of their conflicts.

One interesting finding about the congregations classified as 'persistently conflicted' is that they accounted for 35 to 40% of all church conflict reported over a four-year period.

When this data is compared with the data gathered in the first wave survey (1998), the findings indicate that prevalence of church conflict is constant (not increasing).⁵

²Hugh F. Haverstadt, *Managing Church Conflict*, (Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1991), 7.

³J.C. Larve, (1996, Mar/April) Forced Exits: A Too Common Ministry Hazard. *Christianity Today International/Your Church Magazine* 42 (2), 72, December 26, 2002.

⁴Goodwin, E. (1997, Fb) Forced Termination and Ethics. *The Servant*, Publication of Ministry to Ministers Foundation Inc. 2, December 27, 2002.

⁵From 2006-2007 Duke University National Congregations Study, 2006-2007, http://www.soc.duke.edu/natcong/wave_2.html (accessed January 7, 2010).

Other research by Faith and Communities Today/Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership relates to the prevalence of conflict:

Seventy-five percent of the congregations surveyed reported some level of conflict in the past five years (1995-2000), and 20% reported that they were presently involved in active conflict.

These findings indicate how important it is for congregations to prepare for conflict so that it does not negatively affect their health and effectiveness. Indeed, the FACT/CCSP study states that ‘understanding how conflict impacts congregations strikes us as an absolute necessity.’⁶

The author of *Winning the Battle at Church* writes,

We absolutely agree. Yet it is amazing (and heartbreaking) to see how congregations generally prefer to avoid preparing for conflict. When it strikes, they are confused and often respond slowly and ineffectively, bringing unnecessary anguish and suffering to their staff and members...

More than 19,000 congregations experience major conflict every year.

25% of the churches in one survey reported conflict in the previous five years that was serious enough to have a lasting impact on congregational life.

Only 2% of church conflict involves doctrinal issues.

98% of church conflict involves interpersonal issues.

Control issues ranked as the most common cause of conflict (85%)

About 40% of church members who leave their churches do so because of conflict.

Very small numbers (16%) of churches report positive outcomes from conflict.

The average pastoral career lasts only 14 years—less than half of what it was not long ago.

1,500 pastors leave their assignments every month in the United States because of conflict, burnout or moral failure.

45% of the pastors terminated in one denomination left the ministry altogether.

34% of all pastors presently serve congregations that forced their previous pastor to resign.⁷

“It is no wonder that so many thoughtful Christians avoid church conflicts like the plagues of Egypt. The question is not whether Christians fight or even whether Christians

⁶ From Faith Communities Today (FACT) and the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership (CCSP), “Insights into Congregational Conflict,” based on a survey of 14, 301 congregations in 2000, <http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/research-based-products-congregational-leadership#ChurchConflict> (accessed January 14, 2010).

⁷ David & Diane Noble, *Winning the Real Battle at Church*, (Kansas City, BHC Publishing, 2008), 171.

fight dirty. The question is whether church conflicts can ever be Christian,” relates Dr. Hugh Halverstadt.⁸ He goes on to say, “The Chinese characters for ‘crisis’ mean both ‘danger’ and ‘opportunity.’ One character is ‘wei’ (danger), a face-to-face encounter with a powerful animal. The other character is ‘chi’ (opportunity), the blueprint of an open universe. In the same way, church conflicts present us simultaneously with danger of divisiveness/disintegration and an opportunity for wholeness/reconciliation.”⁹

Concerning the subject of conflict, Morton Deutsch relates, “Conflicts are power struggles and differences: differing information or differing beliefs: differing interests, desires or nations: differing abilities to secure needed resources.”¹⁰

Jay Hall states it this way, “conflict is defined here as essentially the circumstances—both emotional and spiritual which can be both brought about by the presence of differences between parties who are, for whatever reason in forced conflict with one another.”¹¹ A working definition of conflict is not easy to develop. Conflict, as typically used, does not so much have a technical meaning as it has a usage. The word conflict comes from a Latin word which literally means “a striking together.” This “striking together” could happen between two or more forces, persons, or groups.¹² In their book, *Church Fights*, Leas and Kittlaus write, “conflict happens when two pieces of

⁸ Halverstadt, 3.

⁹ Ibid, 4.

¹⁰ Morton Deutsch. “Conflicts: Productive and Destructive,” reprinted in Fred Jandt, ed., *Conflict resolution through communication*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 156.

¹¹ Jay Hall, “Conflict Management Survey,” (The Woodlands, TX: Teleometrics, 1969), 1.

¹² Robert L. and Marsh Sheffield, Cecil E. and McKinney, Mike L. and White, James E, “Equipping Deacons to Comfort Conflict,” *Convention Press*, December 2007.

matter try to occupy the same space at the same time.”¹³

According to Lloyd Elder, professor and Director of the Moench Center of Church Leadership at Belmont University, Nashville, TN: “conflict in the congregation is a situation in which two or more members or factions struggle aggressively over what is or appears to be mutually exclusive beliefs, values or assumed powers or goals.”¹⁴

The Question: Is Church Conflict Good or Bad?

Ken Sande answers the question by stating,

Conflict is not necessarily wrong or destructive. Some differences are simply the result of God-given diversity. (We need to be careful not to confuse unity with uniformity!). When handled properly, conflict can result in significant benefits. It can stimulate productive dialogue; encourage a healthy re-examination of assumptions and preconceptions; lead to the discovery of new ideas, approaches, and methods; and stimulate personal growth. But conflict is not necessarily neutral or beneficial. When conflict is not handled properly, or when it is the result of sinful attitudes and desires (James 4:1-2). It can lead to alienation, anger, pain, humiliation, defensiveness, physical illness, and can lead to broken families, friendships, and businesses, and drastically diminish the witness and outreach of the church. Even if a conflict is caused or aggravated by sin, it is never too late to start doing what’s right. With God’s help, people can change their approach at any time and change disruptive conflict into constructive conflict which can benefit everyone involved.¹⁵

Causes of Conflict

Ken Sande states the following reasons that cause conflict:

1. Misunderstandings (poor communication, or inaccurate or insufficient information)

¹³ Speed Leas and Paul Kittlaus, *Church Fights: Managing Church Conflict in the Local Church*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), 28.

¹⁴Lloyd Elder, <http://www.belmont.edu/Moench>, (accessed November 15, 2009).

¹⁵Sande, 2-1.

2. Differences in values, goals, priorities, expectations, perceptions, or opinions. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
3. Limited resources (Genesis 13:1-2)
4. Sinful attitudes and desires that lead to sinful words and actions (James 4:1-3). These are the leading causes of conflict in the church.¹⁶

Within church conflict, causes of conflict can be for different reasons. In order to deal with conflict one must develop the ability to recognize the general and specific causes of conflict. Conflict resolution is based—to some degree—on what is happening within the particular conflict situation.¹⁷ According to Robert L. Sheffield, the following are actual causes of conflict in the church: stress, confusion, use of misuse of power, change, diverse membership, unmet needs, and fear.¹⁸

It is easy to see that the actual causes of conflict can be overlapped in any life situation. In their book, *Conflict Ministry in the Church*, McSwain and Treadwell help us understand how stress relates to conflict.

When stress becomes dysfunctional for a person, it has effects upon other persons. The pressures of life spill from the lives of those stressed to others closest to them...Stresses lead to conflict with those held most dear and love most deeply...Often the church is the first social grouping to experience the dysfunctions of persons living with unconquered stress. Behaviors of anger, hostility, frustration, hurt, and distance are signals of need that call for response and care. Too often the response is rejection and disassociation because we do not understand the needs of the person who seems always to be instigating ‘fires of

¹⁶ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 9.

¹⁷ Robert L. and Marsh Sheffield, Cecil E. and McKinney, Mike L. and White, James E, "Equipping Deacons to Comfort Conflict," (*Convention Press*, December 2007), 2.

¹⁸Ibid, 2.

destruction' which someone must extinguish.¹⁹

McSwain and Treadwell pointed out the connection between the stresses that pastors experience and conflict within the church,

Overstress among the clergy is a major source of the conflicts churches experience. The role expectations of laity toward ministers are often so naïve they do not allow ministers to experience the same stresses as others. Given the subjective nature of their work and the difficulty of visible measures for their hours of toil, stress becomes one of the acute 'occupational hazards' of their profession. The sedentary nature of the tasks of ministry, the long hours of weekly service, the constancy of availability to people, and relatively low financial rewards of the work bear their toll in frustration.

No congregation will live up to the expectations of its potential if its ministers live with dysfunctional stress.²⁰

Conflict, according to Robert Sheffield, is the state of being unclear about the underlying problem. While this may seem simple to recognize, it is not simple in actual experience. Since most people have to admit they are confused, pride becomes involved and the conflict is deepened.²¹

Use or misuse of power in the church by pastor, staff, deacons, or members can be very damaging to the church. "When power is used as a manipulative device, a way to dominate people or a situation, and to control a group for selfish purposes, power is being misused." This can be done by the pastors, deacons, staff, and members of the church. "Sometimes a congregation allows the power to reside in the hands of one group or one person. At other times power is simply assumed without formal or informal permission

¹⁹ McSwain, Larry L. *Conflict Ministry in the Church*. (Nashville, TN: Baptist Sunday School Board, 1981), 5.

²⁰ Ibid, 7.

²¹ Sheffield, Robert, Marsh, Cecil, McKinney, Mike, White, James, *Equipping Deacons to Confront Conflict*, (Convention Press: Nashville, TN, 1987), 16.

by anyone...Just as damaging, however, is the person who assumes power and then by whatever means available seeks to keep it...Sometimes a staff member either in competition with the pastor, another staff member, or in the absence of a pastor attempts to assume control of a congregation.”²²

Change is another area of conflict. Dr. Faulkner gives us several ways that change can be the cause for potential conflict: conflict is always a possibility when change occurs in the organizational structure of the church, change that involves the physical facilities of the church produces the possibility for conflict, and the possibility for conflict also exists when the church membership begins to change.²³

Diverse membership in the church is another cause of conflict in the church. Churches have gift differences, age differences, and length of membership differences, but also we are all just different.²⁴ Poor communication within the church leads to conflict. Members must learn to communicate with each other and understand what each is saying and meaning. Robert Dale’s list shows several reasons people have trouble hearing what is communicated:

Emotional factors—stereotypes and personal insecurities hinder us from accurate hearing.

Audio factors—noise distractions, like background conversations or street sounds, affect ability to take in information.

Visual factors—detracting mannerisms, such as yawning or clearing a desk, block good listening.

Pace factors—we speak at a rate of about 120-155 words per minute. Our minds, however, can process 400 to 800 words per minute. The time gap between how fast we send information and how fast we receive information encourages us to

²² Sheffield, 16.

²³ Brooks R. Faulkner, *Forced Termination-Redemptive Options for Ministers and Churches* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1986), 18.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 18.

‘wool gather’ and to fill our minds with our own concerns. These random thoughts lessen our concentration on others’ communications.

Rebuttal factor—most of us listen with some idea of countering the other’s viewpoint. So we tune out and construct our own argument. The unfortunate result is simultaneous monologues, two folks who are talking without either of them listening.

Advice-giving factors—few of us enjoy or even use the advice others give us so freely. We prefer our own solutions and filter our advice (unless we’re in a very dependent state of mind).²⁵

Unmet needs are another reason for conflict in the church. Dr. Sheffield says he has known people to become upset to the point of not coming back to church because they felt, whether rightly or wrongly, that their needs were not being met. This may mean that no one visited them during an illness, not enough attention was given during a crisis experience, or someone failed to minister to a family member who was a shut-in.²⁶

Fear is another cause of conflict in the church. Speed Leas says that “fear is what you experience emotionally when you perceive that you are being threatened by danger or evil and you feel incompetent to manage it.”²⁷ According to Sheffield, fear leads to all kinds of results both internally and outwardly that produces the potential for conflict in our lives. Our stress level is heightened and can actually lead us to a state of distress unless it is brought under control very quickly. It also leads us to a state of irrational thinking.²⁸

Speed Leas gives the following signs that will lead us to recognize disordered thinking: I have thoughts of losing control, I am afraid that I will get hurt or the other will

²⁵ Robert D. Dale, *Surviving Difficult Church Members*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 19.

²⁶ Faulkner, 16.

²⁷ Speed Leas, *Leadership and Conflict*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 49.

²⁸ Sheffield, 19.

get hurt, I am afraid that I or the other person will not be able to handle the situation, and I find it very difficult to concentrate. Irving Janis called this hyper-vigilance, where one makes a snap judgment and comes up with simple-minded answers. Often the person starts dividing everything into black and white/good and evil categories at this stage.²⁹

Conflict Possibilities within the Church Organization

Dr. Bob Sheffield states that since the church by nature is an organization as well as a body, conflicts sometimes arise because of organizational structure. It is safe to say that the more complex the organizational structure, the more the chances are multiplied that conflict can occur. This does not mean that organizational structure should be shunned, but it does mean that potential trouble areas within the church organization should be recognized. The following is a list of conflict possibilities within the church organization: between individual staff members, between pastors and the congregation, between pastors and church leaders, between members of the congregation, a church in a changing neighborhood, differences in priorities among church leaders, inadequate understanding of the nature of the church, and failure to follow good organizational skills.³⁰

It is important to understand that there are different size churches—the family size, pastoral size, program size, and corporate size; each size requires a specific understanding in the context of conflict in that size church:³¹

²⁹Leas, 56.

³⁰Sheffield, Marsh, McKinney, White, 21-24.

³¹Christianity Today.com “Leadership Development,” 9.

Table 4 : Conflict in Size

Family Sized	Tend to be single-cell organizations with only one dominant leader—usually not the pastor, rather a long-term active member of the congregation. Family-size congregations tend to look to the past, to what has or has not worked, to guide their decisions.
Pastoral Size	These churches average 50-150 people on Sunday morning. They have several cells, or primary groups. These cells tend to relate to each other through the pastor.
Program Size	These congregations have from 150-350 on Sunday mornings. Since duties exceed the physical capabilities of a single pastor, the church hires other staff and delegates more work to boards and committees.
Corporate Size	These congregations, with more than 350 people on Sunday morning, are even more hierarchically organized than program-size churches. The pastor now relates only to program staff, certainly not all staff. Often the pastor focuses more on his unique ministry (usually preaching), and others have the administrative and program responsibilities.

Churches and Pastors can Expect Conflict

A pastor should be aware of the most predictable times of conflict so that they can be ready. Speed Leas gives his “10 Most Predictable Times for Church Conflict,” which are: Easter; Christmas; stewardship campaigns/budget time; addition of new staff member; change in leadership style; pastor’s vacation; change in the pastor’s family; introduction of baby boomers into the church; the completion of a new building; and a

loss or increase of church membership.³² A wise pastor would keep these times in mind to protect himself and the church from destructive conflict.

Levels of Conflict

It is important for pastors and churches to be aware of “levels of conflict” so that they can understand the types of conflicts.³³

Table 5 : Levels of Conflict

Level One: Problem to Solve	Conflicting goals, values, needs. Problem oriented rather than person oriented.
Level Two: Disagreement	Mixing of personalities and issues; problem cannot be clearly defined. Beginning of distrust and personalizing the problem.
Level Three: Contest	Begin the dynamics of win/lose. Personal attacks; formation of factions or sides. Distortion is a major problem.
Level Four: Intractable	No longer clear understanding of issue; personalities have become issue. Conflict is now unmanageable. It focuses on elimination and/or destruction of the other.

Types of Conflict

After much research this author has determined that Ken Sande of PeaceMaker Ministry probably has the most accurate descriptions of the six types of church conflict:

³² Speed Leas, "The Ten Most Predictable Times of Conflict," *Ct Library*, <http://www.ctlibrary.com/lebooks/libraryofleadershipdevelopment/conflictreconciliation//> (accessed February 22, 2010), 9.

³³ *Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual*, LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, (LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN, 2000), 52.

1. Internal Conflicts—This type of conflict is within oneself, such as anger or bitterness
2. Substantive Conflicts—Examples of this type of conflict are church budgets, committees, removal of pastor, or other church staff members, church building projects.
3. Value and Belief Conflicts—This type of conflict deals with Biblical Doctrine
4. Relationship Conflicts—This type of conflict deals with the heart in the area of lack of forgiveness and making things right with an individual or group.
5. Information Conflicts—The way information is given out to staff or the church on any issue
6. System Conflicts—This type of conflict is how a church is governed and who is responsible for what.³⁴

This model by Ken Sande can be used when identifying a particular conflict within the church. When the conflict has been identified, then it is easier to deal with and derive a successful and beneficial solution to it.

As previously mentioned in this paper, II Timothy 2:25-26 (HCSB) is a guide: “with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.” As pastors and church leaders, we must take these verses to heart and practice them. They will help us in defusing destructive church conflict before it is too late to stop it.

It is important for one to understand that a conflict free church does not exist, and it is helpful to know both the characteristics of constructive conflict as well as the characteristics of destructive conflict. The following list comes from *Making Peace with Conflict* as found in the Transitional Pastor Manual.

³⁴ Ken Sande, "Managing Church Conflict in Your Church" (Billings: Institute for Christian Conciliation, 1993, seminar), 17.

Characteristics of Constructive Conflict

1. Church members change, adjust, and compromise
2. Church members interact with an intent to learn instead of an intent to protect
3. Church members do not stay stuck in a conflict; conflicts move and change
4. Church members experience increased self-esteem
5. Church members have a motivation for positive connection with others
6. Church members have a relationship focus
7. Church members express the presence of empathy
8. Church members' actions are primarily cooperative, marked by egalitarian relationships

Characteristics of Destructive Conflict

1. Participants are rigid, inflexible, and insistent
2. Participants interact with the intent to protect self and hurt others
3. Participants become stuck in and defined by a particular conflict
4. Participants experience increased fear, anger, and insecurity
5. Participants have either a 'fight pattern' (a desire to destroy the others argument or person) or 'flight pattern' (avoidance, resentment)
6. Participants look out for only their own self-interests
7. Participants use demanding verbal and non-verbal communication
8. Participants employ primarily competitive and destructive tactics marked by domination and subordination patterns³⁵

Individuals as well as churches have common responses to conflict. Some of the most typical responses to conflict are the following:

1. Avoiding: "Problem? What problem?"
2. Accommodating: "I give up" (people pleasers)
3. Compromising: "Let's just split the difference"
4. Competing: "I win; you lose"
5. Collaborating: "You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours"³⁶

A church is a family and conflict is unavoidable, but how it is handled will determine whether the experience will be positive or negative.

³⁵*Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual*, 52.

³⁶*Ibid*, 53.

Benefits of Responding to Conflict Biblically

There are benefits to responding to conflict Biblically. The Institute for Christian Conciliation identifies some that are a great place to start: 1.) erring believers are restored to usefulness in the church; 2.) Families are strengthened and protected from divorce; 3.) members enjoy better relationships and more productive activities; 4.) the purity of the church is maintained; 5.) the likelihood of fatal divisions within the church is reduced; 6.) less exposure to lawsuits; 7.) respect and appreciation for leadership grows; 8.) members are maturing in their faith and life; 9.) resources (time, energy, money) of the church and members are protected from waste; 10.) new members are attracted and church growth is stimulated; 11.) and the peace of knowing that you are being obedient to God (Isaiah 48:18).³⁷

Every pastor and church must struggle with issues, and the question comes, what issues are worth battling over – what are the majors and minors? The following are four issues worth battling over in the church:

1. Biblical fidelity. No discounting the teachings of Christ
2. Living out what we believe. Biblical teaching must affect daily lives
3. Our church's unity. All members must support this, divisiveness is sin
4. Verbal integrity. Remaining truthful in confrontation or conflict³⁸

Summary

The statistics show that conflict is taking place in the church. The author has attempted to share with the reader an understanding of what conflict is. The author has

³⁷Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual, 54.

³⁸Ibid, 55.

analyzed whether church conflict is good or bad; the major causes of conflict; illustrations of possibilities within the church organization; that every church should expect conflict and be ready for it; types of conflict; levels of conflict; characteristics of conflict; characteristics of destructive conflict; benefits of responding to conflict biblically; and issues worth battling over. It is important that Christians understand that conflict is not bad, but if not handled biblically it can become destructive and hurt the church and the ability for churches to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The problem for pastor-church conflict is that many times it leads to termination, forced termination, and pressured termination of the pastor. These consequences are not unique to churches and pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention, as other denominational churches and pastors are also experiencing this. The following information includes reports from national ministries and pastors. The purpose of these statistics will show the far reaching results of destructive conflict on churches and pastors, and what kind of problems are prominent in pastor-church conflict.

Occupational Statistics for Pastors

For twenty-four years, SonScape Retreats has been helping pastors address their hurts and struggles while developing deeper intimacy with God and each other. Too often we fail to recognize how close our ministers and families are to experiencing burnout from their present status in ministry. For example, “the average tenure in ministry has declined from 21 years in 1990 to 12 years today.” Also, seventy percent of pastors say that their self-esteem was higher before they started ministry than they do at this present time. Pastors are not the only ones impacted; their families are too. In fact, around 25% of marriages among clergy members end in divorce. Pressures like these drive 1,600 pastors

out of the ministry every month, rendering 19,000 out of the ministry per year.¹

The following survey sheds light on the fact that more than one in every five ministers has been fired or forced to resign. Nearly 600 ministers responded to a survey by Leadership Magazine, a journal for church leaders published by Christianity Today, Inc. The findings declare that nearly 23% have been fired or forced to resign, and 34% claim their predecessors had been forced out before them. Among those who claim to have been forced out, 62% say the church that terminated them had done the same to at least one other minister, 43% say a faction in the church pushed them out, 71% of those revealed the faction party numbered 10 or fewer; only 20% say the real reason for their learning was made known to the entire congregation, and 52% say they didn't ask adequate questions about the church before accepting the job.²

Smallchurch.com provides interesting, yet similar statistics. They report that 75% report a significant stress related crisis at least once in their ministry, 50% feel themselves as unable to meet the needs of the job, 90% feel inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands, and 40% report a serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month.³

George Barna states that "Less than one half of the people most committed to the church say that their church performs its primary duties with excellence. Two out of three

¹ "Why SonScape Retreats?" SonScape. www.sonscape.com/aboutus.htm (accessed October 29, 2008).

² Robert O'Brien. "When Ministers Are Forced Out, Ministry Group Ready to Step In." Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc... <http://mtmfoundation.org/news/news05.htm> (accessed November 17, 2009).

³ "Statistics." Small Church. www.smallchurch.com/06%20statistics.htm (accessed February 24, 2009).

adult Americans say there is no such thing as absolute truth.”⁴

Maranatha Life, a life line for pastors, states that pastors today are faced with more work, problems, and stress than any other time in the history of the church. This is taking a frightening toll on the ministry, as depicted by the following statistics, that they report: fifteen hundred pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention in their churches. Four thousand new churches begin each year, but over seven thousand churches close. Fifty percent of pastors are so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could, but have no other way of making a living; and eighty percent of seminary and Bible school graduates who enter the ministry will leave the ministry within the first five years. Ninety percent of pastors said their seminary or Bible school training did only a fair to poor job preparing them for ministry.⁵

Elijah Ministries contributes to the study with the following conclusions: 1500 pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention in their churches, 70% constantly fight depression, 80% of pastors spend less than 15 minutes a day in prayer, 70% said the only time they spend studying the Word is when they are preparing their sermons, and the majority of pastors wives said that the most destructive event that has occurred in their marriage and family was the day they entered the ministry.⁶

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir gives statistics on pastors from the Francis Schaeffer

⁴ Barna, George. *The Barna Report: What Americans Believe: An Annual Survey of Values and Religious Views in the United States*. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1991), 25.

⁵ "Life-Line for Pastors - Statistics about Pastors." Maranatha Life Ministry. <http://maranathalife.com/lifeline/stats.htm> (accessed November 17, 2009).

⁶ Elijah Ministries. <http://elijahministries.net/id10.html> (accessed November 17, 2009).

Institute of Church Leadership Development (FASICLD). This quest began in 1989 as a Fuller Institute project that was taken over by FASICLD in 1998. Research data was compiled from 1050 pastors surveyed from two pastor's conferences held in Orange County and Pasadena, Ca—416 in 2005, and 634 in 2006: of the 1,050 or 100% of pastors surveyed, every one of them had a close associate or seminary buddy who left the ministry because of burnout, conflict in their church, or from a moral failure, 935 or 89% of the pastors surveyed also considered leaving the ministry at one time. 590 or 57% said they would leave if they had a better place to go—including secular work, and 790 or 75% of the pastors we surveyed felt they were unqualified and/or poorly trained by their seminaries to lead and manage the church or to counsel others. This left them disheartened in their ability to pastor.⁷

The following research distilled from *Barna*, *Focus on the Family*, and *Fuller Seminary*, backed up our findings, and additional information from reviewing others' research: fifteen hundred pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout, or contention in their churches, and almost forty percent polled said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry.⁸

Out of the 1050 pastors surveyed during two pastors conferences held in Pasadena, California, 825, or 78% (326 in 2005 and 499 in 2006) said they were forced to resign from a church at least once. Sixty-three percent (63%) said they had been fired from their pastoral position at least twice. In the survey, pastors were asked why they

⁷Krejcir, Dr. Richard J. "Statistics on Pastors - Into Thy Word Ministries." Into ThyWordMinistries.<http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=36562> (accessed November 17, 2009).

⁸ Barna, 30.

were fired—from the reasons given by the church board versus what they felt the reason was. They were given 15 categories with a blank space to fill in other reasons: poor leadership, conflict with key staff or lay leadership, gossip, lack of funding, doctrinal divide, hardship on family, not connecting with membership, power plays, church council refusing to resolve conflict, resistance to their teaching, resistance to their leadership style or vision, failure to teach biblically, poor people skills; failure to follow job description, inappropriate relationship, or other sin.⁹

The top five main explanations on a scale of one to five were given, with few (8%) reporting on any of the other categories. These stats are based on number one response; at the same time, over 70% of pastors stated three of these five reasons. Here is the order (these findings have been retested and backed up in internet polls done since 1998 and church survey studies done since 1980): 412 or 52% stated that the number one reason was organizational and control issues. A conflict arose that forced them out based on who was going to lead and manage the church—pastor, elder, key lay person, faction, and 119 or 14% stated the number one reason to be that the church was resistance to their leadership, vision, teaching, or to change, or that their leadership was too strong or too fast.¹⁰

The other significant study of pastors that holds similar results was conducted by psychologist Richard Blackmon (with ties to Fuller Seminary and Dr. Archibald Heart), also reported by the Los Angeles Times newspaper. In 1985, Blackmon surveyed one

⁹ Krejcir, 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

thousand pastors from four major denominations in California, USA. His research, which was ongoing up to 2004, revealed that over 75% of ministers are extremely or highly stressed. He found that 31.75% of the clergy surveyed had sexual intercourse with a church member—who was not their spouse! In addition, he found that 30% to 40% of ministers ultimately drop out of the ministry. His research goes on to say the average insurance costs to churches for dealing with mental breakdowns with clergy is four percent higher than any secular industry. Blackmon states that the significance of the stress is mainly based in the areas of personal finances, church finances, building issues, recruitment of volunteers, counseling issues, and visitation. Sermon preparation and teaching seem to be last on his list!¹¹

Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, shares the following conclusions: ninety-five percent of pastors do not regularly pray with their spouses, ninety percent of pastors said their seminary or Bible school training did only a fair to poor job preparing them for ministry, eighty-five percent said their greatest problem is they are sick and tired of dealing with problem people, such as disgruntled elders, deacons, worship leaders, worship teams, board members, and associate pastors, and eighty percent of pastors' spouses wish their spouse would choose another profession, feel pressured to do things and be something in the church that they really are not; and said that the most destructive event that has occurred in their marriage and family was the day they entered the ministry.¹²

¹¹Krejcir, *What is Going on with the Pastors in America?*
<http://www.intotheword.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=36562> (accessed 11/17/09).

¹² "The Pressures of Pastoral Ministry." John Mark Ministries.
<http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/2049.htm> (accessed November 17, 2009).

Historical Termination Data of All Pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention

What is forced termination? This question was asked and defined by the Sunday School Board, now known as LifeWay, in 1990. The formal definition derived from the Sunday School Board is “the severing of the formal relationship between the minister and the church either by coercion or a vote.”¹³ According to Norris Smith, forced termination has become an epidemic of pain throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. Ministers and their families are being traumatized, and church fellowships are being shattered. Both parties involved in a forced termination suffer; thus, it truly is a no-win situation.¹⁴ Sixty SBC pastors agreed with Dr. Smith that forced termination is a problem today in SBC churches (see SBC pastor survey questions in Appendix I).

Unfortunately, this epidemic is not a new one. Forced termination has been steady in its progression for quite some time among Southern Baptist Convention churches. It became a nationally focused and recognized at the Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in 1983. An awareness of the issue increased with an adopted resolution commending the Sunday School Board, state conventions, and associations “for their redemptive efforts relating to the crisis” at hand.¹⁵

However, even with the additional spotlight being put on the issue of forced termination, years later the Southern Baptist Convention finds itself without much success in handling it. In 1988 another resolution was adopted at the Southern Baptist Convention in San Antonio, Texas. Members concluded in part, “Resolved...that we

¹³Norris Smith, *Forced Termination: Scope and Response*, *Search*, (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Fall 1990), 6.

¹⁴Smith, 8.

¹⁵Annual, Southern Baptist Convention Book of Reports, 1983, 67.

pledge ourselves to diligent intercessory prayer (1) for our local churches in conflict (2) for pastors and church staff members who have been dismissed for whatever reason.”¹⁶

It can be concluded from the aforementioned annual convention meetings, the Southern Baptist Convention is undoubtedly disturbed by churches and pastors being in conflict and pastors and church staff being terminated. The problem that had remained buried has now been exposed for people to not only notice, but also to take action.

In 1984, the research department of the Sunday School Board released data concerning various facets of forced termination. It revealed that 88 ministers were being fired each month. Many causes were listed, the two primary revolving around the disunity of the congregation and the interpersonal skills of the pastor. The pastors claim that they were fired by a small but powerful minority controlling the decision making powers of the church. Conversely, churches claim that pastors were not getting along with the members, particularly church leadership.¹⁷

Dr. William Bloch, author of *Clergy Overboard* writes about an epidemic:

The Southern Baptist Convention, as well as several other Protestant denominations, is in the midst of an epidemic, and most members of the denomination are completely unaware of it. Senior pastors, assistant pastors, music and youth pastors, administrators, and any other staff member are all subject to being forcibly terminated with little or no warning. For the past several years increasing numbers of pastors throughout our denomination have abruptly found themselves without a ministry or income. One estimate indicated that a pastor is force-terminated approximately once every six minutes in the United States. Clifford Tharp, in a study of Southern Baptist pastors who had been terminated, found that 85 percent of those pastors had been terminated after confrontation with a select group within the church rather than by a vote of the entire church. The most frequent (36 percent) method of termination also involved an immediate severance

¹⁶Annual, Southern Baptist Convention Book of Reports, 1988, 68.

¹⁷J. Clifford Tharp, Jr., *A Study of Forced Termination of Southern Baptist Ministers*, (Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, TN, 1984), 1-7.

with some severance pay. These pastors had found themselves the victims of sinful covert political activity rather than legitimate actions of the church.

This made the shock and trauma of forced termination even more difficult, making the need for ministry to these individuals and their families critical. Unfortunately, at the present there is very little real help available throughout the Southern Baptist Convention to minister to the victims of forced-termination. Some state conventions have established various types of emergency assistance programs.¹⁸

Norris Smith, a retired consultant in forced termination from LifeWay, states that a random survey conducted in 1988 by the church administrative department of the Sunday School Board surfaced an alarming increase in terminations. Within four years, forced termination had increased from 88 per month to 116 per month, revealing a different set of corresponding causes. The primary cause was a lack of communication between the ministers and the church leaders. Following closely as a secondary cause was immorality.¹⁹ Further, the research seems to indicate forced terminations is no respecter of geography. No area seemed to be more susceptible than others in this issue. It is everywhere; no one is immune. There is, however, one variance in the data. Approximately two-thirds of all terminations occur in churches with a membership of one hundred or less.²⁰

The following are statistics of forced termination of Southern Baptist Convention churches according to LifeWay Christian Resources. The statistics are derived from a

¹⁸Dr. William Blosch: <http://www.21stcenturypress.com/clergyoverboard.htm>.

¹⁹ Norris Smith, Forced Termination Survey (Nashville Baptist Sunday School Board, 1988), 1-4.

²⁰ Ibid, 6. This information was gathered in 1990. No additional research has been conducted to the size of churches that have or will terminate a pastor within the Southern Baptist Convention.

survey that was taken each year from 1996-2008. The survey was distributed by LifeWay to Church Ministry Directors (CMR's) in church state conventions and then was sent to Directors of Missions (DOM's) within their state (See Appendix B and C).

It is important to note as one looks at Table 6: Forced Termination Statistics that it appears as if the number of terminations is decreasing, when in fact they are not. The number of states and size of the states and the number of pastors in the states are throwing off the numbers. There are thirty-eight state conventions (an average of 23 reported) and the survey has never had all the states report. This further supports that a scientific study needs to be done in order to properly understand and correct the termination of ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention. We also need to be specific with the numbers for termination, forced termination and pressured termination; up to this point that has not been done. The correct information is needed in order to respond to the problem.

Table 6 : Forced Termination Statistics

Year	Full-Time Pastors	Bivocational Pastors	Full-Time Staff	Totals	Number of States
1996	818	441		1259	14
1997	607	285	300	1192	22
1998	614	314	246	1174	26
1999	531	301	245	1071	26
2000	482	268	237	987	22
2001	528	212	254	994	18
2003	615	323	295	1233	26
2004	408	192	184	784	19
2005	655	314	333	1302	29
2006	361	165	203	729	28
2007	361	165	203	729	28
2008	296	165	183	644	22

The Southern Baptist Church Minister Relations Association, encompassing state convention officials who work in the area of church-pastoral relations compiles its annual survey with the help of nearly 1,100 SBC directors of missions from around the country. One must understand that this was a survey about the number as well as the reasons for the forced terminations of ministers, (the reasons will be supplied in Chapter Five). The Southern Baptist Convention has never commissioned a scientific research project to determine this information.²¹

These informal surveys were used to discover the reasons of the forced terminations. It is interesting that the largest Protestant denomination in the world that has an abundance of resources in people and a research center has never conducted a scientific research study about this issue. Information regarding the surveying of pastors or churches to determine what their problems are remains relatively non-existent.

In the year 2000, about fifty-five percent of the pastors who underwent forced termination returned to church-related jobs and forty-five percent did not. The survey also finds that forty-one percent of fired pastors received professional counseling and roughly thirty-five percent received financial help. Neil Knierim, a leader care manager, goes on to say a study needed to be done to know why so many did not return to ministry and what percentage of those who received professional counseling did return.²²

Each year, LifeWay would send out surveys to CMRs for them to send out to the DOMs in their states, and then the DOM's would send them back to the CMRs. In turn,

²¹*Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual*, LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, (LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN, 2000), 59.

²²*Biblical Recorder*. "Forced Termination of Pastors," www.biblicalrecorder.com (accessed August 24, 2001).

the CMRs would send the results back to LifeWay. The average of twenty-two State Conventions sent the results back to LifeWay over a twelve year period from 1996-2008.²³ That means on the average, ten states did not report per year over that 12 year period 1996-2008. The actual number over the 12 year period could be as much as a third more, making the totals more like 16, 314 for forced termination over the 12 year period. The bottom line is that there is no way to know what the total numbers really are.

Historical Southern Baptist Convention Remedies

In the article by Dennis Hester, "How Pastors Can Build Relationships and Lessen Conflict in Their Congregations," he quotes Rev. Mike Huckabee, Governor of Arkansas and former Pastor and President of the Arkansas Baptist Convention from a 1992 statement, "Churches are using termination as the 'weapon of choice' in targeting church staff problems in epidemic proportions."²⁴

Dr. Jimmy Draper became the President of the Sunday School Board (LifeWay) in 1991 and retired in 2006. Dr. Brooks Faulkner stated that: "Jimmy Draper, President of the Sunday School Board (LifeWay) made clear early in his leadership that a high priority at the Board (LifeWay) would be to give encouragement to the ministers and churches that have gone through unsettling experiences (termination). Our section exists to provide that encouragement and assistance in terms of resources and services. We work with ministers who have been terminated and churches that have seen terminated

²³*Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual*, 25.

²⁴Dennis Hester, "How Pastors Can Build Relationships And Lessen Conflict In Their Congregations," *Better Churches*, file://Z:/DMinProject/mikehukabe.htm. (accessed April 26, 2010).

ministers.”²⁵

Dr. Faulkner went on to say, “a group was assigned to find ways to help ministers and churches find redemptive ways of coping with forced termination in our churches entitled, the Coordinating Committees of the Interagency Council of the Southern Baptist Convention, worked 3 years, and are now funding the project being implemented by our section and the Sunday School Board. It is jointly financed by boards and agencies in the Southern Baptist Convention.”²⁶

Wounded Heroes

Dr. Freddie Gage was a well known evangelist in the 1970s until he was beset by anxiety attacks and clinical depression. After being helped by psychiatric treatment, Gage said, he realized that his denomination had unfairly stigmatized other pastors who needed similar help. He continued, “When a pastor stumbles, we put him in a coffin and bury him...many times they are walking wounded. The Christian army often not only shoots them, but we leave them to bleed to death in the field.”²⁷

In 1998, Dr. Gage started Wounded Heroes, a ministry to pastors. In the January 1998 *SBC Life*, a journal of the SBC Convention, he placed an article about the start of Wounded Heroes. He said that 6000 Southern Baptist ministers walk away from their ministry each year. Eighteen hundred Southern Baptist Convention ministers were fired in 1997. He states, “A minister drops out, his family suffers, a congregation is in disarray.

²⁵Church Administration, Nashville: February 1994, 17.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Jeffrey Weiss, Baptist Take over Program to Help, Wounded Heroes, <http://www.bibleteacher.org/wounded/wh-art2.htm> (accessed February 2, 2010).

The community is shocked. A generation of young people is lost because their role model crashed and burned. It happens 500 times a month among Southern Baptist pastors alone. It impacts more than 31,200 family members, thousands of church members and hundreds of thousands in their communities.”²⁸ Through this ministry, retreat centers were established, the first ministry of its kind in the 152 year history of the SBC—a Christian psychotherapy program was designed to meet the needs of pastors, missionaries, church staff, denominational workers, evangelists, their wives, and their families. In cooperation with the National Southern Baptist Convention and all 38 Baptist State Conventions throughout the nation, a follow-through program provided a Southern Baptist pastor as an encourager accountability partner to be a mentor for a full year.²⁹

A news article appeared in the Baptist Press (B.P.) in May 5, 1998 written by Herb Hollinger announcing the first Wounded Heroes luncheon in Salt Lake City during the Southern Baptist Convention. The article explained what Wounded Heroes was all about and communicated that Wounded Heroes was started the previous year when Gage shared his burden for hurting ministers and a vision for a Christian psychotherapy program with Dr. O.S. Hawkins, President of the SBC Annuity Board, and Jack Graham, Pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas. Gage said that the nonprofit organization had been greatly supported and backed with contributions from those two men and also gifts from James T. Draper Jr., President of the Sunday School Board of the SBC; Bob Reccord, President of the North American Mission Board; Robert White, executive director, and Frank White, President of the Georgia Baptist Convention; Charles Sullivan,

²⁸ SBC Life, January 1998, Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, 16.

²⁹Ibid, 16.

executive director of the State Convention of Baptists of Indiana; Claude Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, TX; along with the President of the SBC Pastor's Conference, many pastors, lay persons, and churches. Gage shared that ministers were leaving the ministry in epidemic proportions and that in the previous year, 225 pastors, associate pastors, music directors, youth ministers, educational ministers and other staff workers were fired each month; more than 50 calls a day came into a little-publicized SBC help line. Last year, according to an SBC official, one-third of SBC ministers and staff felt the need to call an SBC agency for some kind of help.³⁰

Wounded Heroes, Inc.'s original list of officers and board members reads like a "who's who" of Southern Baptist leadership. In addition to those mentioned above, Southern Baptist leaders on the board included Morris H. Chapman, President of the SBC Executive Committee; Jim Henry, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Orlando, Florida, and former SBC President; and Ken Hemphill, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.³¹

According to The Wounded Heart Ministries, Inc., Dr. Freddie Gage labored for years on a dream that emerged from his own pain: that the Southern Baptist Convention would offer in-depth psychological counseling for troubled pastors and their families. Gage announced that Wounded Heroes would be taken over by LifeWay Christian Resources, a convention agency. According to research performed by LifeWay, as many as a third of the denomination's 62,000 churches have staff members suffering from significant emotional problems every year. Two years ago, more than 6,000 Southern

³⁰ Herb Hollinger, Wounded Hero's Luncheon, Salt Lake City, SBC, Baptist Press, May 5, 1998.

³¹ Ibid.

Baptist Pastors left their ministries, an average of 225 were fired.³²

LifeWay took over Wounded Heroes about one year after it began. According to Gage, by becoming part of LifeWay, Wounded Heroes received a six hundred thousand dollar budget and a guarantee that the program will continue. “They’re doing it and not charging a thing,” Gage stated. By officially taking the program on, the denomination made a larger statement—that “Baptists with psychological problems should not fear seeking appropriate medical treatment,” said Draper, who was an early champion of Wounded Heroes. His department had already developed less intensive help for troubled pastors and staff, a program called Leader Care. Wounded Heroes was intended to be an extension of the kind of help that the denomination offered. Callers to the LifeWay Crisis Hotline would be evaluated and offered a range of options.³³ The most seriously troubled would be referred to Wounded Heroes. LifeWay ran two conference centers, one in New Mexico and one in North Carolina. “If the demand is great enough,” Draper stated at the time, “as many as nine Wounded Heroes conferences could be held in each center every year.” I told Freddie, “I want something that will last thirty years or more, after you and I are both gone.” Draper hoped that it would be accomplished.³⁴

Wounded Heroes was a worthy endeavor, however, it did not last very long. Even after the statement made by Jimmy Draper that it would last over thirty years, it lasted only two years. The planned long range goals to minister to pastors were never achieved after being included at LifeWay.

³²Weiss.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

LeaderCare

LeaderCare, a ministry to ministers and their families sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, expanded with added services and staff. It was designed to provide personal development resources as well as crisis prevention, intervention, and restoration resources for pastors, staff members, and their families. LeaderCare began in May of 1996, later adding an emergency type of crisis hot line.³⁵

LeaderCare expansion in 1999 led to adding staff, such as Barney Self, a marriage and family counselor. His responsibilities included counseling pastors, staff, and their families who called the LeaderCare hotline, as well as providing appropriate referrals and follow up for those he counseled. Dr. Speight, a ministry counselor, coordinated retreats for pastoral development and career assessment programs. Bob Sheffield worked with deacons, church committees and church leaders in their relationships with ministers, their families and pastor search committees. Other LeaderCare staff included Brooks Faulkner, Senior LeaderCare Specialist in compassion fatigue, personal growth, and random violence; Norris Smith, specialist in conflict management and mediation; and Tommy Yessick, wellness specialist. Neal Knierim, manager of the LeaderCare section, said the hotline (a 24 hours a day service) received approximately 3,000 calls annually. Needs ranged from having someone to listen and pray with them, to referral to a provider for intensive psychiatric care. Many events were sponsored from Pastor/Wife retreats to seminars, as well as retreats and training in church conflict mediation.³⁶

³⁵Charles Willis, Baptist Press, September 13, 1999, <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=239> (accessed January 10, 2010).

³⁶Greenfield, Guy. *The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal*

LeaderCare was on the course to make a difference in church conflict, pastor care, and forced termination. However, by 2008 it was disbanded after Dr. Draper retired from LifeWay. LifeWay no longer has Wounded Heroes, Wounded Ministers, LeaderCare, or a 1-800 number for ministers needing help. What took two decades to develop was dismantled in 2008. Upon examination, it is worthwhile to ask what will be the next steps the SBC and LifeWay will take in an attempt to help ministers. The author received an email from Dan Garland of LifeWay with some encouraging news. According to Dr. Dan Garland, Eastern Region Director of Consulting Church and Network Partnerships of LifeWay Christian Resources,

LifeWay has 22 church consultants who visit with Pastors and staff every week to discover needs and offer solutions. They are face to face with Pastors/staff out on the frontlines bringing encouragement, counsel, and biblical solutions. Rather than having a Pastoral ministries department, LifeWay has deployed seasoned church consultants. The feedback from the field indicates that this is a vital and effective way to encourage and resource Pastors/staff in their setting and context. Dr. Doug Merrit and I take the calls from pastors and churches and then we refer them to CMR's in the state conventions. These guys are closer to them and can and do provide help.³⁷

Yes, this is encouraging; however this author could not find a Southern Baptist agency which provides the support as LeaderCare once did for pastors experiencing church conflict, personal and professional crises, or terminations.

Consequences of the Problem

The consequences of the problem are many. With the dismantling of the national

Attacks. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2001, 16.

³⁷ Dan Garland, What LifeWay is doing for Pastors, e-mail message to Donald Q. Hicks, April 17, 2010.

pastor/church support system, the aforementioned problems will most likely worsen. Issues which took thirty years to understand and provide corrective solutions for, still presently exist but without solutions, leading the Southern Baptist Convention down a collision course without the support they need or should have. The attacks on pastors are frequent with the rise of clergy killers, pathological antagonists and unreasonable churchgoers demanding their own way as described by Dr. Guy Greenfield in his book, *The Wounded Minister*.³⁸

Dr. Guy Greenfield goes on to say, “Specifically, I am writing about evil, mean spirited persons who are able to inflict disastrous wounds on unsuspecting ministers in the name of God. I am a recent triumph for the battlefield of bloody confrontation who tried to be pastoral, loving, understanding, reconciling and redemptive; yet ended up being shot down and left to die on the battlefield of the church, and there are thousands like me.”³⁹

Pastors Out of Ministry

Church problems have received much media attention, but one that remains in the closet is the growing number of cases where the pastor, through innocent malfeasance becomes targeted for dismissal by small factions of critics. This is happening in many denominations. The Southern Baptist Convention, for example, reports that during one eighteen month period some 2,100 pastors were fired—a 31% increase over the previous

³⁸ Greenfield, 16.

³⁹ Greenfield, 17.

five years.⁴⁰

The cause is three-fold. Some parishioners tend to project their personal problems onto the pastor, making excessive demands and expressing petty criticisms. They insist on their own needs being met and ignore the larger mission of the church. Pillars of the church, because of their devotion and contributions, are often given tacit immunity from New Testament standards of conduct.⁴¹

The church generally reflects rather than transforms the surrounding culture, so societal stress and anger seep in from the outside. It is not hard to see today that congregations have become more like clubs than churches, resulting in growth and change being viewed as threats rather than opportunities. A pastor who finds himself unduly attacked must determine if his congregation has a hidden history of conflict. If attack tactics violate bylaws, and rely on slander, secret meetings, and deceit, he should realize that the problems are deep seeded and that the struggle is spiritual.⁴²

Advice given by different people to pastors today is getting more to the point, because it seems that churches and denominations are not listening and responding to the problems with pastors and churches. If we do not listen and respond then we (the SBC) will begin to see more pastors take the following advice which Michael Smith offers pastors:

Don't count on denominations for help. Afraid of losing the congregation, denominational officials indulge the church, allowing destructive behaviors to continue, and hiding the history of conflict from the ministerial candidates. The

⁴⁰ Michael Smith, *Pastors Under fire: A Personal Report*. Christian Century, February 23, 1994, Vol III, no. 6, pages 196-199 Topic Pastor Congregation Relationships,196.

⁴¹ Smith, 196.

⁴² Ibid.

disenfranchised pastor is left to fend for himself.

Do not accept an offer by the denomination to recommend a consultant. Consultants tend to serve the group that hires them—that is, the denomination. Insist on a conflict manager from outside the denominational structure.

Decide whether a lawsuit may be necessary. Clergy have rights to protection from slander, to fair labor practices, and to due process. If the congregation is unwilling to voluntarily provide these, a pastor should seek redress in the courts.

Look for spiritual blessings and growth during church conflicts. Allow those who will to minister to you. Continue regular Bible study and prayer; unspeakable loss may be turned into immeasurable gain.”⁴³

George W. Bullard Jr. wrote that “as a denomination (SBC), we must be prepared for termination of ministers by making available support systems for pastors, staff members and congregations who are affected. We must assist pastors, staff members, and congregations to understand what is happening and how to prevent unnecessary, reckless termination.”⁴⁴ Termination brings great hurt to the pastor, his wife, children, friends, and members of the church.

The following is a list of what a pastor and his family lose when forced terminated: their place of worship, peace of mind, position of authority and power, their ministry, job/work/vocation; dignity, income, friends, support group, some lose their purpose for living; usually, their home and the city they are living in as they move, various personal activities and functions, children lose their school, teacher, and friends; their trust in people; sometimes their trust in God, their sense of direction in life, security, identity, and self confidence; often, the security of their marriage (marriage problems arise under extreme stress), their health, emotional stability in their family, self-worth,

⁴³ Smith, 198.

⁴⁴George W. Bullard, Jr., A Historical Look at Forced Termination, *Search*, Fall 1990, Nashville: Sunday School Board of Southern Baptist Convention, 13.

self-esteem, a relationship with the community, goals in life; and often, their means of transportation and health insurance; their retirement funds and their freedom.⁴⁵

Physical Health

The physical health of the pastor is affected because of the stress placed on the pastor. In December 1993, The Annuity Board of the SBC Mail Order Drug and Medical Plan Expenses stated that the following were the most commonly used drugs for SBC participants along with their purposes in 1993:⁴⁶

Table 7 : Top Ten Drugs Utilized for GuideStone Participants - 1993

Most Commonly Used Drugs	Purpose
Zantac	Stomach Ulcer
Meyacor	Cholesterol
Seldane	Allergy
Prozac	Anti-Depressant
Premarin	Estrogen Replacement
Procartia XL	Angina
Tagament	Stomach Ulcer
Pepcid	Stomach Ulcer
Vasotec	Blood Pressure
Lopid	Cholesterol

Dr. Doug Day with GuideStone, an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention that coordinates medical coverage and retirement for Southern Baptist ministers sent the

⁴⁵Pastoral Advocacy Network, <http://www.pastoraladvocacynetwork.com/training/netmenders/what-a-minister-loses-in-a-forced-termination> (accessed January 13, 2010).

⁴⁶ “Mail Order Drug and Medical Plan Experience,” GuideStone Statistics, December 1993.

following 2010 report to this author that contains the most current top ten utilized drugs for GuideStone participants:⁴⁷

Table 8 : Top Ten Drugs Utilized for GuideStone Participants - 2010

Drug	Usage
Nexium	Acid Reflux
Lipitor	High Cholesterol
Humira	Arthritis
Enbrel	Arthritis
Plavix	Blood Thinner
Singulair	Asthma
Advair	Asthma
Actos	Diabetes
Omeprazol	Acid Reflux
Crestor	High Cholesterol

In a 2010 phone interview, the author interviewed Christian Loudermilk at GuideStone and tried to secure information concerning how health benefits are tracked but was told that records were not stored in a way to be able to track a specific breakdown.⁴⁸

Long term stress, according to figures from the Alban Institute, is no stranger to American pastors. An estimated 20% of the nation's 300,000 clergy suffer from it. One recent year when the Southern Baptist Convention paid out \$64 million in medical benefits for pastors, stress related illnesses were second in dollar amount only to

⁴⁷Dr. Doug Day of GuideStone Financial of the Southern Baptist Convention, sent by email to the author on 11/3/09.

⁴⁸Christian Loudermilk, Product Research Manager, GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, email to the author of this paper on 11/23/09.

maternity benefits.⁴⁹

A pattern has developed, according to Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries:

Do you see the pattern? Pastors are not being adequately trained in conflict resolution; conflict brings down thousands of them every year; churches engage in spiritual battle without proper leadership. And then churches wonder why they have so little fruit and suffer so much defeat. No secular business would accept such high leadership losses. Executive turnover in the business world typically costs employers from 12 to 18 months of the executive's annual salary. If this figure were applied to pastoral turnovers, we would see that they are costing the church over \$684 million dollars a year! If you measured the cost in terms of seminary or Bible college expenses that go down the drain whenever a pastor leaves the ministry, you would come up with a similar appalling number. But the cost to the kingdom cannot be measured in terms of money. How precious is the gift of preaching the gospel, and what is the cost when a pastor loses his pulpit and his gift is silenced? How precious is the witness of a vibrant church to its community and what is the cost when a forced exit splits a church and results in two hostile congregations? How precious is the privilege of being raised by both parents and what is the cost when a pastor is not there to prevent a divorce and a child is torn between two warring parents? Whatever the measure, the cost of losing thousands of pastors each year is astronomical. The church cannot afford to let these losses continue.⁵⁰

Emotional Health

Pastor John Schmidt of Garden Ministries states that surveys show that anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000 ministers step aside each year through some kind of forced termination. Pastor Schmidt writes,

When preaching from the Bible is met with a lack of willingness to listen to God's servant; When rebellion is thought of as being helpful; When a conspiracy of evil is thought to be the voice of reason and righteousness; When everything honest and good in the character of the minister is twisted into vice and sin, this defines Acute

⁴⁹Steve Rabey, "Where Hurting Pastors Go," Christianity Today, November 23, 1992 pages 12-13. Main topic: Pastoring. See also 8131.

⁵⁰ Ken Sande, "Strike the Shepherd: Losing Pastors in the Church," *Peacemakers*, www.peacemakers.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b1084263/apps/nl/content3.asp?content/ (accessed February 15, 2010).

Pastor Abuse. It is true persecution. Or to state it another way, it is soul crucifixion.⁵¹

Schmidt goes on to state a further definition to help understand the seriousness of the abuse as,

When the good of God's messengers is turned into evil. Over many months, determined and conscious efforts are made to bring down leadership. When vicious lies are poured out like water, so vile and so often that others wilt under their weight and start to believe they are true. The faithful to God take a step back in disbelief and fear, unwilling to stand against the onslaught of violently determined souls wholly bent on the destruction of God's anointed. People that are considered to be the closest friends and confidants turn against the minister for their own gain. Secret backroom meetings take place to solicit and convince congregants of the evil of its minister. Letter writing and phone calling campaigns are organized by dissident self appointed leaders who openly declare their intent to remove the pastor at any cost.⁵²

In addition Pastor Schmidt gives an account of PTS (post traumatic syndrome) and how it can be crippling to the pastor:

When Acute Pastor Abuse occurs, the target minister and his family may experience the symptoms of post traumatic syndrome. These symptoms must be understood and dealt with in an appropriate and gentle manner. It may take three to four years to learn to cope with the after affects. This healing time may be shortened by early understanding of the work of persecution and the powerful intervention of God to restore the soul of His saints—through divine healing.⁵³

Termination traumatizes every member of the minister's family. The minister's sense of self-worth is deeply affected and bruised. He is vulnerable. He questions his personal worth. The negative effect of termination on the minister's self-value is tantamount to laying a sharp axe to the taproot of a growing tree. He is devastated. The

⁵¹John Schmidt, "Defining Acute Pastor Abuse," San Diego: Garden Ministries, www.gardenministries.com (accessed January 10, 2010).

⁵²Schmidt.

⁵³Ibid.

minister's wife is shaken by insecurity. With her husband out of a job, financial pressures shift to her shoulders. She often feels panicky and lonely. Her husband is so focused on his own pain that she is left without someone in whom to confide. Children are hurt also. They are confused and frightened by the change in their parents' feelings and behavior. They have to leave their friends. They are often forced to move away from their house into a new community.⁵⁴ Fern Sutton, a licensed counselor in Lynchburg, Virginia says that it takes about twenty sessions of counseling for a terminated minister and his family just to get their feet back on the ground and their problems range from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and General Anxiety Disorder to depression. Career counseling for the future is sometimes needed.⁵⁵

This author knows firsthand the pain of forced termination through no fault of his own, and the impact it has had on his wife (Tricia), family, friends and the majority of church members that supported him as pastor. Tricia's story is in Appendix D; her story explains what she went through and experienced as her husband was forced terminated as a pastor.⁵⁶

Pastor's Family

Emotional, spiritual, and financial needs can be enormous burdens on pastors and their families. In an effort to identify primary felt needs of pastors today, Facts and Trends Magazine in May 2002 issued the following statistics from a study of 298 pastors

⁵⁴Norris Smith, *Search*, Forced Termination: Scope and Response, Fall 1990, vol. 21, number 1, 6-7.

⁵⁵ Fern Sutton, interview by author, personal. November 10, 2009.

⁵⁶ See Appendix D: "When Your Church World Collapses and You're the Pastor's Wife."

within a previous six month period: 40 pastors were terminated, 87 people were suffering from depression, 20 were suffering from some kind of addiction, and 35 were suffering from some type of conflict at home.⁵⁷

The following are some concluding statistics also from Facts and Trends

Magazine concerning crisis in the pastorate:

Each month some 100 Southern Baptist pastors and staff members face forced termination. - From Jim Henry, pastor First Baptist Church in Orlando Florida; *Only 1 of every 20 ordained to the gospel ministry actively serve until retirement.* - From H.B. London, Jr. Focus on the Family “Pastor’s Weekly Briefing;” *Roughly 30% to 40% of religious leaders will drop out of the ministry and 75% go through a period of stress so great that they consider quitting* (psychologist R. Blacklow, L.A. Times); *Of 1,400 ministers questioned, fewer than 20% receive any kind of annual recognition* (LifeWay Christian Resources); In 1998, Dr. Fred Gage (*Wounded Heroes*) stated: *6,000 SBC pastors leave the ministry each year — 225 of their pastors were fired each month; Leadership has reported that 25% of those asked said they had been fired or forced to resign, normally by a faction of people that numbered fewer than 10.*⁵⁸

Churches

Church Family

Norris Smith has provided a good perspective of what happens in the church family when the pastor is terminated.

The church family also suffers. The fellowship is fractured. Significant loss is experienced. Community respect is diminished, membership drops, attendance declines, the mission of the church is side tracked. The church as an institution is side tracked. The church as an institution suffers. Individuals within the church experience a wide range of emotions. They are grieved over all the loss. Emotions such as anger, grief, embarrassment, and fear are felt. Children are confused. New Christians are disillusioned. A spiritual sadness settles over the congregation. The posture of the church becomes one of a defensive retreat. The agenda of the

⁵⁷Shepherds’ Haven of Rest Ministries, Arlington, TN, <http://shorministries.com/about/>, (assessed December 4, 2009).

⁵⁸Ibid.

church is survival and maintenance. Members focus on themselves instead of their mission. Ministry is self-serving. Information is hoarded and decisions are made by a few. This kind of climate makes conflict a live option. The scope of forced termination is seen in the number of monthly firings. It leaves the minister's family and the congregation devastated. Everyone loses something. No one really wins.⁵⁹

Evangelism

In the *Journal of Evangelism and Missions*, Thomas Hammond and Steve Wilkes wrote about how church conflict affects evangelism in the church. Dr. Hammond tells of a story about a church he served as interim pastor that had recently forced their pastor to resign:

During the first meeting with church leaders, I asked to see their numbers for the past several years. Needless to say they were not good. Money...down, attendance...down, baptisms...down, you guessed it...down as well. One significant fact about their church is that they were located in the second-fastest growing county in America. In the middle of a population explosion, they were in a terrible free fall. As I looked closer at the numbers, I noticed the chart did not go straight down. In fact, there were several high peaks over the years. After questioning one of the lay leaders about the reasons for the decline after the growth, he pointed to each and embarrassingly admitted that the growth stopped because of the "fights." He was even able to recall what the different "fights" were about. While these "fights" left emotional scars across the congregation, they also served as a deterrent.⁶⁰

Dr. Hammond quotes Soviet dissident and Pulitzer Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn, wrote, "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them—but the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human

⁵⁹Norris Smith, 7.

⁶⁰Thomas Hammond and Steve Wilkes, "Beyond Conflict to Church Growth," *Journal of Evangelism & Missions*, vol. 7, Spring 2008, Memphis: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Michael R. Spradlin, editor, 7.

being.”⁶¹ It is a fact that one never knows who will be the one to bring conflict into the church that leads to destructive conflict.

Dr. Solzhenitsyn goes on:

To say it plainly, conflict stops evangelism! Any momentum a church might be experiencing through outreach almost always comes to a screeching halt at the slightest hint of brouhaha. In Acts 6:1 we find the early church still exploding with growth. Thousands were saved. ‘The number of disciples was multiplying’ and things were going well. However, the next words are what all church leaders dread. The Scripture says, ‘there arose a complaint.’ How do we know that the church stopped evangelizing during this conflict? We know because of one work in verse seven. This word is not eloquent but very enlightening. It reveals the beginning of something. It is the word ‘then.’ The conflict was resolved and ‘then’ something happened. What was it? Verse seven says, ‘then the Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.’ So between verse one, ‘the number of disciples was multiplying,’ and verse seven, ‘the number of the disciples multiplied greatly’ a conflict ‘arose’ it was dealt with appropriately, and the church continued to fulfill the Great Commission.”⁶²

Dr. Steve Wilkes asks the question,

Why do conflicts stop evangelism? There are many reasons why the disease of conflict prevents the church from growing. A conflict diverts the focus of church membership from the fields of harvest to discovering who is on whose side. The energy needed for ministry, missions, and witnessing is siphoned from the body and spent on the forming of battle lines. Communication is broken down, and many decisions are made in secret, causing mistrust and alienation. The unity of the fellowship is broken into factions of “us” and “them,” and prevents anyone from inviting a lost person to a ministry event or Bible study. Morale plummets with staff members and lay leaders as evangelistic events are canceled or poorly attended. The hope of impacting the community with the gospel in the future fades as word of the fight begins to seep into the community. It is hard to save a drowning man if everyone holding a life preserver is arguing so loudly they cannot hear his cry.⁶³

This author has observed over the years that at Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings, pastor conferences national, state, and local, that much talk is made

⁶¹Ibid, 7.

⁶²Hammond, 7.

⁶³Ibid, 8.

about evangelism and baptisms going down and the decline of churches. But why is it not really being addressed as conflict causing the problem in the churches? If conflict is not resolved between churches and pastors within SBC churches, evangelism will be greatly affected. How many souls will not be in heaven because churches are fighting? How many churches are not growing for that same reason? How many churches have become disillusioned by unresolved church conflict?

Church Growth

In an interview with Kenneth Keene who was president of the Southern Baptist Church Minister Relations Association describes termination as “one of the most serious difficulties in Southern Baptist Life. If a church is in conflict, it is not going to grow and it sends a negative message to the community. It is hard for a church to be in conflict and for the community not to know about it.”⁶⁴

Dr. Steve Wilkes states,

Sadly conflict is a common occurrence in congregations of every denomination across America. It happens to traditional, blended, and contemporary churches for a variety of reasons, with the capacity to reach extreme levels of intensity. Its impact on a congregation can be devastating. Relationships are damaged, friendships strained, and many decide to stop attending. The church’s ministry and evangelism efforts are usually brought to a standstill leaving a divided fellowship that has taken its eyes off the harvest and has become distracted from fulfilling the Great Commission.⁶⁵

Church growth is accelerated when conflict is identified, responded to, corrected and resolved. Look at the remarkable events that were happening in the Bible when the

⁶⁴ Ken Walker, *Fewer Pastor/Staff Terminations Reported*, (Nashville: Baptist Press, July 2007).

⁶⁵Hammond and Wilkes, 4.

Holy Spirit came. Peter preached and about three thousand souls were saved and baptized in one day. The church continued to grow spiritually, through discipleship, as the Bible says, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching;” numerically as “every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved;” and in fellowship, “And every day they devoted themselves [to meeting] together in the temple complex, and broke bread from house to house” (Acts 2:42-47 HCSB). Peter preached and about five thousand people were saved. While this caused great joy in the church, not everyone in Jerusalem was excited. The Sanhedrin began to pressure some of the leaders in the early church, after all these great blessing of the early church. The Bible says in Acts 6:1 “there arose a complaint.” That complaint was taken care of when the pastors took action and resolved it. One of Paul’s strongest churches was in conflict and he had to address the issue so that the church could keep growing. The Philippian church had to deal with two conflicting sisters. Philippians 4:2 says that Euodia and Syntyche had a bad relationship that was threatening to destroy the harmony of the church.

Summary

The scope of the problem of unresolved church conflict and termination of ministers is far reaching and affects many churches, pastors and their families. Statistics have been given in this chapter. Statistics gathered indicate the problem of forced termination in SBC churches. Different Southern Baptist agencies such as LifeWay have attempted to deal with the problem by initializing LeaderCare, however LeaderCare was dismantled without replacing this resource for CMR’s, DOM’s, churches and pastors to provide needed help. Pastors in the SBC are struggling with health problems as well as emotional problems, being caused in part by the stresses of church conflict(s) that have

not been resolved. These conflicts are also taking a toll on their families and the health of the church. Southern Baptist churches must work to address the problems faced by churches and pastors which will ultimately solve conflict and division in our churches, allowing the main focus to be evangelism and advancing the Kingdom of God globally.

CHAPTER FIVE

CAUSES OF TERMINATION IN SBC CHURCHES

In 1983, Linda Lawson in Baptist Press discusses forced termination of Southern Baptist pastors as one part of a thorny, multifaceted, issue which threatens the very existence of some churches and the spiritual and emotional health of pastors and church members. According to Brooks Faulkner, former supervisor of the career guidance section in the Sunday School Board (LifeWay) church administration department, the firing of a pastor or staff member is often a manifestation of a church embroiled in conflict. Additionally, termination has an impact on family members who may be torn between anger and grief. A layman, Tom Brown of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, wrote to the Baptist and Reflector to offer a ministry of prayer for terminated ministers: “to any pastor who asks, I promise to pray for him. I don’t need to know why; the Lord knows that prayer is needed.”¹

The following resolution was adopted by the 1983 Southern Baptist Convention. The resolution that was adopted stated: “That all associations, state conventions, and Baptist Sunday School Board—to continue positive corrective measures related to this sensitive problem through the provision of preventive and redemptive support services to

¹Linda Lawson, *Conflicts, Forced Terminations Trouble Many Congregations*, Nashville, Baptist Press, 7/13/83, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/5680,13-Jul-1983.PDF>, web accessed 12/5/09, 3.

ministers and churches.”²

As we look at the issue of reasons for the forced termination of ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention, we must understand that in most cases the minister is not the problem. According to Brooks Faulkner, the minister is rarely the problem in a forced termination, which does not solve the issue. In most cases where the minister is terminated, a substantial conflict existed before the minister was called to the church.³

The corporate planning and research department at the Baptist Sunday School Board (LifeWay) commissioned a survey. More than one thousand Directors of Missions were contacted for information about churches involved in serious conflict within the previous three years. Leaders of churches were asked to respond about how they dealt with conflict, how they managed conflict, and the primary resources used in local churches for working through problems. According to 1990 survey results released by Norris Smith, forced termination consultant at the Board’s church administration department, nine out of ten pastors in churches, which experienced serious conflict, are forced to leave. According to 63% of responders, the most common solution for dealing with church conflict is to turn the problem over to the deacons. Second, 13% turned to committees. Finally, 11% reported they usually ignore conflict and hope it will go away.⁴

Unresolved conflict leads to the forced termination of many pastors. Lowry’s

² Lawson, 3.

³Ibid.

⁴Jim Lowry, *Church Conflict Leads to Pastoral Termination*, (Nashville: Baptist Press, 11/30/90), <http://media.sbhl.org.s3.amazonaws.com/7065,30-Nov-1990.pdf>, p. 2, (accessed August 10, 2009).

article indicates that church conflict results in the departure of the pastor, but also the departure of church members ranked second with 84% reporting this. Two other highly ranked results were withholding tithes and offerings with 54%, and the resignation of lay leaders with 42%. The numerous divisions within church families results in churches not working through conflict. Instead of working through conflict, the resolution is just to remain quiet.⁵

Forced termination is not the answer but instead is a crippling methodology frequently used in churches to deal with relational issues and problems between churches and ministers. According to pastors who have gone through this traumatic experience, pain from a sharpened dagger could be no more intense than the anguish suffered by Southern Baptist pastors who have been fired or forced to resign their pulpits.⁶

Before looking at the top reasons why Southern Baptist pastors are terminated we will look at a study by Leadership, Christianity Today, and a survey mailed to a random selection of U.S. pastors. A total of 593 pastors responded. The top reasons pastors have experienced forced terminations are as follows:⁷

⁵Jim Lowry, 9.

⁶Jim Lowry, *Fired Pastors Cling to Hope*, Nashville: Baptist Press, 11/11/87, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/6479,11-Nov-1987.pdf>, (accessed 12/5/2009, 2).

⁷John C. LaRue, Jr. *Forced Exits: A Too-Common Ministry Hazard*, 4/14/09, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/yc/more/specialreport/6y2072.html> (accessed 12/15/09, 2).

Table 9 : Top Reasons Why Pastors Experience Forced Termination

46%	Conflicting Vision for the Church
38%	Personality Conflicts with Board Members
32%	Unrealistic Expectations
24%	Lack of Clear Expectations
22%	Personality Conflicts (not with board members)
21%	Theological Differences
19%	Personality Conflicts with the Senior Pastor

SBC Top Reasons for Church/Staff Termination

According to a 2006 study done by LifeWay, Department of Pastoral Ministries, the general inability to “get along” is the root of the top five reasons staff members in Southern Baptist Churches are terminated from their positions.⁸

Bob Sheffield, pastoral ministries specialist says relational issues top the list for the tenth consecutive year. The top five are control issues: who is going to run the church, poor people skills, churches’ resistance to change, pastor leadership style being too strong and churches already in conflict when the pastor arrives.⁹

The following are the top reasons for church staff terminations in SBC churches: control issues (who controls the church), poor people skills, church’s resistance to change, pastors’ leadership (style too strong), church was already in conflict when the pastor arrived, decline in attendance and/or conditions, pastor’s leadership style (too weak), administrative incompetence on the part of the pastor, sexual misconduct, conflict with other staff, ethical misconduct (mismanaged money, dishonesty), disagreement over

⁸ Chris Turner, “More than 1,300 Staff Dismissed in 2005; Relationship Issues Again Take First Five Spots”, <http://www.lifeway.com/article/?id=163471>, (accessed November 20, 2009), 1.

⁹ Ibid.

doctrine, tenure (been in church too long), rapid growth, pastor versus deacon, pastor's physical health, personal and financial problems, poor work ethic, general issues, Calvinism, dysfunctional church, pastors' impatience when faced with a disagreement or conflict, moral failure, poor match, and pastor was threatened¹⁰

All of the reasons for forced termination can be summarized in one word: conflict. When a pastor is forced out of ministry, it is usually because he has been unsuccessful at resolving differences with other people in the church. As Christianity Today's survey reads: 45% of ousted pastors admit they could have done more to avoid being forced out.¹¹ Resolving conflict is the primary action they wish they had taken sooner,¹² and they believe conflict management was the area of training most lacking in their seminary or Bible college education.¹³

Ken Sande, who has developed "The Peacemaker" church resource set, has summarized the cost and solution of conflict between pastors and the church:

Pastors are not being adequately trained in conflict resolution; conflict brings down thousands of them every year; churches engage in spiritual battle without proper leadership, and then churches wonder why they have so little fruit and suffer so much. No secular business would accept such high leadership losses. Executive turnover in businesses typically cost employers from 12-18 months of the executive's annual salary. If this figure were applied to the pastoral turnovers, we would see that they are costing the church over \$684 million a year! If you measured the cost in terms of seminary or Bible experiences that go down the drain whenever a pastor leaves the ministry, you would come up with a similar appalling number. But the cost to the kingdom cannot be measured in terms of

¹⁰ Turner, 2.

¹¹ John C. LaRue, Jr. "Forced Exits: How to Avoid One," Christianity Today International, Your Church magazine, Jan/Feb, 1997, 8.

¹² Ibid

¹³ John C. LaRue, Jr. "Profile of Today's Pastor: Ministry Preparation," Christianity Today, Your Church magazine. Mar/April, 1995, 56.

money. How precious is the gift of preaching the gospel, and what is the cost when a pastor loses his pulpit and his gift is silenced? Whatever the measure, the cost of losing thousands of pastors each year is astronomical. The church cannot afford to let these losses continue. To make matters worse, most congregations have not been properly equipped to deal with conflict. So when conflict arises, many members retreat into denial, some form defensive factions, and others launch all out attacks on the pastors. When a pastor who is unprepared for peacemaking walks into a church, the stage is set for agonizing conflict and a forced exit.¹⁴

It is important to understand and remember that conflict and forced termination is not just a Southern Baptist problem, but is widespread in every denomination. In 1999, 72,000 pastors and clergy were fired across America. Some pastors were partially at fault, some had no fault, and some did not know the reasoning. Nevertheless, pastors and their families were fired, forced terminated and pushed out into the streets.¹⁵ The most shocking statistic from this study is that only 55% of pastors who experienced forced termination returned to church related vocations; 45% did not.¹⁶

Southern Baptist Reasons for Leaving Ministry

Faulkner/Smith research identified findings from early 1984, 1993, 1997 and 2000; various factors led to forced terminations. Their findings in the following table displays the most frequently stated reasons for termination as revolving around a lack of

¹⁴Ken Sande, *Strike the Shepherd—Losing Pastors in the Church*, Peacemakers Ministry, <http://www.peackemakers.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b1084263/apps/nlcontent3>, (accessed February 15, 2010).

¹⁵ Everett Goodwin, “Forced Terminations: When a Church Asks a Pastor to Leave,” <http://priscillasfriends.org/studies/terminations>.” (accessed February 5, 2010), 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

unity within a congregation:¹⁷

Table 10 : Termination Reasons Involving Lack of Unity

66%	Small but powerful minority of members
41%	Factions in the congregation
16%	Differed with congregation over leadership style of pastor
12%	Been at church too long
10%	Too authoritarian or dictatorial
10%	Couldn't get along with members
10%	Not spending enough time on the job

In the book, *Forced Termination*, which was released in 1986 as a result of the first research project on the subject, there is a section on “subterranean pastors” or lay persons, who feel the need to guide the church spiritually, often to the exclusion of the leadership of the pastor. These persons had tendencies to: speak the language of Zion, be involved in the administration work of the church, but not necessarily the official elected positions; develop allies among the elected positions of leadership in the church; although not particularly faithful in services on Sunday and Wednesday nights, they were particularly faithful during decision making meetings, adept at exhortation and bluff—although these were carefully disguised; and verbally concurrent about spiritual welfare and future of the church apparently because it gives them leverage with the naïve and vulnerable members.¹⁸

It is important for both pastors and churches to understand that even a mad man

¹⁷Brooks R. Faulkner, *Leaving – Why Ministers Leave the Ministry*, Advisory group study on Why Protestant Minister Leave the Ministry, Sponsored by the Lilly Foundation and the Catholic University of Washington, D.C., January 2001.

¹⁸ Brooks R. Faulkner. *Forced Termination: Redemptive Options for Ministers and Churches*. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 1986, 10.

like Adolf Hitler understood how to manipulate people to fill their needs. Just before he launched his attack against the Soviet Union in 1941, he arranged for Stalin to see forged documents that indicated his own officers were conspiring against him. Gripped by paranoia, Stalin executed or imprisoned 35,000 top officers—over half of the Russian officer corps. When Germany launched its attack, the Russian army was headless and helpless, and suffered staggering casualties and defeats.¹⁹

A similar disaster is occurring in the church. We are engaged in a terrible war. We struggle “against the powers of this dark world and...spiritual forces of evil.”²⁰ We need our leaders now more than ever; it is devastating when we lose them on the eve of battle. We are losing them at an alarming rate. Although there are times when it is best for a pastor to step down, too many good pastors are driven out of ministry; leaving thousands of churches weak and vulnerable to spiritual attack. Without good leadership, factions multiply, evangelism declines, divorces proceed unrestrained, discipleship loses direction, and missionaries are forgotten on the field. Scripture warns, “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered (Matthew 26:31).”²¹

It appears that pastors do not understand that really what is behind most termination and do not know how to avoid them in cases where it is possible. A survey conducted by this author of 60 SBC pastors show what advice they would give to avoid a forced termination. Their responses and the number of pastors who gave that response are as follows: establish a support group – one, stay morally clean – two, let deacons handle

¹⁹ Sande, 1.

²⁰ Ephesians 6:12

²¹ Sande, 2.

it – three, obey the Bible – twenty- three, love God – one, love people – six, pray – seven, be humble – two, check church out up front – four, maintain good character – three, listen to God – three, use pastoral authority – two, be polite – two, let wife handle it – one.

(Pastor survey- appendix I)

Many seminarians have no idea what they will face in future ministry. Many churches are repeating the same mistakes and sins as they have done for years. A pastor loses much when he is force terminated from a church. A website created by Pastoral Advocacy Network has comprised a list of what a minister loses in a forced termination. It states that “there are many things that could be added to any list of things that a pastor and his family lose in a forced termination. These changes happen literally overnight. There are few vocations in life that cause the loss of so much by a termination. If churches and church leaders would take the time to consider what they are doing to their shepherds in dismissing them, I wonder if they would be so cavalier about their decisions.”²²

Patterns of Forced Termination

One must ask himself if there is a plan that churches can execute to force terminate their pastors. An article was written by Dr. Charles H. Chandler. After he facilitated a session at a Healthy Transitions Wellness Retreat, he was asked, “Is there a rulebook on forced termination?” He had observed the similar “dynamics” or “rules” in all the different stories. A psychiatrist assisting with a retreat was appalled as he heard the stories. He worked extensively with corporations in “downsizing” and noted that none of them treated employees like the churches treated the retreat participants. Chandler

²²Sande, 2.

observed three “dynamic” patterns in all of their stories:

First, each minister had been “blind-sided by a group of two or three persons, usually self-appointed, who approached the minister without warning and said he should resign because of loss of effectiveness. They convinced the minister that the whole church shared their feelings. The ‘group’ presented themselves as merely ‘messengers’ and insisted there was nothing personal about the request. The messengers told the minister they loved him and really hated to deliver the resignation request.”

Second, while the minister was in the state of shock after being “blind-sided,” the “group” dumped guilt on the minister. They said the resignation and related conversation must be kept very quiet. If word got out, it could split the church, and the minister would not want to be known as one who caused a split church! Any negative result from the minister’s leaving was dumped directly on him as though a minister could just slip away and never be missed.

Third, while the minister was still in no condition to make a decision of any kind the group pressed for a decision. In most cases, a few weeks or months of severance was offered—provided the resignation was given immediately and the entire conversation kept quiet. The “messengers” added “we have to know what you plan to do because if you refuse to resign or if you talk to other church members, we will take away the severance and call a church business meeting to fire you. Again, the minister was told there was nothing personal about the request. The group had to do what was best for the church. No reasons were given for the forced termination except that the church needed new, more effective leadership.”²³

Dr. David L. Goetz’ “Forced Out” gives some of the fallacies and undesirable

ethics endorsed by the phantom rulebook:

Though the messengers present themselves as representing the vast majority of the membership, according to a survey conducted by Leadership Magazine, 43% of forced-out ministers said a ‘faction’ pushed them out, and 71% of those stated that they ‘faction’ numbered 10 persons or less. The self appointed ‘messengers’ often horde the inside information, because only 20% of the forced out ministers said the real reason for their leaving was made known to the entire congregation.²⁴

Ethics are often a victim of forced pastoral termination and for that matter, the continuing conflicts in church life which lead to such traumatic moments. Nearly every

²³ Charles Chandler, <http://www.pastorsnet.com>.

²⁴ David L. Goetz, “Forced Out” Leadership journal (Carol Stream, IL: Volume XVII No. 1 winter 1996), 40.

minister that has been forced terminated or those with near misses can testify to a universal theme of compromise in congregational ethics.²⁵

The most frequent violation by churches is in the failure to observe established procedures and process for evaluation, conflict resolution or review in pastoral relationships. Commonly terminations are accomplished without a meeting of a pastoral relations committee, deacons, or church board taking place instead, small groups or powerful individuals often accomplish their purpose by private meetings or conversations followed by the use of threats, intimidations, or excitements designed to encourage a pastor to resign. This causes the impossibility of the pastor being treated fairly, and also compromises the integrity of congregational practice and the level of trust within the congregation.²⁶

The stage is set so that the pastor and churches' reputation and future is destroyed if the story and truth gets out. Pastors, churches, and church leaderships must understand that many of the church conflicts are brought on by pathological antagonists, also known as clergy killers. Sometimes it is the pastor, but this author's experience of fifteen years working with pastors and churches in conflict is that most of the time it is pathological antagonists (clergy killers) that target the pastor for destruction as well as the church.

Dr. Guy Greenfield says that the wounded minister is the growing phenomenon that "is a major problem approaching crisis proportions of pathological antagonists and their allies and sympathizers who launch systematic and sustained attacks on the leader of their church or ministry."²⁷ Dr. Kenneth Haugk, a clinic psychologist, says that pathological antagonists go out of their way to make insatiable demands, usually attacking the person or performance of others. These attacks are selfish in nature, tearing down rather than building up, and are frequently directed against those in a leadership

²⁵ Everett Goodwin, 2.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Greenfield, Guy. *The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal Attacks*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2001.

capacity.²⁸

Dr. Lloyd Rediger describes these antagonists as “Clergy Killers,” who have as their one major objective, to abuse or hurt the minister to the degree that they will leave the ministry. Rediger notes that this abuse is “increasing in epidemic proportions...it is a phenomenon that is verified by both research and experience.”²⁹ He identifies clergy killers as “people who intentionally target pastors for serious injury or destruction.”

Pathological Antagonists

Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk says that antagonists are not a homogenous group. It is helpful to distinguish three different types:

1. Hardcore antagonists are seriously disturbed individuals. They are psychotic—out of touch with reality. Their psychosis is almost always of the paranoid variety, which by its nature is not as easy to detect as other psychoses, many paranoid individuals can appear normal some (or even most) of the time. Hardcore antagonists tend to have incredible tenacity and an unbelievable desire to make trouble.
2. Major Antagonists are not as severely disturbed as hardcore antagonists, yet they may at times exhibit similar behaviors; whereas hardcore antagonists cannot be reasoned with because they lack emotionally stability to understand. Major antagonists possess the capability of reasoning with their opponents but decline to exercise it, and the demands of major antagonists also are insatiable. Diagnostically, major antagonists have a character of personality disorder. They carry a great deal of hostility, couples with an overwhelming drive for power. Although they are not psychotic, their personality problems are most certainly deep seated, yet they are not out of touch with reality
3. Moderate antagonists lack the self starting quality of the others. Moderate antagonists lack the perseverance of the others. Moderate antagonists have personality problems, but their problems are not as severe as those of hardcore and major antagonists. They are the main followers of the other

²⁸ Haugk, Kenneth C. *Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1988.

²⁹ Dr. Lloyd Rediger, *Clergy Killers*.

kinds of antagonists.³⁰

The question is often asked, “Why do antagonists have and get so much power and are free to use it in the church? How do they get followers?” Here are some reasons why individuals follow antagonists:

People sometimes mistake antagonists for activists, the truth is often far less exciting than lies and half-truths, bad news is more exciting than good news, some people are gullible, and antagonists take advantage of that; some people tend to follow orders without question, some people are intimidated by antagonists, many persons just don’t want to rock the boat, people follow antagonists to be one of the crowd, some join antagonists as a way to express their own feelings, others follow antagonists because of misguided loyalties, and some follow antagonists because antagonists frequently make their followers feel important. In some ways, followers of antagonists resemble ‘moderate antagonists.’ Most people have a tendency to follow powerful leaders, but those who actively support antagonists allow this tendency to blind them.³¹

Dr. Guy Greenfield adds one to the list. He calls them well-intentioned dragons—their goals may allegedly be the best interest of the church, but their methods and attitudes are still those of a dragon, doing more harm than good, undermining the majority of the church without intending to do so.³²

Clergy Killers

According to Dr. Lloyd Rediger, clergy killers are people who intentionally target pastors for serious injury or destruction. One must be careful not to label a person who has a disagreement with a pastor as a clergy killer. The following are “six D’s” that characterize the clergy killers’ phenomenon.

³⁰ Kenneth C. Haugk, 29-30.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Guy Greenfield, 39.

Destructive: Clergy killers are marked by intentional destructiveness. They don't just disagree or criticize, they insist on inflicting pain and damaging their targets. Their tactics include sabotage, subverting worthy causes, inciting others to do their work, and causing victims to self-destruct.

Determined: Clergy killers don't stop. They may pause, go underground, or change tactics, but they will intimidate, network, and break any rules of decency to accomplish their destruction. They insist that their agenda has priority.

Deceitful: Clergy killers manipulate, camouflage, misrepresent, and accuse others of their own tactics. Their statement and negotiations are not trustworthy.

Demonic: Clergy killers are evil and may be mentally disordered, depending on how you define intentions and behavior that do not yield to patience and love, or honor human decency. Spiritual leaders become symbols and scapegoats for the internal pain and confusion they feel. Because their mental pain and spiritual confusion are unidentified and untreated, they foment unusual, reactive, and destructive motivations. This evil characteristic may also be apparent when there is no other cause that explains the clergy killer behavior.

The mainline church and popular culture essentially have discarded the concept of evil by labeling sin and evil as mental illness or human failure. This loss of a spiritual understanding of intentional destruction leaves us unable to make use of the powerful spiritual gifts of enlightenment, grace, discipline, and courage to confront evil through God's power.

Denial: This fifth "D" indicates the way the church colludes in the agenda of the clergy killer. Most of us don't want to admit to the reality of clergy killers, nor do we acknowledge the intentional damage they cause. Because we believe "this shouldn't be happening in the church," we convince ourselves it isn't really happening. Such denial leaves clergy killers unrestrained and the whole church vulnerable.

Discernment: This is the prescriptive sixth "D." This spiritual gift of discernment is God's grace proffered in an enlightened person who sees and understands evil, and then allows himself or herself to be empowered by God's Holy Spirit and to become an agent of exorcism. Discernment is followed by confronting evil, in this case, the clergy killers. This confrontation works best, of course, in a healthy community of faith.³³

The Most Common Congregational Toxins

In Dr. Lloyd Rediger's book, "The Toxic Congregation: How to Heal the Soul of

³³ Lloyd Rediger, *Clergy Killers*, 9-10.

Your Church,” he describes the most common congregational toxins: 1.) persistent use of innuendoes, public and secret attacks on integrity and competence; 2.) intimidation and threats through financial matters; 3.) physical harm (or threat of harm) of property damage; 4.) persistent resistance to programs and ideas unwanted by the perpetrators; 5.) false reports to denominational officials or consultants; 6.) extreme opposition to instruction and orders from authorities; 7.) judgmental actions to the point of theological ‘clearing’; 8.) unwillingness to use civil conflict resolution methods; 8.) continual use of disrespect; 10.) violation of moral and spiritual Christian norms.³⁴

In conclusion, Dr. Rediger states

Such behaviors by individuals and groups are our focus. But it should be obvious that toxic intent and behavior, now common in families, neighborhoods, and social environments, and influential on congregational toxicity. These toxins, like biochemical toxins, cannot be dismissed, covered over, ignored, or diluted. They must be identified, treated, and eradicated. This may seem overly severe to some who believe that if we ignore, analyze, or keep trying to negotiate and ‘love’ intransigent control mongers, they will become civil. History and research expose this fallacy.³⁵

Summary

This chapter provided insights into causes of terminations in SBC churches. It included termination study of all pastors, the top reasons for termination of SBC ministers, and what a minister loses in termination. It also describes and explains pathological antagonists and clergy killers. It goes on to give some of the most common congregational toxins. Causes of termination of ministers in SBC churches need to be

³⁴ Rediger, G. Lloyd. *The Toxic Congregation: How to Heal the Soul of Your Church*. New York: Abingdon Press, 2007.

³⁵ Ibid.

identified and biblical solutions provided. The most efficient and accurate way for this to be done is through the use of a scientific research survey which would gather information from pastors to determine the causes of terminations, forced terminations and pressured terminations.

CHAPTER SIX

PREVENTIVE SOLUTIONS

The author has come to realize through research for this project the reality that prevention of destructive church conflict needs immediate attention by all members of the Southern Baptist Convention. Several preventive tools will be suggested for use by churches, pastors, Director of Missions (DOMs) and Church Minister Relations Directors (CMRs) to equip them to curb the epidemic/pandemic of conflict that leads to the termination of SBC Pastors and the devastation it creates among churches, pastors and their families, and the negative impact it has on the evangelism to unbelievers and discipleship of believers.

During a phone interview with Dr. Silven Knobolch, the CMR Director for the state Southern Baptist Convention of Illinois, he stated that it takes about seven years for a church to recover from a forced termination of a pastor and the conflict involved. He went on to say that more training of conflict resolution needs to be provided for pastors, churches, DOMs and seminaries.¹

The Church Minister Relations Directors of each SBC state convention are on the front lines in their efforts to prevent, intercede and provide some kind of assistance to hurting churches and terminated pastors.

¹ Dr. Silven Knobolch, phone interview by Don Hicks, March 3, 2010.

The author conducted a survey of twelve CMR's who have averaged eight years serving as CMR's and 163 years collectively, serving as a pastor of a church. Collectively the CMRS did not have a standard way they were trained in church conflict resolution. The following are resources used by CMRS: Peacemakers, George Bullard, Speed Lea, Norris Smith, LifeWay one-day training, old HMB Conflict Management Training and seminary class. There was over whelming support (all 12 surveyed) from the CMRS for seminaries to train their students in church conflict management. They said much of the problem with church/pastor conflict is because the pastors had not been trained in seminary on how to deal with conflict and basic interpersonal relations. Most of the training they provide to the pastors, DOMS and churches in church conflict training is what they have put together over the years of ministry, peacemakers and books they have read. The CMRS refer churches in conflict to the DOMS, third party mediators, themselves or retired pastors. CMRS find out about the needs of churches and pastors by word of mouth, phone calls from a deacon, pastor or a DMO. The resources being used by CMRS for church conflict presently are as follows: Transitional Pastor, Intentional Interim, LifeWay, various books and old LeaderCare material. All see church conflict escalating. LeaderCare provided help, but now the only resources are Focus on the Family, Peacemakers and private counselors or private ministry retreats for ministers and their families when going through forced termination. All 12 of CMRS surveyed wanted to see a Church Conflict Manuel put together that reflected SBC polity and would be used as a training tool for pastors, staff, deacons and church members (See Appendix E for CMR Survey questions). This author concludes by this survey that CMRS are in need

of their voices being heard by ministers, churches and denominational leaders in the SBC.

The author over the past three years has had many phone conversations and several interviews with past leaders of LeaderCare, pastors, Wounded Heroes, the pastoral ministries division of LifeWay, GuideStone, NAMB, CMR's, DOM's, chairmen of deacons, church members and all have concluded that a uniform conflict resolutions manual needs to be developed and recommended to Southern Baptist Churches, denomination leaders and pastors and they should consider adopting and using this tool. Each of the aforementioned knows the importance of the autonomy of the local SBC Church (polity) and that this cannot be required. However, such a resource could be highly recommended to the churches so that conflict would not lead to forced terminations and conflict would not lead to destructive conflict, but to Biblical resolution.

It has been said that in order to understand agreements, both parties must understand the expectations and communicate with each other. Dictionary.com defines the following terminology: expectation – “a prospect of future good or profit;” communication – “the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing or signs;” prevention – “the act of preventing; effectual hindrance” and “a preventive: This serum is prevention against disease.”² This chapter will state and expand on suggestions to help prevent conflict that may lead to forced termination of pastors in the SBC.

²<http://dictionary.reference.com>

Training of Seminary Students

Upon research of the six Southern Baptist seminaries it was discovered that all the seminaries had at least one elective course in church conflict. According to their catalogs and class descriptions, none of the six seminaries had a core course that was required by the seminary student that the author could find:

Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries

Golden Gate	Peacemaking in the Church (elective) Conflict Management in the Church (elective) No required classes
Mid-Western	Interpersonal Communication and Conflict Management (Required): Personal Life and Work of the Pastor (a couple of class periods)
New Orleans	Stress and Conflict Management (elective) 2 hours Conflict Management (elective) 2 hours
Southeastern	None found
Southern	Change and Conflict Management (elective)
Southwestern	Conflict Ministry in the Church (elective)

Southern, Mid-Western, Golden Gate, New Orleans and Southwestern seminaries had a course devoted to conflict management, church conflict and resolution. The author of this paper could not find a course listing for church conflict and/or conflict management at Southeastern Seminary, however it was taught for a couple of class periods in Pastoral Ministries class. In fact, each of the six Southern Baptist seminaries had at least a class period or two but none had a required church conflict resolution or conflict management course required. The author could not find in course offerings, one class period or any course description of the six SBC seminaries regarding information about forced termination of ministers; this is not to say this subject matter does not exist, but information concerning forced termination could not be found in school catalogs. The lack of required training for seminary students concerning these issues is not unique.

Very few seminaries of any kind offer “church conflict” training within the required seminary training of seminary students.

A survey conducted by the author of 60 SBC seminary trained pastors representing major parts of the United States both of small and large churches appears to agree with the conclusion that the pastors wished they had had training in church conflict in seminary training. The survey of 60 SBC pastors asked, what areas of pastoral ministry do you wish you had been taught while in seminary? Notice the results. Out of 60 SBC pastors 47 said church conflict resolution along with ,3 more Bible training, 8 more counseling,8 more administration, 12 more business, 1 more systemic Theology, 3 more leadership, 1 children’s ministry, 1 Latin. When the same 60 pastors were surveyed about if they had ever been trained in church conflict resolution 7 said yes and 53 said no. 17 said they had 1 class period in seminary, read an article(2), read a book(3), heard a sermon (6)or on the job training(5). (Survey questions Appendix I)

According to Bill Summers, Director of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, TN: “Total FTE enrollment for the six seminaries for the year 2008-2009 was 7,782. Out of that total, 1443 graduated in the 2008-2009 class – 844 with MDiv, 71 with ThM and 528 with MA.³ During that same period SBC churches terminated almost the same number of pastors that the SBC seminaries were graduating to be pastors (see Table six, page 52 of this paper).

Sam Granade, Director of Church-Minister Relations for the Alabama Baptist Convention states, “Unless a minister knows how to deal with conflict and other realistic

³ These are the latest statistics on the six Southern Baptist seminaries and are from the academic year 2008-2009. These figures represent full-time equivalent enrollment and do not include students enrolled on the web. This information is from the 2010-2011 SBC Ministry Statements Notebook – according to Bill Summers, Director of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, TN.

problems, he may never get to use his preparation in theology and Bible study.” In effect to stem the tide of termination in the denomination, the church-minister relations directors considered several solutions which, if applied to developing situations, could positively affect relationships between congregations and minister. One of the suggestions was that they urge seminaries to prepare ministers to deal with conflict with studies in conflict management, staff relationships and personal management.⁴

Sam Granade, Director of Church-Minister Relations for the Alabama Baptist Convention states, “Unless a minister knows how to deal with conflict and other realistic problems, he may never get to use his preparation in theology and Bible study.”⁵ Seminary students need a dose of reality and a firm understanding that we are involved in spiritual warfare and our enemy is Satan. I Peter 5:8-9 (HCSB) says, “Be sober! Be on the alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your brothers in the world.” He will do everything possible to instigate and turn conflict into destructive conflict which destroys the local church and pastors. Prayer, fasting and spiritual warfare are good weapons for preventive measures in church conflict. These are the tools needed to combat the enemy and will be outlined in chapter seven of this paper.

⁴ Lowry, Jim, *Denominations Struggle with Forced Terminations*, Baptist Press, 1/4/86, (accessed 3/5/2010).

Training for Churches

Training in conflict resolution is available from the local Associational Director of Missions and the State Director of Church Minister Relations. To discover the resources which each state provides, contact your respective associational or state office. The problem that this author discovered was that there is no uniform conflict resolution manual that can be used so that all Southern Baptists will understand how Baptist churches will handle church conflict and termination of pastors. The challenge will be to take the Bible, conflict tools, and Baptist polity into consideration and put them together into an understandable manual that SBC churches may adopt. The Baptist Faith and Message is a document that SBC churches have adopted that guides them in their statement of faith. Why not entertain the thought of conflict resolution being adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention and closely examine the treatment of our pastors and how they are terminated? Further examination, study and solutions are needed with the pastors and churches that violate the Scripture in the way they handle conflict and termination.

Pastor/Church Covenant Agreement

The author of this paper could not find many SBC churches that actually have a clergy employment contract and the ones that did, did not want to share them. However, the time has come that each church and pastor should think about a written agreement. The author's mentor Adrian Rogers once told him that, "The weakest ink is better than the sharpest mind."

Richard Hammer JD in *The Pastor-Church Contract* writes concerning the terms and elements in structuring a minister employment contract:

1. Legal names of each party
2. Signatures of each party
3. Characterize the minister as an employee or self-employed
4. Job description
5. Term of employment and condition for renewal
6. Grounds for discipline or dismissal and any procedure that must be followed
7. An arbitration clause. The minister and employing church to utilize arbitration to resolve disputes rather than the civil court
8. Define the compensation of the minister. This is an important feature of any employment contract
 - a. Housing allowance
 - b. Equity allowance
 - c. Accountable reimbursement policy
 - d. Church-owned vehicles
 - e. Self-employment tax
 - f. Insurance
 - g. Retirement
 - h. Works made for hire
 - i. Qualified tuition reductions
 - j. Loans to clergy
 - k. Voluntary withholding⁶

Most Southern Baptist churches do not make a written contract with their pastors.

The Pastor Search Committee Handbook gives a good pastor-church covenant of relationship.⁷ That is a good start. (See Appendix F for a sample Pastor/Church Covenant Agreement.)

Agreements made between the pastor and church need to be in writing. This will provide clear definition of what the pastor expects of the church and what the church expects of the pastor. Additionally, obligations should be outlined between the pastor and the church which should include matters of mutual agreement, annual time off, and salary/benefits. Finally, the Pastor and the church's Chairman of the Board of Trustees

⁶ Richard R. Hammer, *The Pastor-Church Contract*, (Matthews, NC: Church Law and TaxReport, 1998), <http://www.churchlawtoday.com/private/library/pcl/p02b.htm> (accessed March 12, 2010).

⁷ Pastor Search Committee Handbook, (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2002), 72.

should sign agreements on behalf of the church after the church leadership and Pastor have agreed, and the church has approved.

A Proposed Bylaw Section on Church Conflict

Each church should have a section in their bylaws that directs the church on how to handle church conflict. This allows the church members and leadership to be equipped to handle any church conflict before it becomes destructive and prevents a Biblical resolution. It is always better to have a section in your church's bylaws before a conflict happens. In Appendix G you will read what The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia recommend their churches to use in their bylaws that guide the church members and leadership in times of conflict, therefore leading to a Biblical resolution.

Dealing with Conflict in a Small Church

Within the Southern Baptist Convention, 81% of the churches average 125 or less.⁸ When considering this fact, it is needful to understand that small churches function in a world of different dynamics and functionality as opposed to large churches. Since conflict is a reality in small churches, pastors must recognize that conflict will happen in small churches, and if it is not handled correctly, it can cause damage to the pastor and the church for an extended period of time.

When tensions develop because people disagree (even two or three individuals within the congregation), the small church experiences spiritual stress and emotional

⁸Bivocational Small Church Leadership Network, August 2010 newsletter, <http://www.bivocational.org/BIVOnewsletter/2010/E-Newsletter> (accessed August 31, 2010).

upheaval. Conflict can be especially traumatic for the people and pastors as they try to deal with the crisis.

Dr. Glenn C. Daman gives advice on the dynamics of small church conflict:

1. Conflict undermines the morale of the pastor
One significant problem in a small church is the isolation of the pastor. In a small church there are no staff members from whom to obtain emotional and spiritual support. When issues arise the pastor often faces them alone.
2. Conflict undermines the morale of small church
The morale of a small church is often fragile. Because the church may struggle with finances, staff, and resources, there is a concern that the church will no longer be viable. A small church can become discouraged if other churches grow and it does not. The people can become discouraged if new families visit, but go to the church down the road because it offers more programs.
3. Small churches often mask conflict under the guise of relational unity
A small church has a relational culture. The people can appear unified in public, but conflicts often remain hidden below the surface. Members may be resentful from past hurts and offenses, and even be angry and bitter.
4. Conflicts affect the whole
A disagreement between two individuals in a larger church may remain unnoticed by the rest of the congregation; but in a smaller congregation, the whole church feels the tension. A small church operates as a whole. People want to know what is going on in every program and ministry, even if they are not directly involved. Consequently, everyone becomes aware of a conflict between two individuals. They will intuitively sense the tension, even if they are not fully aware of the issues.
5. Conflicts affect the testimony of the church.
The future ministry of the church can be affected when people become angry and bitter with one another. This is especially true for churches in smaller communities where the population remains static. People in the community say, 'Well, I used to attend that church, but...' The ongoing conflicts that hinder the outreach of the church may not only stem from internal conflicts within the church, but also from conflicts within the community. When invited to attend the church, people say, 'I would go to church, if so-and-so did not go there.'⁹

⁹ Glenn C. Daman, *When Sheep Squabble-Dealing with Conflict in the Smaller Church*, http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200502/200502_086_squabble.cfm (accessed March 28, 2010).

Dr. Daman goes on to give excellent advice on preventing conflict in the small church when he says:

“While all conflict cannot and should not be avoided, many conflicts within the small church can be prevented. Many tensions can develop, not because of sinful behavior, but because pastors fail to communicate clearly and learn how to work with others.”

Three Ways in Preventing Conflict in the Small Church

1. Working with the tribal chief
Pastors can avoid being entangled in controversy by learning to work with the tribal chief of the congregation. Remember, this individual has considerable influence in the church. A pastor sometimes wrongly assumes that the tribal chief disagrees with his ideas because he is carnal and power driven. In most cases, however, the tribal chief has risen to the rank he holds because of his faith and long-term involvement in the church. A tribal chief often provides the spiritual stability small churches need during changes in pastoral leadership.
2. Orchestrate change carefully
Most change results in conflict as the desired new methods clash with the established old methods. As a result, change involves a loss as well as a threat to the stability of the church. This is especially critical to a church that is struggling to exist. Even though the change may be necessary for the church to remain viable, people fear that the change may be the final action that pushes the church over the edge.
3. Maintain communication
Pastors often create tension because they assume everyone has heard and understood what has been communicated. Conflict usually arises because pastors have under-communicated rather than over-communicated. The rule of thumb is: the more significant the issue and the more it affects congregational life, the most pastors must communicate clearly and continually what is happening and why.¹⁰

Transitional Pastor

The Southern Baptist's have created a great tool that both gives preventative and interventional solutions to church conflict and forced termination of pastors. LifeWay

¹⁰ Daman.

Christian Resources (cooperating with state conventions and associations) provides kingdom focused denominationally relevant resources to churches in the period without pastors. This support includes:

- Identifying and training transitional pastors
- Informing churches of transitional pastor ministry
- Providing information about potential transitional pastors
- Providing in-process consultation to transitional pastors
- Evaluating transitional pastor effectiveness

The Transitional Pastor Training Manual consists of 118 pages and is divided into five main divisions:

1. The Transitional Period in the Life of the Church
2. The Transitional Pastor in the Life of the Church
3. The Skills of the Transitional Pastor
4. The Transitional Pastor Covenant of Relationship
5. Leading the Church Through the Stages of Transition¹¹

The Transitional pastor usually stays in the church for 12-18 months. During that time many issues can be dealt with that allow the next pastor to be successful.

Transitional pastors are highly experienced and trained for this ministry. This ministry was developed by Dr. Roy Edgemon, Dr. Bill Hogue, Dr. Henry Webb, and Dr. Earnest Mosley. Combined they have about 200 years of ministry experience as pastors and denominational workers with the Southern Baptist Convention. They give an average of four training sessions a year. This training is taught at the seminary level (in the MDiv and DMin) at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, VA, by this author. The transitional pastor ministry is probably the best preventative tool that Southern Baptist's have to battle conflict within Southern Baptist churches that lead to forced termination.

¹¹ *Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual*, LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, (LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN, 2000), p. iv.

Pastor Search Committee Handbook

Pastor Search Committee Handbook is designed to be practical in content, user friendly in approach, and comprehensive in scope. It addresses the needs of churches of various sizes and is simple enough that all churches will find it easy to use. Although the process is detailed, it is not cumbersome. The Pastor Search Committee Handbook recommends a five phase process in calling a pastor and is a comprehensive pastor search handbook for training a pastor search team.¹²

Questions Pastors should Ask

One of the best tools that a pastor can use to find out about a church before he accepts the call is to ask questions. This author has found very little resources on how to investigate a church and plenty of materials on how a church can search and investigate a pastor. The following are questions that the author has collected over many years of ministry. These questions need to be asked by a pastor candidate to a perspective church he is interviewing with. The first set of questions in Appendix H will assist the pastor candidate in understanding the church he is considering, In determining if this church could be a church that is, or has been in conflict and if they have terminated pastors in the past. The second group of questions in Appendix H may be used. When the prospective pastor has the answers to these questions, he will be able to pray and seek God's direction more clearly. In some cases to advise the church they must deal with certain issues before he will consider becoming the pastor of their church. He needs to ask a series of questions to the pastor search committee that will help him develop an understanding of

¹²See *Pastor Search Committee Handbook*, Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2002.

the church he is considering. If the church has been in conflict in the past or is in conflict in the present the author has developed questions to be asked in addition to the previous ones located in Appendix H of this thesis.¹³

You might say as a pastor that if you gave these questions to a church, they would never call you again. Then you should praise the Lord, and be thankful that you and your family will not be the next to be destroyed by a church that allows clergy killers to take out their pastor and his family while they look the other way. On the other hand, if these questions had to be answered by a conflicted church before they ever got a pastor, they would either deal with the sin or not have a pastor. I would challenge all SBC pastors to ask these questions when they are interviewed by churches and it will make a difference in the termination, forced termination, and pressured termination of pastors (ministers) in the Southern Baptist Convention. Perhaps the pastor being considered should say, “Not now, but call me back when you are ready to deal with the past history of your conflict and or sin. Do not make me the next terminated pastor of your church.”

Summary

This chapter covers preventative solutions for church conflict that leads to termination, forced termination, and pressured termination of SBC ministers. It is important that seminary students, churches, and pastors are trained in preventative solutions of church conflict before they have conflict or before it turns destructive. Three important tools discussed in this chapter are a pastor/church covenant agreement, the transitional pastor, and proposed bylaws for a church to use that describes how a church

¹³See Appendix H for a complete list of suggested questions.

deals with conflict biblically. Special attention is given to conflict in a small church. This chapter also includes questions that a prospective pastor can ask a church so that he understands the church he is considering.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERVENTIONAL SOLUTIONS

When a problem is identified, this creates an opportunity to provide a solution. The success of provided solutions is based upon the implementation of those solutions. The author proposes ten intervention solutions for conflict that leads to the termination of Southern Baptist pastors.

Prayer

Prayer is solution number one. Prayer should have first priority when a church and pastor are in conflict with each other. It has been said that nothing of eternal significance happens apart from prayer. Adrian Rogers said this about prayer:

As temples of the Holy Spirit our bodies should be houses of prayer. Anything that distracts from vital prayer in our lives is a treacherous thief, stealing from us the blessings the Father longs to bestow and taking from the Father the glory that He so richly deserves. We need to learn the art of prevailing prayer, which links us with the Almighty God in a miraculous way. If God does hear and answer prayer, then the one thing above all else that I should learn to do is to pray. Failure to pray is more than a tragedy. It is a sin. God's Word says, 'moreover, as for me, far be it for me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.'¹

The church and pastor should pray together and others should pray with them as well. Dr. Elmer Towns says:

Jesus made an incredible promise to us that if we agree with each other in prayer, the answer will come. 'I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven' (Matthew

¹Adrian Rogers, *Principles of Prayer*, The Criswell Study Bible, p.1870.

18:19). The Greek work for ‘agree’ used in the verse is the source for our word ‘symphony’ two people praying in agreement makes beautiful music to God!²

We must pray in faith so that God will hear us when we pray according to His will.

Towns further summarizes these conditions:

We ask sincerely, we ask in faith knowing that we will receive an answer, we continue asking, we ask according to Scripture, we ask in Jesus name, we make our requests in order to glorify the Father, we ask according to the will of God, and we ask only after repenting for our sins.³

Dr. Dave Earley relates in his book on prayer,

Leaders must turn problems into prayer, of course, it is best to pray before problems are even on the horizon, but often that is not possible. Therefore, leaders must learn that when troubles arrive to pray, pray first and pray until you either know what to do next or have peace that God has it all under control.⁴

Many times in conflict we do not know what to do. Many times we must ask for protection from our enemy and our enemy is the “evil one” Satan. Dr. Rogers says,

The phrase ‘deliver us from the evil one’ is acknowledgement of our need for God to provide us a way of escape from our great enemy the devil. Satan has already made plans to sabotage your life and to hurt your loved ones. He has already dug a pit for your feet to fall in this day. Satan cannot get at God directly. He knows, as evil persons have always known, that if you cannot harm someone, then the next most effective thing is to harm someone that person loves. God loves you and therefore, Satan throws his armies of all the artillery of hell at you. You need the protection provided through prayer. The prayer for deliverance from evil and temptation is preventative medicine.⁵

Fasting

Another preventative solution is fasting. Dr. Elmer Towns in his book, *Fasting for*

² Elmer L. Towns, *How to Pray When You Don't Know What to Say* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2006), 25.

³ Towns, 83.

⁴ Dave Earley, *Prayer: The Timeless Secret of High-Impact Leaders* (Chattanooga: Living Ink Books, 2008), 74.

⁵ Rogers, p.1872.

Spiritual Breakthrough: A Guide to Nine Biblical Fasts, states,

I want every Christian in the world to learn to fast—to fast properly—too fast for results. If every Christian fasted, the results would shake our society like a windstorm bending a sapling. Christians would demonstrate that they live differently, that their faith is imperative, and that the Almighty works in their daily lives. If all your churches fasted, they would move forward in evangelism and reach out in feeding and helping others. God would then pour His presence upon His people.⁶

The author recommends the following fasts for conflict in the church. These fasts are taken from the ten fasts described in Towns book:⁷

Table 11 : Fasts

The Ezra Fast	Fasting to solve problems (see Ezra 8:21-23). If we fast for a specific purpose, we may solve a debilitating problem.
The Elijah Fast	Fasting to break crippling fears and other mental problems (see 1 Kings 19:2-18). Through fasting, God will show us how to overcome negative emotional and personal habits.
The Saint Paul Fast	Fasting for insight and decision making (see Acts 9:9-19). If we fast to subject our will to God's, He will reveal His will to us.
The John the Baptist Fast	Fasting for an influenced testimony (see Matthew 3:4). If we fast for the influence of our testimonies, God will use us.
The Esther Fast	Fasting for protection from the evil one (Esther 4:16). If we fast for protection and deliverance from Satan, God will deliver us from evil

Revival

The church today has become entangled in destructive conflict and disunity. As a

⁶ Elmer Towns, *Fasting for a Spiritual Breakthrough: A Guide to Nine Biblical Fasts* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1996), 15.

⁷ Ibid, 2.

Transitional Pastor at a Baptist Church, while conducting a Church Memories Workshop (the members of the church talk about the past and present condition of the church both bad and good and seek understanding and biblical resolution), the author asked the members to write reasons why the church was having disunity. A long time member and Elder wrote and shared with the church, “The church has tolerated ‘Jezebel’ attitudes in the interest of Botox unity.” What he was saying is that piety, artificial differences and sinfulness in the church was making it impossible to have Biblical unity.

Our country, communities, businesses, families and churches are going to implode because we recognize, but are unwilling to stop and turn in obedience to God’s Word and His Spirit to stop disunity and destructive conflict in God’s church. We as a Southern Baptist Convention can preach and say all we want that evangelism is declining because Christians are not witnessing and churches are not giving enough money for missions, but Satan has deceived the church and is destroying thousands of churches and pastors every day because we refuse to deal with destructive conflict and disunity in churches. There is hope and a solution to disunity and destructive conflict in the church. In the book written by Greg R. Frizzell titled *Releasing the Survival Flood*, he says that

The Bible leaves no doubt that loving God means loving each other as the Bible says in Matthew 22:37-38, John 13:13-35 and 17:21. Today believers must rediscover a vital fact—the two Great Commandments are inclusively linked. In other words, no one can truly love God yet be unkind or bitter toward fellow Christians. In Matthew 5:23 and 6:14-15, Jesus made clear that anger and disunity among believers seriously blocks our relationships with him. In terms of love and fellowship, today’s church is in a major crisis. Never has our nation seen such devastating disintegration of church and family relationships. In fact, what we have witnessed in family structure is no longer a decline, it is an unmitigated collapse! As much or more than any other factors, relational anger and unforgiveness are huge barriers to a modern day revival flood.⁸

⁸ Gregory R. Frizzell, *Releasing the Revival Flood: A Churchwide Journey to Miraculous Unity and God Glorifying Fellowship* (Union City: The Master Design, 2005), 8.

Church conflict is the devil's tool that is destroying the local church. The church needs to awaken and hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ when he said to the churches in Revelation: "Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches"⁹ The commandment given by Jesus in John 13:34 (HCSB), "I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another" is a foundational principle which must be practiced among believers.

There is something unspeakably ugly about disunity, fighting, and tension in churches. These patterns utterly quench God's Spirit; they boldly damage our witness and power in evangelism! When believers cannot get along in reasonable peace, we shame Christ's name and irreparably damage lives.¹⁰

A great revival will be triggered in this country and around the world when churches and pastors are willing to fall before God and give up their rights, opinions, and plans so that destructive church conflict and disunity will be stopped by God's forgiveness. We must forgive each other anew to restore the church and his ministers to the full power through the Holy Spirit! We need a modern Pentecost or no proffered resolution to conflict resolution will ever work, and will be nothing more than a waste of time and money.

Spiritual Warfare

In order to hinder or stop churches, the devil continually seeks to exploit issues

⁹ Revelation 2:17 (HCSB).

¹⁰ Frizzell, *Releasing the Revival Flood*, 8.

and divide believers.¹¹ The Bible says in 1 Peter 5:8 (HCSB), “Be sober! Be on the alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.” We should be prepared and ready with Biblical tools for both prevention and correction.¹² The Scripture says in 2 Corinthians 2:11 (HCSB), “so that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his intentions...” The church must stop being ignorant of Satan’s devices, or he will keep taking advantage. The Bible says in Ephesians 6:12 (HCSB) “For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.” Church conflict and disunity are Satan’s tools that he is using against God’s church. One way Satan is doing this is by allowing conflict to lead to the forced termination of the pastor. Forced termination is an unknown practice in the New Testament. Nevertheless, forced termination has become a cultured solution for difficult spiritual problems and other conflicts in the church. God’s way of handling conflict calls for rebuke of sin, repentance, discipline of unrepentive sin and restoration. The church must find a way to stop the damage done by the increasing number of forced terminations. Forced termination is a non-biblical method of dealing with conflict.¹³

Satan works best under a cover of darkness.¹⁴ Current studies show the very same problems are common in thousands of congregations. Revival is being stopped by

¹¹ Frizzel, 8.

¹²1 Peter 5:8 – “Be sober! Be on the alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour (HCSB).”

¹³ Michael D. Miller, *Honoring the Ministry: Honoring the Leaders God Gives Your Church* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1998), 9.

¹⁴Ephesians 6:12 (HCSB) – “For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.”

destructive church conflict and disunity.¹⁵ The church and pastors cannot get along because damaged relational patterns are usually much more “spiritual battles” and “heart issues” than mere personality or psychological conflicts. Because the root battle is spiritual, most relationship patterns will not be solved by human resolution techniques alone.¹⁶ In his book *What’s Right with the Church: A Manifesto of Hope*, Dr. Elmer Towns wraps it up well when he says,

In spite of its failures, when the church upholds the standards of righteousness and influences society around it, life will be better for all believers, and those who are not believers. The church may be wrong in the area that some of its members are hyper-spiritual. But what’s right with the church? Right standards!¹⁷

Christian Conciliation

Christian conciliation involves different tools and each is important to know how to use and when to use them. The Bible says in Galatians 6:1-2 (HCSB), “Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you won't be tempted also. Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

A problem that this author has discovered in his research and involvement in church conflict for fifteen years as a coach/mediator/arbitrator to both churches and pastors, is that many times the pastor and church are in a win/lose competition. The following conflict intensity scale adopted by Peacemakers from Sam Leonard, is a good

¹⁵ Miller, *Honoring the Ministry*, 10.

¹⁶ Frizzell, *Releasing the Revival Flood*, 9.

¹⁷ Elmer L. Towns, *What's Right with the Church: A Manifesto of Hope* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2009), 75. This book is highly recommended to help churches to see what’s right with the church and should be read by church members and pastors.

way to determine the level of church conflict and the methods to resolve the conflict.¹⁸

Table 12 : Conflict Intensity Scale

Code	Level	Description	Appropriate Response
0	Minor Offenses	Characterized by disappointed expectations or incidental irritations	Overlooking
1.0-1.9	Low-grade Conflict	Characterized by uneasiness; discomfort; something “feels wrong;” goal is to put your finger on the problem	Discussion
2.0-2.9	Problem to be solved	Characterized by acknowledging an issue needs resolution; focus on the problem, not the people; goal is to solve, collaborate	Discussion/mediation
3.0-3.9	Debate	Characterized by muddying personalities with the problem; emotions begin to get in the way; intermittent anger and demeaning humor; goal is to persuade	Discussion/negotiation or mediation
4.0-4.9	Win/Lose Situation	The contest begins! Characterized by solidified positions, lines being drawn, factions being formed; goal is to win, at the expense of others if necessary	Mediation or arbitration
5.0-5.9	Fight/flight	Characterized by open hostility; material issues are forgotten and persons become the issue; opponent viewed as the “enemy;” goal is to inflict harm and dissolve relationship	Arbitration or church discipline
6.0-6.9	Search and destroy	Characterized by total breakdown of communication; identifying opponents as “evil;” emotions become steely cold; goal is to inflict substantial harm and remove all opposition	Church discipline or litigation
7.0-7.9	Annihilation “Code Black”	Characterized by the need to wipe out other people; goal is to obliterate those seen as being	Church discipline, litigation, or self-defense (flight or war)

¹⁸ *Code: each new level represents a ten-fold increase in the intensity of the conflict. This chart is adapted from Sam Leonard, Solutions, Inc...

		responsible for problem; can lead to suicide (self-destruction), murder, or war	
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The tools of intensive conflict resolution need to be understood. The following explanation by Peacemakers Ministry is excellent:

Conciliation (Work it Out) Responses-We do it Ourselves

1. Overlook (Proverbs 19:11, 17:14; 1 Peter 4:8)
2. Discussion (Matthew 18:15, 5:23-24; Proverbs 28:13)
3. Negotiation (Philippians 2:3-4)

Conciliation (Work it Out) Responses-Others Assist

1. Mediation (Matthew 18:16) Power to Decide
2. Arbitration (1 Corinthians 6:1-8) Lose power to Decide
3. Church Discipline (Matthew 18: 17, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15) Christian Conciliation Practicum¹⁹

One of the problems that Southern Baptist churches and pastors have had in settling church conflict is that they have not had all the resources and support they need to deal with how to oversee, discuss and negotiate the problems once they move into the area of mediation, arbitration, and church discipline. Decisions and agreements must be made concerning who to trust to come in and help them. By the time the Director of Missions is called, it is usually too late. The author has found that a plan for third party mediators and arbitrators outside the Directors of Missions are needed to aid Southern Baptist Churches and pastors. At this time, this vital ministry is not available.

When LifeWay was operating LeaderCare, Norris Smith was one of LeaderCare's consultants who trained church conflict mediators and provided conflict mediation to churches in the SBC. According to Smith, "a biblical model for conflict resolution has led

¹⁹ Christian Conciliation Practicum, Student Manual, Copyright 1993 by Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemakers ministry.

many congregations to use mediation when disagreements become severe.”²⁰ Dr. Smith went on to say, “While bodies of research differ in the numbers of church staff persons terminated each year...in nine out of ten churches experiencing severe conflict, the pastor resigns or is asked to leave.”²¹ This author agrees with Dr. Smith when he states,

The image of a church in conflict is one of a family in conflict rather than an institution in conflict. One distinction in this family approach is that 70% of mediation success lies with the personality of the mediator. Institutional mediation is not generally influenced so much by personality. If they don't trust you, or if you appeared to be biased toward one another or the other, you have become ineffective.²²

Church Discipline

Church Members

Jesus describes the steps for church discipline in Matthew 18:15-17,

If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he won't listen, take one or two more with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established. If he pays no attention to them, tell the church. But if he doesn't pay attention even to the church, let him be like an unbeliever and a tax collector to you.

In these verses are steps that give guidance for resolving church conflict.

“Determining the cause of conflict in the church is necessary in resolving the problem.”²³

The following are the steps outlined in Matthew 18: 15-17:

²⁰ Charles Willis and Chip Alford, "Mediation Gains Popularity to Save Churches in Conflict," *Baptist Press*, March 24, 1997, <http://www.baptistpress.org/bpnews.asp?ID=4350/> (accessed November 3, 2009).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Charles Willis and Chip Alford.

²³ Miller, *Honoring the Ministry*, 78.

Table 13 : Guidance for Church Discipline from Matthew 18:15-17

The offended goes to the offender (vs. 15a)	“If your brother sins against you go and speak with him in private. If he listens to you, you have won a brother.”
The offender listens and corrects his ways (vs. 15b)	“But if he will not listen...”
The offended goes to the offender (vs. 15a)	“If your brother sins against you go and speak with him in private. If he listens to you, you have won a brother.”
If the offender will not listen, take two or three witnesses (vs. 16)	“But if he won’t listen, take one or two more with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established.” If the offender listens and repents, then the process stops here.
If the offender will not listen, then take it to the church (vs. 17)	“If he pays no attention to them, tell the church.” If the offender repents (corrects his ways) you are to bring restoration to them. This might mean giving up leadership until the person goes through the process of restoration and the church is satisfied with the process of restoration.
If the offender will not listen (vs. 17)	But if he doesn’t pay attention even to the church, let him be like an unbeliever and tax collector to you.” If the person repents of their sin, the church should re-examine the person and bring them back through the restoration process.

Church Discipline of a Pastor

In describing the importance of biblical honor of ministers, Paul the apostle gave insight to the subject of dealing with conflicts, “Don't accept an accusation against an elder unless it is supported by two or three witnesses. Publicly rebuke those who sin, so that the rest will also be afraid.”²⁴ Most reasons given for forced termination of a minister are symptoms of deeper problems:

²⁴ 1 Timothy 5:19-20 (HCSB).

When conflict occurs between ministers and churches, all should practice the principle of 1 Timothy 5:19. Are there two or three witnesses to any accusation? Because ministers are leaders, it is not uncommon for them to be criticized by others, some of whom are envious. Many ministers have experienced the pain of critical letters, anonymous phone calls, threats, and false accusations. Before any actions are taken against an accused minister, those involved must ask if there is more than one credible witness to the charges.

Under Old Testament Law, a man could not be put to death on the testimony of just one witness. It required the testimony of two or three witnesses. ‘At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death’ (Deut. 17:6). Another portion of the Mosaic Law declared, ‘One witness shall not rise up against the man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established’ (Deut. 19:15).²⁵

Many of the charges used to dismiss ministers are not sinful actions, but are based on personal conflicts. Termination of a minister is the last resort and should not be the first for the church when there conflict between the minister and a church. The goal of church discipline is restoration, not punishment.²⁶

Second Corinthians 2:6-8 (HCSB) says that, “The punishment by the majority is sufficient for such a person, so now you should forgive and comfort him instead; otherwise, this one may be overwhelmed by excessive grief. Therefore I urge you to confirm your love to him.” When steps are taken to remove a sinning minister; the church’s response should be with a view of restoration, not vengeance. Restoration of the believer is the intention Jesus had in mind in regard to the resolution of conflict.²⁷

As the church follows 1 Timothy 5:19-20 and Matthew 18:15-17 in dealing with a pastor in sin, sometimes it is helpful to secure a third party mediator to assist. The pastor

²⁵Miller, *Honoring the Ministry*, 76.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

and church leadership should agree on whom together. If the pastor does not confess and repent of the sin, then the Bible is clear that they should be removed. Churches should place the process of this into their bylaws and every pastor should insist that the church have a process for dealing with conflict with each other and the pastor, so that a Biblical process takes place and not a “good old boys solution.”

Summary

This chapter has suggested several interventional solutions that churches and pastors should use to biblically resolve conflict. There are procedures that need to be implemented in the church so that God is honored and biblical “due process” is accomplished. When a carpenter pulls up in his truck to remodel your house, pulls out tools he will use, tells you he has everything he needs and will start on your house as soon as he learns to use them, how would you react? Your reaction would probably be along the lines of, “I hope he leaves quickly” or “I’d better find someone else!” This chapter provided tools, but they are only beneficial if churches and pastors learn how to use them rather than just waiting for a conflict to start. If these tools are used correctly then destructive conflict can be averted or solved.

CONCLUSION

The author's journey as a minister of the Gospel started on April 18, 1975. At that time, the author surrendered to the call of God on his life to preach. Over the last thirty-five years, the author has come to understand church conflict by being a pastor, experiencing conflict in churches, study/training, and providing help to churches and pastors as a coach, mediator, and consultant in church conflict and church health, and being an Assistant professor and Coordinator of Church Health and Church Relations at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

This paper has given an overview of conflicts within churches that lead to the termination of pastors within the Southern Baptist convention, accompanied by a proposal of preventive and interventional solutions. This presentation of statistics and history of these past and present conflicts has proven the epidemic of conflict in our churches and the forced termination of pastors, and how this has weakened and is destroying local churches, pastors, and their families in the SBC. There are some efforts that have been made to address the problem the last twenty years or so, and it has been encouraging that even with the closing of LeaderCare on a national level that CMRs and DOMs are still working hard to minister to churches and pastors in the area of church conflict and terminations of pastors.

However, without LeaderCare, the following is true:

1. The Southern Baptist Convention has no ministry in place for

church pastor restoration

2. The SBC has no national center for pastor care
3. The SBC has no 1-800 number for hurting pastors
4. The SBC has no unified manual for addressing church conflict
5. The SBC has no church discipline process that has been adapted by its churches in a uniform way
6. The SBC has no unified mediating, arbitrating, or any kind of process that enables the churches and pastors to work out conflict
7. SBC churches and state conventions are outsourcing its counseling, mediation and help for pastors to non-SBC organizations that do not understand SBC polity
8. The SBC allowed LeaderCare to be dismantled without a replacement ministry to pastors and their families

Church conflict and termination of ministers has not gone away and its progression has worsened. The Church-Minister Relations Directors for each state, the Directors of Missions, pastors, staff, church members, dechurched, unchurched and unbelievers will attest to this fact. A quick internet search will yield over 4 million results on pastor/church conflict. It is obvious that no one person can deal with this pandemic of destructive church conflict. It will take measures that only a team can do with the direction of God and His leadership and direction.

The Southern Baptist convention was on the right path to identify and treat the infection of destructive conflict and disunity within its churches, leading to the termination of pastors; they need to get back on this path. Bob Sheffield, a former

director of LeaderCare at LifeWay, told me in a phone interview, “We have the same root causes but modern manifestations of reasons why ministers are terminated.”¹ Today the internet is being used to attack pastors by unhappy church members as well as members suing their churches, church leaders and pastors. There are some pastors who may need to be fired when the pastor has a moral failure, illegal actions, or Biblical heresy. But many churches that repeatedly terminate pastors for reasons such as "it was time for him to go" or "we could not get along," need to be red flagged until the church deals with its unhealthy ways of dealing with conflict.

The Southern Baptist denomination has done an excellent job teaching churches how to investigate pastors but an extremely poor job training pastors on how to investigate a church. The church wants to know everything about a pastor. It is common practice to have a pastor sign a permission slip to check out credit/history, criminal history, degrees, references, former churches, and ask any question about a pastor to anyone they desire. This is a good practice, but the church also should be willing to answer any questions and provide documents requested by the pastor being considered as the prospective pastor, as he is checking out the church. It has been the experience of some pastors that churches became offended and/or surprised when asked to provide information about the church. As President Ronald Reagan use to say verify, verify, verify. If disunity and destructive conflict are going to be solved in SBC churches, the churches and pastors are going to have to be willing to solve their conflicts biblically and have biblical repentance, forgiveness, and restitution. In other words, allow God’s Holy Spirit to move by convicting of sins (both in church members and pastors). Donald F.

¹Bob Sheffield, personal phone interview, March 2010.

Ackland, who wrote the book for Southern Baptists in 1955 called *Joy in Church Membership*, said the following, which fits perfectly to what is taking place today in our world, country, state, communities and churches:

Great Civilizations of the past have perished by reasons, among other things, of the decay of family life. Where marriage vows are lightly broken, home blessings are little esteemed, and parental authority is ignored, there are the seeds of national deterioration and disaster. The remedy for all such tendencies is the gospel of Jesus Christ; and the glorious alternative is the multiplication of homes in which Christ is honored, God's Word is read, family worship is observed, and the family is linked by indissoluble bonds with the fellowship of the church.

There are three great institutions which have the blessing of almighty God: civil government, church, and home. True happiness, experienced on the widest scale, depends upon loyalty to all three. When the compass of life finds its center in the church, then the circle which it strikes will be large enough to contain all other worthy loyalties, and these will be bound together by the unbreakable ties of love for God and for each other.²

Dr. Ackland was on target in 1955 when he wrote these words. In the church today, where is the joy of church members when you are there to serve and worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Even with all the problems in the church, the church is still the bride of Christ. Today churches and pastors are now involved in lawsuits that are not being settled but are destroying the testimony of Christians in the world's eyes. The Bible tells Christians very clearly how to handle conflicts as this author has previously stated in this paper. Churches and pastors in the present and future will be involved in lawsuits if they do not put preventative measures in their bylaws. When conflict issues cannot be resolved between church members and pastors, an environment must be created for both to share and submit to biblical resolutions which will include mediation and if need be, binding arbitration before they go to court to have it settled.

² Donald F. Ackland, "Joy in Church Membership", 1955, Convention Press, Nashville, TN, p.8.

It is imperative that Southern Baptist churches understand that if they do not protect their pastor from abuse that the courts of the land will have to protect them from illegal treatment. I have seen many churches in conflict with pastors disregard the Bible, bylaws and in some cases, the law to remove their pastor for non-biblical reasons while the majority sit and watch it time after time. This is unacceptable.

Because some churches are not giving pastors 'due process' they are turning to lawyers and the courts for help. This practice was unheard of in the past but now is becoming an option for pastors who have been removed illegally from their pastorate and have suffered unbelievable emotional, physical, and financial damage. Churches are starting to find that a few members or small groups in the church can cause conflict for the whole church in legal matters when these members say they represent the church and they legally do not.

There are times when pastors need to be fired but this process should follow Biblical guidelines according to Matthew 18:15-17 and I Timothy 5:19-20. This is "due process" for ministers. Churches should be kind, loving, and compassionate even when terminating a minister or when a minister resigns because of moral failure. Remember the pastor has a family and they need to be taken care of. The church is usually more understanding of helping a family when the parents are drunks or unbelievers than to their pastors and their families.

After researching and writing this paper, "a study of the conflicts within churches that lead to the termination of pastors within the Southern Baptist Convention, accompanied by a proposal or preventative and interventional solutions," it is realized that the Southern Baptist Convention has taken steps to identify the problem of forced

termination and several decades to understand and address it, and now a plan must be devised to go forward without LeaderCare. Conflict and termination of ministers is raging in churches and must be addressed before more hurt and destructive conflict lead to forced termination and pressured termination of pastors. Many churches will repeat abuse of their pastors that God has placed in their churches as gifts from Him to the church, and will not be able to secure pastors. Where is the righteous anger of denominational leaders, pastors, and church members in relation to the termination of pastors in Southern Baptist Churches?

Ministers and church members have attended SBC conventions over the years and heard sermon after sermon that have been preached about the need for more evangelism, baptisms, church growth, and the need of more money for missions to reach the world for Christ. Of course these issues should be areas given top priority, however, all of these areas will be enhanced when time is spent on solutions to assist churches and pastors to solve their disunity and destructive conflict, which is leading to termination, forced termination, and pressured termination of pastors.

SBC churches are struggling and unhealthy because they are not handling church conflict properly. The problem is not going to go away by just having another program put in place by the SBC. You can replace rotten wood all day long but if you do not address what is causing the wood to become rotten, it will simply be a temporary solution rather than a permanent one.

Examine the answer to this question: Would the Southern Baptist Convention churches have hundreds of millions of dollars more to reach people for Christ, for missions, to disciple Christians, and have greater joy in their churches, if time were spent

in the reduction of church conflict and they were willing to confront the sin of disunity and destructive conflict and repent of it? Inactive church members that do not attend church because they have been hurt or have seen someone hurt in church conflict would start coming back to the church and more unbelievers would come to know Christ. We would see thousands of preacher's kids have a healing and return to our churches. What a day it would be to see church members, churches and pastors reconciled because churches would bring back former pastors and publicly ask for forgiveness.³ Pastors would go back and ask forgiveness of churches they have hurt and sinned against and seek forgiveness. Churches must understand that sowing seeds of discord by church members left unchecked and undisciplined by the church will lead to disunity.⁴ Here is a good explanation of what it means to sow seeds of discord:

This phrase means to create internal conflict within the enemy. Secretly sow discord on the enemy's friends, families, allies, advisors, employees, officers and neighbors. Doing so will weaken the enemy's power and abilities. With so much internal discord, the enemy will be preoccupied and weaken from within. This will make the enemy penetrable by relying outside elements, the very ones that are helping your enemy.

One can start sowing seeds of discord by infiltrating close people of the enemy. Send spies, or create new ones within the enemy to start the process. Spread rumors, gossips, fake letters and calls to sow discord by making everyone close to the enemy seem like a betrayer. From bribing to sending false information, the methods are endless. By weakening the enemy from internal discord, attacking them will be easy.⁵

Destructive conflict will lead to division in the church, members leaving,

³1 John 1:9 (HCSB) – “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

⁴Proverbs 6:16, 19 (HCSB) –“Six things the LORD hates; in fact, seven are detestable to Him;” ¹⁹“a lying witness who gives false testimony, and one who stirs up trouble among brothers.”

⁵David Kam, "Sowing Seeds of Discord," *Marketing Deviant*, August 22, 2008, <http://marketingdeviant.com/sowing-seeds-of-discord/> (accessed April 22, 2010).

decreased offerings, termination of ministers, the church losing its witness for Christ to the community, and in some cases, the closing of the church; the most harm being the effect on evangelizing the lost.

The author had breakfast in Lynchburg with Dr. Ed Stetzer of LifeWay Research while he was there to speak at a meeting sponsored by the Center for Church Planting at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in the spring of 2010. During this meeting Dr. Stetzer agreed with this author that destructive church conflict was destroying churches and damaging churches, pastors, evangelism and discipleship in SBC churches. He went on to challenge the author to speak and write with the goal to educate, exhort and inform pastors, churches and denominational leaders of the SBC concerning the dangers of destructive conflict that leads to the termination of ministers, while pledging his support for this endeavor.

The following are proposed recommendations by the author based on his research in this thesis;

Proposed Recommendations to the Southern Baptist Convention, Churches, and Ministers

1. Give more support to the CMR's of each state which would include resources and money to assist them to help the churches in their states in the area of church conflict and termination of ministers.
2. Commission and pay for a scientific study/survey that would be made up of CMRs and conducted by Life Way Research. CMRs would create questions to ask and oversee the project. SBC pastors would be asked directly how church conflict, termination, forced termination, and pressure termination and how it affects their families.
3. Direct GuideStone to educate churches and pastors on insurance protection such as Employee Protection Liability Insurance, officers and directors, malpractice, disability and other helpful coverage.
4. A national 1-800 number and website for ministers to be able to be directed to the right resources and persons for assistance in church conflict and personal and professional crises.
5. Unified church conflict manual that could be used by churches and pastors

- that would have SBC church polity in mind.
6. A recommended bylaw for churches to adopt on how they will handle conflict in the church
 7. A recommended pastor/church convent agreement for churches and pastors to use and could be adopted by churches.
 8. Identify repeat offending churches that terminate pastors and red flag the church until they have resolved the problem that causes them to terminate pastors.
 9. Direct all Southern Baptist Seminaries, colleges, and universities to develop courses and require courses on church conflict resolution and preventing ministry failure in their core requirements.
 10. Develop and train pastors and churches in church conflict mediation and reconciliation.
 11. Establish a national minister counseling network
 12. Establish a national church conflict coaching and mediating network
 13. Establish a national ministers retreat and rest network
 14. Establish a national network list of churches that minister to terminated, forced and pressure terminated ministers
 15. Establish a national network for pastor's kids
 16. Establish a national network for minister's wives.
 17. Educate every Southern Baptist Church member in how to love and care for their ministers and families
 18. A convention-wide day of fasting and prayer for churches and their ministers in conflict.
 19. A foundation be started to provide money for pastors who have been terminated and need assistance and training.
 20. Establish a national Center of Church Health – Pastor/Church Relations that will provide networking and resources to churches and pastors in the area of Biblical church health as well as training for mediation/arbitration.
 21. Each SBC church and pastor participate in the, Transformational Church Training being provided by LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville Tenn. and written by Dr Ed Steizer and Dr Tom Rainer.

Disunity in the church, destructive church conflict and the termination, forced termination or pressured termination of pastors can be stopped in SBC churches by embracing biblical conflict resolution through training our seminary students, pastors, deacons and churches and providing them support and encouragement. Preventive and protective measures can be placed as guardrails to strengthen, guide and guard the pastors and churches from disunity and destruction. Churches and pastors, be strengthened by these words in I Chronicles 28:20 (HCSB), “Then David said to his son Solomon, ‘Be

strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God is with you. He won't leave you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the LORD's house is finished.'”

APPENDIX A
ARTICLE BY LLOYD REDIGER

(On following page)

FOCUS

CLERGY
KILLERS

by G. Lloyd Rediger*



*G. Lloyd Rediger is a pastoral counselor, author, speaker, and consultant who specializes in clergy leadership issues. He lives in Roseville, Minnesota.

This is an angry column. I am enraged at sick and evil people in the church who destroy pastors. This column and magazine are typically read by clergy, so this is like "preaching to the choir." But I must say these things anyway, for they may add a bit of courage or clarity to the lives of troubled pastors, or at least assure them that they are not alone.

Some years ago I entitled one of these columns, "Let's Get the Pastor." In it I described a kind of game that goes on in many churches, with the pastor used as a football. This time I am describing the more vicious game in which a pastor is targeted for destruction, and a congregation is seriously damaged by the fallout. The perpetrators go free, of course, often to kill again, and often convinced that they are doing the right thing.

When I encounter such pastor killers, I am reminded of biblical passages where religious people destroy or terrorize spiritual leaders. Even Jesus was not exempt. In one sense we should not be surprised, therefore, when we as clergy are terrorized, for it only took them three years to get Jesus. What hurts the most, of course, is that these people purport to be Christians. And often, they are persons in whom we have invested significant amounts of professional and personal time and energy.

My purpose in writing on this subject is to clarify for pastors and denominational executives, the fact of, the methods used by, and the remedy for clergy killers in the church.

THE REALITY OF CLERGY KILLERS

First, the fact of clergy killers. Nearly any experienced pastor and denominational executive has encountered these humanoid (excuse me, my anger is still showing!). We tend to deny, excuse, or pamper them in the church. But they are very real and very toxic. I have encountered them in every denomination, and in many congregations over the years. But because we believe such persons should not exist in the church, and that we should be kind and forgiving to everyone, we fail to admit or understand the tactics, the motivation, the devastating toll they take on the energy and resources of the church, besides the cruel damage they do to clergy and those dear to them.

Clergy killers typically have intimidating power because they are willing to violate the rules of decorum and caring the rest of us try to follow. This is powerful at a subconscious level, for we sense such persons are willing to escalate the fight, and use tactics we forbid to use ourselves. In fact, most of us clergy do not even know how to do survival fighting ("street fights"), much less have the necessary resources and networks for such showdowns.

Clergy killers are masters of disguise. They can present themselves as pious, active church members who are "only doing this for the good of the church." Naive and gentle ("peace at all costs") parishioners may be deceived by such camouflage. And they typically advocate for the CKs (clergy killers) by urging the pastor and church board to be patient, make allowances, or not to misjudge such folks. CKs can convince many that they are raising legitimate issues. For those who might do battle with them, CKs use bluster, threats, and terrorism to appear as unstoppable giants. CKs even have allies of opportunity, i.e., parishioners who do not advocate the cause CKs are espousing, but who wish to punish the pastor for their own hidden reasons.

Clergy killers are evil. There, I said it! There are clinical names,

of course, but in our theological categories, they are evil. This means they are not just sinners, in the normal inadvertent or mistaken sense. They do evil intentionally, and willingly pursue its destructive means and ends. Even repentance and restraint on their part is suspect, for it is typically a tactic only. Being around, and having to associate with such persons, tempts healthy spiritual leaders to pronounce curses ("Who unto you Scribes and Pharisees..."), as someone we all know did more than once while on this earth.

IDENTIFYING CLERGY KILLERS AND THEIR EFFECTS

From a clinical (psychological) perspective, CKs are likely to have personality disorders (paranoid, antisocial, borderline, histrionic, narcissistic, and even passive aggressive). Or they may be previous or present victims of abuse. They may have volatile or addictive personalities. They may have inadequate socialization, arrested adolescence, and violent role models in their history. And they may have developed a perverse, voyeuristic, and vindictive taste for the suffering of their targeted victims.

In more ordinary terminology, CKs have learned the power of throwing tantrums to get their way. They know how to be bullies. They know how to distract, confuse, and seduce. And they have little sensitivity to the suffering of those outside their circle of cohorts.

It took me some time to realize the dimensions and variations of CK tactics. In generic terms, they can either wound or kill by direct attacks, by getting others to do their dirty work for them, or by inducing their victims to self-destruct. The first two are self-explanatory. But it is this third generic form of victimization that may go undetected.

The tactic of inducing a victim to self-destruct is not uncommon. Some jungle creatures do this. And it is not uncommon in business, politics, and the professions to harass a person in subtle and obvious ways until their stress produces irrational and destructive behavior. They may wound or destroy themselves. They may destroy a scapegoat. Or they may do something bizarre, unethical, or criminal so that legal authorities must punish them. And it is not uncommon for the victim of a CK to develop behavior and attitudes that lead to alienation of family and friends, divorce, and loss of clergy credentials.

I could cite many examples of clergy killers in action. One that raises my ire every time I hear or remember his name is a former pastor who was once a shining star in his denomination. He seemed to have everything going for him, until he became pastor of a medium-sized, thriving, and progressive church. But a couple of university professors and a seminary professor resented this pastor's charisma and success. They combined to sabotage his leader-

ship. Then when his confidence began to falter, and his pastoral competence waned under their attacks, they began to accuse him of mental disorders. His wife divorced him in panic. He finally left ordained ministry, and has been unable to hold any but menial jobs. He now subsists in an inner city, hardly able to cope or even recognize old friends. The CKs continue in that church, like scorpions doing what scorpions have to do.

Cardiovascular disorders, cancer, arthritis, gastro-intestinal disorders, respiratory problems used to be rather rare among clergy. And clergy used to generate the best mental health and longevity statistics of any profession. Not anymore. I hear of and work with highly stressed, paranoid, cynical, and dysfunctional clergy all the time now, with growing numbers. Many of these maladies are traceable to CKs and their work. The costs to the church are enormous, in lost clergy, health costs, divided congregations, loss of ministry resources, and in debilitated pastors unable to function at much more than a survival level. Can anyone stop these CKs?

THE EXTENDED DAMAGE

One of the causes of the downturn in mainline Protestant denominations is the wounded pastor syndrome. When a pastor is bleeding and desperately trying to survive, it is apparent that she or he will have little energy available for the creative pastoring that church growth requires. But since the pastor is still visible and the traditional services continue, most people will not realize what is occurring. This condition resembles a pet dog with worms. It still looks like a dog, so no one thinks to question the loss of energy, and the debilitation of mission. And hardly anyone goes to the pastor with the kind of understanding, strength, and support she or he needs.

I had lunch with a number of pastors recently, at a conference I was leading on another topic. It was notable that they talked almost continually of church situations where the pastor was under attack. Their comments ranged from "There, but for the grace of God, go I" to "poor guy, I wish I could help him!"

More than one denominational executive has told me lately that as they travel across their district or the nation, they find attacks on clergy to be endemic. They indicate a helplessness to do much about it. For even in strong executive denominations, top leaders have little authority to disarm or fight CKs. They fear offending powerful lay leaders, no matter how evil they are. Being political, they realize that their power is derivative. And most denominational executives do not have an inclination toward the power tactics needed to eliminate CKs from a congregation. The current prevalence of lawsuits is certainly no encouragement for any denominational leader to risk offending hostile-aggressive persons. But legal means may be one possibility for controlling

CKs.

It would be helpful if seminaries could prepare pastors for the real jungle of the local church. Academic is not notable for realism, however. It should be obvious by now that pastors need survival training. They certainly should be trained in conflict management as well. Lip-service to this need is not adequate.

Recently, I consulted with an organization that is establishing a leadership training process outside of seminaries. This organization purports to train pastors in evangelism, church growth, and "community-based pastoring." When I asked the director what kind of training they offered pastors in building their own support base, and in survival tactics, he looked at me as if I were from another planet. He said, "If a pastor is a dynamic leader, there will be no such problems." If he hadn't been so sure of his institute's success, I could have told him of a burned-out pastor I had talked to the previous week, who had graduated from his program, and of at least two other graduates whom I had heard were under attack by CKs.

THE CONTEXT

The etiology of the CK phenomenon is not mysterious, for we have always had a few evil people in the church. But contemporary society is especially compatible for CKs. There is a general distrust of authority figures of any kind. There is biblical and theological illiteracy in the pews. This means parishioners do not understand God's purposes, and the dynamics of spiritual leadership. There is a general sense of entitlement growing in the church, in which church members feel entitled to comfort and privilege. If a pastor does not please them, they are free to criticize and punish. There is a growing business mentality in the church, which says that if the CEO (pastor) does not produce, he or she should be fired. And there is mobility among parishioners which means they feel little loyalty to the "peace and unity" of the church. For they will soon move on, without having to deal with the consequences of their irresponsible behavior. As has been mentioned, we are not training pastors to handle conflict, nor support themselves in survival situations.

All churches and pastors are not suffering, of course. And all critics of pastoral leadership are not CKs. But the killing of pastors is a serious and, in my experience, growing phenomenon. Some pastors are incompetent, and some "shoot themselves in the foot," but none deserves the torturing tactics of CKs.

It is not only the victimized pastor who suffers, of course. We have noted the subtle, but significant damage to congregations and denominations. We should certainly note the damage to clergy spouses, families, and intimate friends when CKs attack. Such actions may have even fewer survival resources unless they have their own careers and support networks.

Identifying a problem is useful. But offering possible solutions and prevention techniques is also necessary. Even though clergy killing is such a distasteful, denied subject, some healing insights will be useful—at least to clergy who know the reality of this treacherous role vulnerability.

GENERIC CASE MODEL

The first overt sign of the killing process began at a Church Board meeting (Session, Board of Deacons, Classis, Vestry, etc.). A member said, "A lot of people are complaining to me about the pastor. They're saying he doesn't call enough; he can't be reached when they want to talk to him; he's not friendly enough."

The Board asked who these people were, but the complainant refused to say. Then they asked for specific examples. He refused to be specific. The Board said they couldn't take action unless they knew the specific complaints. The complainant replied that they had better take action, because these were important members who might leave the church.

Before the next Board meeting, a letter filled with innuendoes against the pastor was mailed to the congregation. At the following meeting, the Board and pastors were in a near panic. The complainant said he had talked to the bishop, and the bishop said these were serious charges that needed to be investigated.

A new investigative team reported next time that there seemed to be a lot of people unhappy with the pastor. The Board voted to have a delegation meet with him.

At the next meeting the pastor was absent. After six months of this harassment, he was in the hospital. The Board voted to send a delegation to the bishop. At the following meeting, the delegation reported that the bishop recommended removal of the pastor.

The pastor currently is scheduled for heart bypass surgery. Rumor says his wife is addicted to tranquilizers.

THE REMEDIES

The first remedial insight is the one to which this column is dedicated, namely, the existence of clergy killers. Such persons exist and continue their devastation in that shadowy dimension of institutional religion, behind the prominence of altar, pulpit, and pew. As I consult with victimized clergy, and even savvy denominational executives, it is hard for them to admit the presence and damage of clergy killers. It is much easier to blame pastors, for an unwritten expectation of our profession is that successful pastors should not have unhappy parishioners. There are incompetent pastors, of course, but there are clergy killers also.

The second insight is that the motivations and tactics of CKs are of a different order or magnitude

than ordinary critics or nagging detractors. They are evil. And this is what makes them difficult to deal with. For though religion and clergy are not strangers to evil, we have forgotten the need for exorcism. Given this lapse, we simply must teach ourselves reality. CKs do not stop with winning a single victory over a pastor. It is only a matter of time before another attack is fomented. CKs do not stop when thwarted. They may back off, but this is only to regroup and find a winning strategy. CKs camouflage their methods and goals through denial, piety, distractions, seduction, and unlikely alliances. CKs are willing to go to any length to achieve their goals, and seem to relish the notoriety and general destruction they generate. There is a lifelong goal. When they kill off (get rid of) one pastor, they will as certainly wait for an opportunity to kill the next one, even if they had a part in bringing her or him to the pulpit. CKs typically do not leave a congregation after either a victory or defeat, as other types of clergy antagonists often do. They tend to stay and turn a parish into a clergy killing field.

The third insight about CKs is how difficult and rare it is to find successful ways of thwarting or eliminating them on a permanent basis. As already mentioned, the denial process in the church is so strong that neither traditional theology nor polity offer effective relief. But there are several strategies that offer some possibility of success.

1. Have patience. If one learns survival tactics, outliving CKs may be possible. Forty years in the wilderness eliminates some of them.

2. Raise consciousness. Educating laity and clergy to the CK phenomenon is valuable for both the short term and long term. This is sophisticated education, however; denial and CK vengeance will try to sabotage it.

3. Teach survival. Clergy and their intimates must be provided with self-preservation skills, since a few lay leaders, colleagues, or denominational executives will come to their aid, ready to stay the course with tenacious CKs.

4. Give theology and polity some teeth. In order that when CKs are identified, they may be eliminated. We have now put teeth into policies to eliminate killer clergy (sexual malefactors); we could do the same with clergy killers.

5. Engage knowledgeable consultants to bring in outside skills needed in this struggle for which the church is poorly prepared. Such professionals can advise and devise the interventions necessary. I have been encouraging experienced Pastoral Counselors (AAPC certified) to bring their special skills to the church for such ministries.

6. "Go by the book." Follow your denomination's polity and protocol as closely as possible. This not only lessens legal liability, it also sets precedence and gives all involved parties an honorable method and goal.

7. All of the above!

This is a negative column, in that it deals with an unwanted subject and with admitted anger. I pray, however, that its effect will be positive, on behalf of embattled clergy and God's church. ■



If we can be of service, please call:

JIM CHAVIS

Director of Pastoral Ministries
Florida Baptist Convention

1-800-226-8584, ext. 192

Who Heals the Healer?

by Louis McBurney

There come the refugees of this hideous war.
They look lonely, outcast.
Even in the crowded huddled masses they
seem not to touch—each standing alone.
Not so much standing as almost falling.
Some have open wounds. That one there
Looks feverish with infection.
They're all so hungry, so exposed, so tired.
What war has brought them to this sad place?
Not Auschwitz or Mylai or Beirut—
They're the shepherds of Jesus' Flock—Brought
Thus through tending the sheep.

I hope that this article has been helpful to you. The Pastoral Ministries Department of the Florida Baptist Convention is committed to growing healthy happy churches and growing healthy church leaders (ministers). We are here to serve you through a wide variety of workshops and individual consultation.

APPENDIX B

2006 FORCED TERMINATION REPORT

2006 Forced Termination Report

<u>Forced Terminations</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>
Bi-vocational	184	314	192	323
Full-time	496	655	408	615
Staff	<u>265</u>	<u>333</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>295</u>
Totals	945	1302	784	1233

2006 Totals for Reporting States

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Total</u>
Alabama	56	18	74
Arizona	2	2	4
Arkansas	23	6	29
California	15	3	18
Colorado	3	0	3

Florida	35	14	49
Georgia	72	38	110
Hawaii	1	0	1
Illinois	19	9	28
Iowa	0	0	0
Kansas/Nebraska	4	5	9
Kentucky	19	8	27
Louisiana	No Report		
Maryland/Delaware	4	0	4
Mississippi	56	11	67
Missouri	22	21	43
Montana	0	0	0
Nevada	1	0	1
New York	No Report		
North Carolina	94	31	125
Northwest	7	0	7
Ohio	13	0	13
Oklahoma	11	0	11
Pennsylvania/South Jersey	4	0	4
South Carolina	33	13	46
Tennessee	46	27	73
Texas: BGCT	82	43	125
SBTC	No Report		

Utah/Idaho	0	0	0
Virginia: SBC	No Report		
BGA	38	12	50
West Virginia	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	680	265	945

The following issues are reported in rank order:

- 1. Control Issues – who is going to run the church**
- 2. Church’s resistance to change**
- 3. Poor people skills on the part of the pastor**
- 4. Pastor’s leadership style is too strong**
- 5. Church was already conflicted when the pastor arrived**
- 6. Decline in attendance and/or conditions**
- 7. Pastor’s leadership style is too weak**
- 8. Administrative incompetence on the part of the pastor**
- 9. Sexual misconduct**
- 10. Conflict with other staff**
- 11. Disagreement over doctrine**
- 12. Ethical misconduct – mismanaged monies, dishonesty**
- 13. Tenure – been at the church too long**
- 14. Rapid growth**

APPENDIX C
2007 FORCED TERMINATION SURVEY RESULTS

(On following page)

**Summary Report Form
Forced Termination Survey
2007**

The number of pastors and fulltime staff ministers in your state who experienced forced termination in 2007.

Pastors:	Bivocational	<u>165</u>
	Fulltime:	<u>361</u>
Staff ministers:		<u>203</u>
Total:		<u>729</u>

The total number of responses for each of the causes of forced termination:

<u>101</u>	Pastor's leadership style--too weak
<u>160</u>	Pastor's leadership style--too strong
<u>362</u>	Control issues--who's going to run the church
<u>158</u>	Church was already conflicted when the pastor arrived.
<u>51</u>	Sexual misconduct
<u>27</u>	Ethical misconduct--mismanaged monies, dishonesty
<u>17</u>	Tenure--been at church too long
<u>43</u>	Disagreement over doctrine
<u>63</u>	Administrative incompetence on the part of the pastor
<u>43</u>	Conflict with other staff
<u>15</u>	Rapid growth
<u>90</u>	Decline in attendance
<u>214</u>	Poor people skills on the part of the pastor
<u>199</u>	Church's resistance to change
<u>41</u>	Other (please explain) _____

Thank you for your participation.

SBC
Director, State Convention or Fellowship

Top Ten Causes of Termination 2007 SBC

1. Control issues – who is going to run church.
2. Poor people skills on the part of the pastor.
3. Church's resistance to change.
4. Church was already conflicted when pastor arrived.
5. Pastor's leadership style – too strong.
6. Pastor's leadership style – too weak.
7. Decline in attendance.
8. Administrative incompetence on the part of the pastor.
9. Sexual misconduct.
10. Disagreement over doctrine.

Other causes: (2007 SBC)

- 1. Generational issues**
- 2. Calvinism**
- 3. Dysfunctional church**
- 4. Pastor's impatience when faced with a disagreement or conflict**
- 5. Moral failure**
- 6. Poor match**
- 7. Pastor was threatened**

APPENDIX D: TRICIA'S STORY

By Tricia Hicks

Why Me?

"Where did You go, God? Why did You allow this to happen?" I was so angry at Him. I had read enough of Psalms to know it was OK to be totally honest with God. David certainly was at times. If God knew what I was thinking, I felt I might as well verbalize it to Him.

But how could this happen to me? I had been so excited about my calling as a pastor's wife when Don and I got married in 1979. I knew God had gifted my husband to be a minister, and we both had an intense desire to follow His will for our lives.

Anatomy of a Nightmare

How could our dream have turned into such a nightmare? The answer is simple: We experienced the severe pain of rejection by the people we were serving. I have always known people are fickle. I had been in the ministry long enough to see adults act like children when they want their own way. Yet I wasn't prepared for the level of treachery mounted against us in November 1994.

We felt certain that God had led us to the church Don was pastoring. We poured our love into the lives of the people, and they became a real family to us.

The Seeds of Discord

However, amid this happy pastorate, there were those who wanted to be in control--and they looked upon ministers as expendable. And so began a year-long process of gossip and criticism.

Sowing seeds of discord among the brethren, Satan often works quietly behind the scenes of a church. This seems particularly true in churches where people are being saved and are growing in their desire to serve the Lord. We are in a spiritual war--not against flesh and blood (each other) but against Satan and all the powers of hell.

The stress became greater as the behind-the-scenes dissension became increasingly evident. Watching helplessly while a group of people conspired against my husband, I fell into a deep depression.

The intense, constant criticism was destroying him--and me. As Don's wife, I knew how much he loved God and loved those people--the very people who seemed bent on destroying him. No matter how he tried, in their eyes he could do nothing right.

Where Was God???

I thought of God's many servants in the Bible who were persecuted unjustly. Where was God then; and where was He now?

Never had I experienced the hate I witnessed at one Sunday night service. It was as if I was in the middle of a bad dream and couldn't wake up.

Some of the deacons brought a motion to have my husband terminated as pastor. Then, after it was read, a man stood and said he thought a round of applause should be given for the godly deacons who had the courage to make such a motion. This man and his wife had always been so loving and encouraging to us. Now, out of the same mouth, came quite a different message.

I sat in disbelief as it became clear the congregation was split right down the middle: 50 percent stood and clapped for the motion; 50 percent sat and did not clap. I was shocked as I looked at the belligerent expressions on the faces of people I loved and thought loved our family. All of this happened three weeks before Christmas. It destroyed the joyous season for me.

The Family's Hurt

Suddenly remembering that our son Matthew was with us in the meeting, I stood to my feet and, exploding with anger, shouted: "I can't believe you're doing this in front of my little boy! This is just hate!"

Sobbing so deeply that I could hardly walk, I grabbed Matthew and left the meeting. Even then I heard the demonic murmuring of someone in the crowd: "She shouldn't have brought him in here in the first place."

It was as if the congregation had become a lynch mob. By walking out, my son and I were spared from the venomous dialogue that followed. Fortunately, some precious friends came to comfort me in the room in where Matthew and I had gone. Many people were hurt, shocked and horrified that night. I wasn't the only one who left with a broken heart.

I never went back to that church. My husband did, three days later, to submit his resignation.

Healing the Wound

How is a broken heart mended? This unexpected rejection was something I felt I could not live through. The pain was so great I wanted to die.

"Love never fails," says 1 Corinthians 13:8, but it appeared to be failing for me. Although I had been a Christian for 26 years and knew all the verses for crisis situations, they didn't seem to be working at the moment.

I continued to go through the motions of living, but I was dying on the inside. My husband was very loving and supportive, but I hid the extent of my inner turmoil from him.

Coping Mechanism Failure

When stress and anger are allowed to build up over time, they eventually will find an outlet. In my case the coping mechanism took the form of compulsive overeating and then making myself throw up--bingeing and purging. I later learned this is called bulimia, a very serious eating disorder suffered by an increasing number of people in our society.

With my life spinning out of control, I found myself doubting even some of my favorite verses, Proverbs 3:5-6. I wanted to trust in the Lord with all my heart and acknowledge Him in all my ways, but how could I trust a God who would direct my path

onto such a painful road?

It took quite a while before I could focus on the part of these verses that commanded me not to "lean" on my own understanding. Indeed, I could not understand how Christians could treat each other so cruelly.

During this time, my mind was never at rest. Constantly it analyzed what had happened, trying in vain to make some sense out of things and searching hopelessly for some clue to repairing the damage. I struggled to sleep, and when I did, the nightmares kept me from waking up rested.

Overtaken By Mental Illness

The bulimia escalated until I was purging everything I ate. Then, one evening, I began reading a book about eating disorders published by Rapha, a nationwide inpatient-counseling ministry. I unmistakably recognized myself in the pages of this book as it described my disorder in detail.

The morning after I read this, in a moment of total despair and fear, I finally told my husband about the bulimia. I needed help, and at last I realized it. I admitted myself into the Rapha program at Charter Springs Hospital in Ocala, Florida. I'll never forget the song I was quietly singing to myself as my husband drove me to the hospital:

*God will make a way
When there seems to be no way.
He works in ways we cannot see;
He will make a way for me.*

Something deep inside me wanted to believe those words. A faint flicker of hope told me my broken heart could be healed.

Toward Recovery

Before a problem can be solved, one must admit there is a problem. That part I had done, but going for help was another difficult hurdle. In my mind, the worst thing that could happen to a minister's wife was being admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

I spent three weeks there.

My first night in the hospital brought a barrage of tangled thoughts rushing through my head: What's wrong with me? Have I done the wrong thing by admitting myself to this hospital? I've let so many people down. Why has all this happened to me when I was just trying to serve the Lord?

Recovering From Failure and Rejection

My ability to trust people had been severely damaged by what had happened, and I was petrified by fear of what people would think when they heard of my stay in the hospital. If they criticized and rejected me before, what would they be saying now? I thought.

Sadly, my thoughts were not just filled with presumptions about how I would be further rejected by people. In my trauma I also lost sight of what I needed most: the unconditional love of God.

It was a perfect opportunity for the devil to taunt me: "If you don't perform correctly--perfectly-- then you're worthless, unlovable and hopeless. God will never be able to use you again."

One Positive Result

Although nothing is more painful than dealing with core problems such as failure and rejection, there was one positive result. The decimation of my sense of personal significance caused me to search for a self- image founded on the Word of God.

The Bible speaks of the wisdom found in a multitude of godly counselors. Through the Rapha staff, the wisdom and love of God flowed to my mind and heart. The mending of my broken heart began.

Learning To Trust...Again

Other than my family, the first people I began to trust were the other patients in the Rapha program at the hospital. There was no pretense or facades among us.

We all knew we were there because we needed help, so we began to love and trust each other-- unconditionally. We didn't have to pretend everything was "fine" as Christians often think they must in order to be accepted.

I had never experienced such honesty and genuine love among a group of people. We prayed and learned together every day.

God's Unbelievable Promise

While packing for the hospital, I had grabbed a plaque on my dresser and tossed it into my suitcase. The plaque displayed a verse that really began to bother me, Jeremiah 29:33: "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord; plans for good and not evil, to give you a future and a hope."

"How could good come from what happened?" I asked God. Although I looked at that plaque every day, I told myself I didn't believe its message anymore. But as the days went by, the verse was planted deep in my heart.

Why Me? Why Not Me!

With the help I received at the hospital, I began to see that my self-worth does not equal my performance plus the opinions of others. My performance may falter, my popularity with people may rise and fall, but God constantly and completely loves and accepts me. Seeing that, I began to trust Him once again.

On my first night in the hospital, a patient shared his story of attempted suicide. "Why me?" he had asked a Christian friend who came to see him soon afterward. His friend replied: "Why not you? God will use this in your life."

When I heard his story, I thought I would never be able to say, "Why not me?" Now I can honestly say, "Use this experience for your honor and glory, Lord!" That was the starting point of God taking me off the road to self-destruction and placing me on His path of healing.

It has now been more than a year, and I'm still in the healing process. So is my family.

God has given me a wise Christian psychologist to complete my treatment. Also, our new church is filled with wonderful, loving people. Their unconditional love--in addition to the support of my family and those at Rapha--has been a major factor in teaching me to trust people again.

Trust God's Plan

Forgiveness plays a major part in the healing process. The overwhelming waves of anger I felt did not begin to subside until I genuinely forgave those who hurt me. By an act of my will I forgave them and prayed for the Lord to work in their lives.

Most important is the fact that I can now see the plans God has for me are for my good, not for calamity. By bringing me out of what seemed to be a hopeless situation, God has made me a bolder witness and given me a greater love for people. As a direct result of what we have gone through, my husband and I are now embarking on a ministry to hurting pastors and wives.

The Bible says of Joseph that when he was falsely accused and thrown into an Egyptian prison, "the Lord was with him" (Gen. 39:20-21). And so He is with us when we face unjust circumstances today.

May our testimony echo Joseph's words to those who caused his pain: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Gen. 50:20).

The Updated Results of God's Plan

You may be wondering where I am today and so I am going to fast forward fifteen years. Remember the verse (Jeremiah 29:11), which I mentioned in my previous story? "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "Plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." It has proven to be so true – in other words, God has proven Himself to be faithful to my family and I and He never gave up on me.

Don and my vision of a Church Health ministry has now been established through the Office of Church Health/Church and Pastor Relations at the Center for Ministry Training – Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary at the Liberty University campus in Lynchburg, Virginia where he is an Assistant Professor of Pastoral Leadership and Homiletics Online and a member of The National Southern Baptist Church/Minister Relations Association. We travel around the country encouraging pastors, their families and churches. During the last three years we have seen many pastors and churches without hope make a turn around and they are now able to echo Joseph's words in Genesis, "God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Gen. 50:20). These pastors are now ministering to other pastors and churches in crisis. Isn't that what it's all about, "the saving of many lives" – mind, body and soul? Just as our Lord Jesus Christ commands in Matt. 28:19-20, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." God made the path and was always walking with us, and He will always be with us as we strive to see Christians strengthened through His love and power!

APPENDIX E

Survey Questions for CMR's of the Southern Baptist Convention:

1. How long have you served as a CMR?
2. Were you a pastor before becoming a CMR? If so, how long did you serve as a pastor?
3. How were you trained in conflict resolution?
4. Do you think it would be a good idea if seminaries trained students in conflict prevention ? If so how?
5. Do you provide training in church conflict resolution to pastors? Director of Missions? Churches? If so what do you use?
6. Do you provide church conflict mediation? If so, what model is used?
7. How do you find out about church conflict in your state?

8. What do you believe are the top five reasons for pastor/church conflict?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
9. What do you believe are the top five reasons for churches to terminate pastors?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
10. Who provides resources for you regarding church conflict?

11. The SBC has tried programs such as Wounded Heroes and Leader Care. Were they useful? Why do you think they did or did not work? In your opinion, would it better to have each state meet the needs of the pastor and church when church conflict arises? How are you doing it now?

12. Would you like to see a church conflict manual/system developed that would fit the SBC church policy? What would you want it to include?

13. Do you see forced termination as a result of church pastor/conflict going down or up? What do you think a solution would be? Short-term? Long-term?

APPENDIX F

PASTOR-CHURCH COVENANT OF RELATIONSHIP

This covenant between _____ (pastor) and
_____ Church at

_____ (address) is entered to provide clear understandings about relationships and responsibilities necessary to bring glory to God through the growth of the church and the pastor throughout the tenure of his ministry.

The church and the pastor are pleased to enter this covenant, effective _____ (date). This covenant shall continue as long as both the pastor and the church believe it is God's will for them.

Led by the Spirit of God, the pastor agrees to the following.

- 1 Seek the mind of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all things.
- 2 Be a person of integrity in his family, the church, and the community.
- 3 Be loving and gracious to all.
- 4 Be diligent in work according to a work schedule shared with the church.
- 5 Use his ministry gifts, knowledge, and wisdom to glorify Christ through the church.
- 6 Provide spiritual leadership to the church.
- 7 Lead the church in planning and implementing ministries that fulfill the Great Commission.
- 8 Preach to instruct, inspire, and enable the church for ministry.
- 9 Coordinate baptismal services, officiate weddings and funerals, or delegate these responsibilities.
- 10 Mediate conflict to produce healthy, productive relationships in the church.
- 11 Lead the church staff and delegate responsibilities to staff members or church officers.
- 12 Lead the church leadership team (church council) in its tasks or delegate responsibility.
- 13 Counsel other church leaders and ministry teams about their work.
- 14 Evangelize the lost through preaching and personally as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- 15 Care for persons with special needs and lead others to be involved in caring ministries.
- 16 Respect church members' ministry gifts and encourage members' growth and involvement in the life of the church.
- 17 Represent the church in community and denominational activities.

Led by the Spirit of God, the church agrees to the following.

- 1 Be loving and gracious to the pastor and his family.
- 2 Pray for spiritual power in his life and work.
- 3 Respectfully relate to him as God's anointed leader for this task.
- 4 Support his leadership with active participation in the church's ministries.
- 5 Talk with him about personal concerns instead of talking about him to others.
- 6 Provide resources for doing the work to which he is committed, including competent and loyal staff members, as needed.
- 7 Provide a salary and benefits commensurate with the duties of his office.
- 8 Free him to do the work to which he is called as other church leaders and members fulfill their responsibilities.
- 9 Annually provide a fair, impartial, and constructive ministry review.

The church and the pastor agree to the following work schedule.

Inasmuch as the pastor has responsibilities that cannot be measured in definite schedules of time, he will give care to scheduling his time and activities to best serve the Lord and the interests of the church, allowing time for personal and family needs. He is encouraged to have two days off each week while being on call in times of crisis. The pastor and the church will be best served if the pastor establishes a schedule of office hours and informs members of the schedule. The pastor's responsibilities require many hours of isolation for prayer, study, and preparation. Church members will regard this time as vital to the ministry and, whenever possible, arrange for consultation and counsel at other times.

The church and the pastor agree to the following salary, housing, benefits, and expenses (see appendix 5 for descriptions).

The church will provide for the pastor as spelled out on the attached checklist (see appendix 6):

- 1 Salary
- 2 Housing
- 3 Protection benefits
- 4 Ministry and continuing-education expenses
- 5 Vacation, leave, and sabbatical

When the pastor search committee and the pastor agree on the conditions of this covenant of relationship, the committee will recommend that the church adopt the covenant and call the pastor.

This covenant of relationship is entered by:

Pastor

Chairman, Pastor Search Committee and Chairman of Trustees

Date

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE BYLAW FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

ARTICLE 7. Settlement of Disputes Within or Against Church*

In any dispute arising between or among Church members, pastors, or staff, the dispute may be resolved by the Church Leadership Team (or a duly appointed team from the Church Leadership Team) under the Christian Conciliation Rules and Procedures published at www.hispeace.org. All employees, contractors and vendors of the Church should be asked to sign policies or contracts with the Christian Dispute Resolution clause in it.

Any dispute between a member and the church shall be resolved through Christian Conciliation. Christian mediation should be attempted but if it does not resolve the dispute then legally binding Christian Arbitration shall be employed by the Board or individuals selected by the Board in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* found at www.HisPeace.org. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each Arbitrator seeking that which most glorifies God and regarding one another before himself.

Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. Jurisdiction and venue shall be the county and state where the church is located and Virginia law will apply to dispute. Members, pastors, staff or third party vendors/contractors shall understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising against the Church and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another or the Church for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision. In that case, judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered by any court having competent jurisdiction, in conformity with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Notwithstanding this above provision, to protect the church and its members and under its risk policy procedures, the church is are required to maintain liability insurance. Therefore, this conflict provision is conditioned upon agreement by the church's insurers that, in light of the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the disputed matter, this provision, and the process it establishes will not diminish any insurance coverage maintained by the church. Moreover, the Arbitrators cannot adjudicate any issue that a civil court could not adjudicate due to jurisdiction based on religious liberty or church autonomy issues unless the church gives its written consent.

*Sample provided by Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia for church constitutions

APPENDIX H:
**QUESTIONS FOR PASTORS TO ASK WHEN SPEAKING WITH A
PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE**

1. What priority does this church give to the preaching and teaching role of the pastor?
2. What is the church's doctrinal statement of Faith? Is the church pastor led, deacon led or elder led and or ruled? Who sets the churches vision?
3. Does the church and its leadership hold to the inerrancy of the Bible?
4. Are there any current unresolved conflicts, problems or issues going on in the church of which I need to be aware?
5. What do you require of a pastor regarding visitation of the sick?
6. How many deacons/elders does the church currently have? How are they chosen, examined as to their biblical qualifications and elected by the church?
7. What are the ministries of the church such as youth, children's and adult ministries etc.? What is the church's position and level of support for such ministries?
8. Is there a church budget? What is the financial position of the church?
9. What are the church's belief, involvement, and financial support for home and international missions?
10. What current evangelistic programs and outreach does the church have and how do you see the pastor involved in these ministries?
11. What responsibilities will the pastor have in regular pastoral counseling?
12. How often does the church have a business meeting? Do you expect the pastor to be the moderator during these church business sessions?
13. What outreach ministries does the church currently have? To the lost, unchurched, dechurched? Nursing home? Jail? Elderly shut-ins? Others?
14. What role do you see the pastor's wife having in the life of the church?
15. What various committees make up the leadership of the church?
16. What priority do you give to the discipleship of new Christians? Do you currently have a new believer's class? New member's class?
17. On what grounds and by what criteria does the church accept members?
18. Does this church practice Biblical church discipline? If so, what is the process?
19. What is the breakdown and priority given to the Sunday school and small group ministry?
20. Will the church allow & pay for the pastor to attend yearly pastoral conferences? Will they pay for his wife to accompany him?

21. What accessibility to the pastor does the church require during the week?
22. What is the church's position and belief on the ordinances of the church? Baptism? Lord's Supper?
23. Where do you as a church see yourself in 5 years? Long-term goals? Short-term goals?
24. How would you describe your church?
25. Why was the church started? History? Does it have a constitution? By laws? Is it incorporated? If so when?
26. What is the church's purpose and mission statement?
27. What is the church's unique role in this community?
28. How would a neighbor around the church portray this congregation?
29. How would you describe the atmosphere of: worship, small group Bible studies, board meetings, business meetings, and special events?
30. What are the three areas you feel must be changed in this church?
31. How many strong ministries does your church have? What are they?
32. What new ministry initiatives has the church launched in the last five years?
33. If you knew you couldn't fail, what would your dreams be for this church?
34. What are the statistics on church membership for the last five years? Why do you think there has been a membership decline? Or growth?
35. Do you have a plan for growth?
36. What is the single biggest obstacle to growth in this church?
37. What role do you feel laypersons should play in the development of a strong, growing congregation?
38. When did your last new members join? When was your last baptism?
39. Is there any conflict in the church now? In the past? If so, explain.
40. What issues or people have regularly caused friction in this church?
41. What is it that sparked your interest in me as a candidate?
42. What were the strengths and weaknesses of your previous three pastors?
43. What has been the tenure of previous pastors/staff members?
44. How does this church view its staff?
45. What is the structure for responsibility in staff positions?
46. Has the interim period been redemptive and healing? What did you discover about yourself?
47. What is the role of the senior pastor? Provide list and contact information for all previous pastors.
48. Will the pastor be given freedom to shape a ministry team that is sympathetic to his vision and have the power to hire and fire his own staff?
49. What are your expectations of my wife and family?
50. Does the congregation have a policy of reviewing the pastor's salary each year? What will my salary be? What would my benefits be? Will the church pay for my relocation?
51. Does the pastor search committee represent the overall congregation and leadership? How?
52. How many are in the membership of the church?

53. What is the average attendance in small groups, Sunday School and worship?
54. How many serve on church staff? Paid? Unpaid?
55. Does the church keep church records in the church office? (Example: finance records, church minutes, committee minutes, deacon minutes, etc.)
56. Does the church have full cover insurance for all church property, director/officer coverage, pastor counseling and malpractice? What other insurance coverage does the church have?
57. How is the church money collected, counted and deposited? How many signatures does the church check have? Do you have a purchase order system? How much money does the church have on hand? CD's, savings or other investments? When is the last time the church was audited internally and/or by an outside firm? What is the name and contact information for the firm that did this audit? Does the church have a lawyer? If so – name and contact information?
58. How many decisions have been made by people trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord as a result of church's outreach over the last five years? How many baptisms the last five years?
59. Is the church and its leadership involved in personal and servant evangelism? Give examples of what evangelism training tools you have used.
60. What association is your church a part of and the contact information for your Director of Missions?

TWENTY QUESTIONS A PASTOR SHOULD ASK THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE IF THEY DISCOVER THAT THE CHURCH WAS OR IS IN CONFLICT WITH ANY PRESENT OR PREVIOUS PASTOR OF THE CHURCH

By Dr. Donald Hicks

1. What was the reason for the conflict with the past pastor?
2. How was the conflict handled and by who?
3. Have you terminated any of your previous pastors? If so, who? When? Reason? What was verbally communicated? Who was involved? How was it done? How much severance? Was the church told?
4. Have you forced terminated any of your past pastors? If so who? When? Reason? Who was involved? How was it done? How much severance? Was the church told?
5. Have you pressure terminated any of your past pastors? If so, who? When? Reason? Who was involved? How was it done? How much severance? Was the church told?
6. Are any of the individuals on this present pastor search committee on any of the other pastor search committees that caused or were a part of questions 3-5? If so, explain.
7. What is and was your process for removing a pastor from office of pastor?
8. Was the termination, forced termination or pressured termination of a former pastor for Biblical, ethical, legal issues? If not, why? Explain.
9. How was the pastor and his family affected?
10. Are you willing as a church, individuals and a pastor search committee to make things right with all pastors who were removed from office wrongly?
11. What do your Bylaws say (ask for a copy) about how a pastor is called and how he is terminated?
12. Do you have a pastor job description? (Ask for copy)
13. Is this church pastor-led? Explain.
14. Is this church deacon-led? Explain.
15. Is the church elder- led? Explain.
16. Is this church controlled and led by a family? If so who?
17. Is this church controlled by a group of people in this church? If so who?
18. Has any of the staff or ministers been a part of the pastor being terminated, forced terminated or pressure terminated?
19. Was your former pastor under a written contract? Was he given a written separation agreement? If so, will you provide me a copy?
20. Would you be willing to request of the church to take a church health survey before I come to be your pastor?

21. Would you recommend to the church to have a church health consultant to come in as a third party to speak with the church about answers to all of the church health survey?
22. Would you provide me with the following information? A copy of your bylaws and constitution, business meeting minutes during the time of any and all church conflicts, copy of the budget, copy of the deacon minutes for any and all times of church conflict, a report from your interim, contact information for all former staff members and pastors, a copy of the church directory, a copy of a church history book (if available), a list of all church leadership for the last 5 years and the committees and members that were approved for the last 5 years, current money owed by the church (itemized), copy of any former or current lawsuits against the church, copy of any insurance claims against the church for any reason, list of all church conflicts in the past and present; church discipline to whom and why, how many pastors have served this church (names and dates of service), are their family members still in the church? former pastors?
23. What are you willing to do to make things right with former pastors and their families that have been treated wrongly, terminated, forced or pressure terminated?
24. If I came to be your pastor after all these questions are answered and solved Biblically would you protect me and my family by placing a written section in the bylaws about how you as a church would protect me, and discipline me when needed, if I should be considered for termination that my family and I will be treated right and have due process by a third party mediator/arbitrator agreed on by me and the church leadership?
25. Will you enter into a church/pastor covenant with me that would explain what you will do for me and what I will do for you and what we will do together for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ?

APPENDIX I
SBC PASTOR SURVEY

1. What areas of pastoral ministry do you wish you had been taught more when you were in seminary?
2. How do you handle church conflict?
3. Have you ever been trained in church conflict?
4. Do you think forced termination of pastors is a problem today?
5. What advice would you give me on how to avoid forced termination?

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FEMA/DRC (Disaster Recovery Center) training/CR Training-Administration-Atlanta Surge Center

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Certified Transitional Pastor “LifeWay” SBC

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“Managing Conflict In Your Church” certification	2000
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<i>Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville, TN</i> Assistant Minister Evangelism/Missions	2005-2007
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<i>First Baptist Church, Halfway, TX</i> Transitional Pastor	2003-2004
<i>Bellevue Baptist Church, Hobbs, NM</i> Transitional Pastor	2002
<i>Baker's Grove Baptist Church, Mt. Juliet, TN</i> Transitional Pastor	1999
<i>Salem Springs Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, TN</i> Transitional Pastor	1998
<i>Greater Orlando Association, FL</i> Contracted Director of Church Planting	1997
<i>First Baptist Church, Lake Mary, FL</i> Senior Pastor	1995-1997
<i>Central Baptist Church, Sanford, FL</i> Senior Pastor	1991-1994
<i>Genesis Christian Counseling Ministry, FL & Kansas City</i> Radio Program Host	1993-1994
<i>Sycamore Hills Baptist Church, Independence, MO</i> Senior Pastor	1989-1991
<i>Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Belin, MS</i> Interim Pastor	1989
<i>Harvest Baptist Church, Dyersburg, TN</i> Pastor	1984-1989
<i>Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, TN</i> Camp Pastor at Summer Youth Camp	1986
<i>Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, TN</i> Intern Staff	1984-1986
<i>Radio, Lebanon, TN</i> Daily Radio Host	1982
<i>Lighthouse Baptist Church, Lebanon, TN</i> Pastor	1980-1982
<i>Thomas Road Baptist Church</i> Pastoral Internship Staff	1977-1981

<i>Liberty University</i> Evangelist—Revival Team	1977-1978
<i>Faith Temple Baptist Church, Nashville, TN</i> Youth Pastor	1977
<i>Oklahoma Baptist University</i> Evangelist—Revival Team	1976
<i>First Baptist Church, Donelson, TN</i> Youth Intern	1975

RELATED EXPERIENCE

<i>City of Lubbock, TX</i> Fire Chaplain (Started Chaplain Program)	2001-2005
<i>Citizens Corps Council, Lubbock, TN</i> First Vice President	2005
Consulting/Coaching/Encouragement of over 1000 pastors Preached Revivals in twenty states, four foreign countries	1995-present
<i>Fire and Rescue Public Safety, Seminole, FL</i> Chaplain (Started Program)	1996
<i>New Work Council, Greater Orlando</i>	1996
<i>Seminole Baptist Association, FL</i> Credentials and Nominating Committee	1992-1995
<i>Southern Baptist Convention, Orlando, FL</i> Credentials Committee	1993
<i>Baptist Sunday School Board Review Committee</i> Life and Work Sunday School Lessons	1993
<i>Blue River/Kansas City Association, MO</i> Christian Life Committee	1989-1991
<i>Dyer Baptist Association, TN</i> Nominating Committee, V.P. Pastor's Conference, Chairman of Christian Life Committee, V.P. Evangelism Committee, Teacher of MasterLife Discipleship Workshop to Ministers	1985-1989

TEACHING/CONFERENCES/SEMINARS/MISC.

<i>Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA</i> Assistant Professor of Pastoral Leadership/Homiletics /Online	2010
Adjunct Professor of Religion/LBTS Online <i>Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA.</i>	2008-2010

Adjunct Professor/LU Online, Dept. of Religion 2007- present
Subject Matter Expert: Pastoral Duties

Nights of Encouragement for Pastors and Wives 2010
Speaker for Louisiana Baptist State Convention

Pastor Encouragement Fellowships 2007-Present
Speaker for Southern Baptist Conservatives Virginia

Leadership Conference Southern Baptist Conservatives VA 2009
Breakout Speaker on Church Conflict

Conference: Adrian Rogers "What Every Pastor Ought to Know"
Conference Leader/Teacher 2009-Present

Wildfire Men's Conference-Thomas Road. Baptist Church, VA 2009
Breakout Speaker on Conflict Resolution for Family, Business, Church

Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, TX 2003
Ministers and Wives Seminar: "Allowing God to Reaffirm Your Call to Ministry."

Associational Seminars/Deacons Retreats
"Twelve Things that a Deacon Should Remember When Conflict is Going on in the Church."

Speaker in Seminars for Pastors
Topics Include: PTSD, conflict resolution in the church, pastors in conflict, compassion fatigue, burnout, stress management, grief process, coping with loss, What it Means to Suffer in the Ministry, Preaching Through Church Conflict.

Kempke Music Conferences, FL
Burnout and Stress Management Seminars to Ministers of Music and Church/Staff Relations

Southern Seminary, Louisville, KY
Certified Seminary Extension Instructor in the Basic and Diploma Series of SBC

"Coping with Loss" and "Understanding the Bible"

Parent/Youth Seminars
"12 Do What's Right Steps in Parenting Teens"

<i>Orlando, FL and Nashville, TN</i>	
Television Programs (Channels 50 & 52), (Channel 39)	
<i>Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville, TN</i>	1998
Preaching Engagement	
“Clear and Present Danger in the Church Today—Forced Termination”	
<i>Criswell Bible College</i>	1995
Chapel Speaker: “What it Means to Suffer in the Ministry”	
<i>First Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA</i>	1994
Testimony: “Never Give Up”	
<i>First Baptist Church, Daytona Beach, FL</i>	1994
Preaching Engagement: “Living by Faith”	
<i>Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary</i>	1991
Preacher for Senior Preaching Week	
<i>Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary</i>	1988-1989
Grader for Dr. Steve Wilkes, Church Growth/Planting Professor	
<i>Winter Youth Celebration, Ridgecrest, NC</i>	1985
Conference Teacher	

PUBLICATIONS/PAPERS/ARTICLES

“Church Conflict: Conflict—Encouragement to Pastors”	2007-2010
“Coloring Outside the Lines”	
<i>Church Growth Paper of Southern Baptist Convention</i>	1993
“Video Church Pamphlet”	
<i>Church Administration Magazine (SBC)</i>	1994
“Billboard Evangelism”	
<i>Church Administration Magazine</i>	1994
<i>Freelance columnist for “Life Focus” Our Town, Lake Mary, FL</i>	1996
“10 Minute Tuck-in,” “Dealing with Anxiety,” “Calming Fears in Young Children,” “Improving Children’s Self-esteem,” “Find a Sense of Community at Church,” “What Children Need Their Daddy to Be,” “Keeping On,” “Suicide,” “Who Lost the Game”	
<i>Former Freelance Religious Columnist for “Wilson World,” Newspaper, Lebanon, TN</i>	1982

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

<i>Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief</i>	2006-2007
<i>Homeland Security/FEMA Disaster Assistance</i> Employee	2004
<i>Hicks Construction Group LLP</i> President/CEO	1998-2005
<i>Liberty University</i> Campus Security /EMT	1979-1981

MEMBERSHIPS

Southern Baptist Convention Church/Minister Relations Association-2009
 International Critical Incident Stress Foundation -1996
 International Building Code Council—Associate Member-2003
 Texas Citizens Corps-2003

COURSES TAUGHT: LU ONLINE AND LBTS/COURSES

Homiletics 501—Sermon Preparation and Delivery
 Homiletics 521—Preaching Lab: New Testament Preaching Lab I
 Homiletics 522—Preaching Lab: New Testament Preaching Lab II
 Homiletics 591—Preaching Lab: Old Testament Preaching Lab I
 Homiletics 592—Preaching Lab: Old Testament Preaching Lab II
 Evangelism 660—Leading the Healthy, Growing, Multiplying Church
 Pastoral Leadership 520—Spiritual Formation
 Pastoral Leadership 997—The Transitional Pastor (Residential Intensive)
 Evangelism 610—Church Planting
 Pastoral Leadership 635—Pastoral Theology
 Pastoral Leadership 625—Preventing Ministry Failure

RESEARCH INTERESTS

The Mental, Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Impact of Forced Termination
 on a Minister and his family
 The Long-Term Effect of Forced Termination on Pastor's Kids
 The Best Way to Educate Pastor and Churches in Conflict Resolution
 Preaching during a Church Conflict Time in the Church
 Church conflict mediation and arbitration
 A Manual for Church/Pastor Conflict Resolution