LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD PASTORS WITH

REGARDS TO LEADERSHIP STYLE, DEMANDS,

STRESSORS, AND MINISTRY BURNOUT

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Barbara C. Chavez

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the perception of 15 small church Assemblies of God pastors in San Antonio with regards to leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout. The researcher used the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach due to the openness of collecting the data through semi-structured interviews that allowed participants to respond to open-ended questions. The additional interview instrument was the WLAB scale and the burnout inventory instrument from Iverson, Olekalns, and Erwin (1998). The researcher coded and evaluated data using NVIVO12 software. Through the association of common themes, the researcher unearthed responses to the vast challenges for clergymen in ministry and retention. Participants established that their lack of training led to unnecessary stress. Nevertheless, the pastors' primary source of stress, was dealing with people in their congregation. Intrapersonal conflict becomes just another stress attribute to the already long list of congregational demands a small church pastor is responsible for. In addition, over half of the pastors interviewed could not define their job description. The common sentiment was that their job description consisted of all that the ministry required, from building to congregational needs. There is limited time available for spiritual and self-care. Further stating that the ministering and caring of others takes a toll emotionally and physically. Not allowing for the proper care of mind, body, and spirit could lead to ministry burnout.

Keywords: leadership, clergies, burnout, retention, small churches, Assembly of God

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Through His grace, wisdom, and strength, I was able to complete this laborious task. Also, to my husband, Carlos, who has always supported and believed in me. Lastly, but not least, to my sons Ricardo and Nicholas, who inspire me to be the greatest mom and a worthy example for them. I love you all so very much!

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Thank you to the devoted Liberty University professors that have encouraged and inspired me to finish strong. Particularly, Dr. Jeffrey Davis, who led, pushed, and prayed me through the finish line. Lastly, Dr. Craig Fee's inspirational study that birthed this research study and has inspired my commitment to putting the Word of God above culture at whatever the cost.

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CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

Stress and burnout are issues that are increasingly reported by clergies (Barnard & Curry, 2012; Hendron et al., 2012). The research revealed that years in service and reported depression significantly predict burnout (Jackson-Jordan, 2013; Jacobson et al.,2013). Hakanen et al. (2011) and Schaufeli et al. (2011) showed that individuals can remain in a constant state of stable burnout, lasting for 5, 10, or even up to 15 years.

After over 30 years of initial studies researchers generally agree that clergy are at risk for burnout (Buchanan, 2014; Jackson-Jordan, 2013), however they do not agree on the main cause of that burnout. Meanwhile, the clergy continues to struggle with few improvements (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Researchers have made progress in identifying some internal and external factors that contribute to the problem. Internal factors that indicate a predisposition to burnout include: personality types, coping mechanisms, personal mastery, or conflict management (Brewster et al., 2015). External factors identified through research include: role conflict, excessive activities, lack of personal time, or unrealistic expectations (Fernet et al., 2012; Joynt, 2012).

While the other focus of the clergy industry makes it particularly susceptible to burnout, scholars have shown burnout involves many other occupations that include high workloads or involve managing others (Bakker et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the potential social implications are significant for addressing the ongoing issue of clergy burnout, which, despite decades of research, continues to be a problem (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). In the present literature, clergy burnout remains an ongoing concern, making it critical to identify the causes of this phenomenon (Fee, 2018). Previous studies on clergy burnout focus on the external and internal factors for burnout. Little to no research has examined the effect of church culture on clergy burnout. More

exploration is needed about the clergy's perceptions of leadership and burnout within the church (Fee, 2018). Therefore, further study was needed to address assumptions about clergy leadership and burnout (Fee, 2018; Jackson-Jordan, 2013).

This study hoped to benefit the ministry by discovering the challenges that lead to clergy burnout in small churches. The data collected will assist mental health professionals in identifying the challenges and needs of clergies. The purpose of this study was to render insight for new theories to develop about clergy burnout to assist clergy well-being and retention. Finally, it was hoped that the results of this study filled the current denominational data gap in the literature for small churches of 250 members or less.

Background of the Problem

Researchers have found a correlation between burnout, depression, and anxiety (Koutsimani et al., 2019; Toker et al., 2012). Bakker and Costa (2014) put forth that once an individual has reached burnout, that individual often continues in a state of burnout for lengthy periods. The literature supports that clergy are at higher risk for anxiety and depression since this is a unique vocation due to its combination of role strains and higher calling, putting clergy mental health at risk (Buchanan, 2014; Jackson-Jordan, 2013; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013). Proeschold-Bell et al., determined that the clergy's depression prevalence was 8.7%, significantly higher than the 5.5% rate of the national sample of all professions.

The demands of the clergy can result in physical and mental complications, including strong tendencies toward depression enhanced by loneliness and isolation (Robbins & Hancock, 2015). Ahola et al. (2012) and Salminen et al. (2013) have shown a positive association between burnout and high-risk behaviors such as heavy drinking, lower physical activity, and obesity. Ahola et al. (2012) and Ahola (2013) indicated a relationship between burnout and a higher risk

of mortality. Comparably, Toker et al. (2012) showed the physical effects of burnout on cardiovascular diseases for men and musculoskeletal diseases among women.

VaanderWaal et al. (2012) posited that one in four Americans seeks clergy assistance with mental health issues. The clergy is often the first line of help for many Americans seeking solace, assistance, and guidance with mental health issues, spending a significant amount of their time caring for their congregants' spiritual, physical, and psychological needs (VaanderWaal et al., 2012). There is a pressing need for preventive interventions that may promote physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational aspects of healthy living that may strengthen clergy resilience in the aftermath of complex disasters or other challenging contexts (Abernethy et al., 2016).

Based on the levels of burnout, should preventative measures not be put into place, the impact will be seen beyond the retention of clergy. Congregations suffer the effects of clergy burnout as well. This connection between congregant spiritual life and burnout has been demonstrated in numerous studies (Bonney & Park, 2012; Büssing et al., 2013; Meek et al., 2003). Meek et al. spoke to the development of spiritual disciplines as one critical key to maintaining resiliency in clergy work. Büssing et al. (2013) reported that although many studies are inconsistent, they still show that the lack of development of a strong spirituality was a significant factor in predicting burnout. The spiritual health of clergies needs to be in good standing to prevent burnout of self and others. Without good spiritual health, the clergy is no longer as effective (Chandler, 2008). Without the time available for clergy self-care and feeding of the Spirit, the vocation calling is less fruitful. Meek et al. (2003) states that God is important for pastors with high demands.

Statement of the Problem

Buchanan (2014) showed (a) 90% of pastors stated they are regularly exhausted and worn out weekly and even daily; (b) 80% of the clergy considered exiting the ministry at some time in their tenure; (c) 75% felt they were ineffectual in leading their church or giving guidance to others, and (d) 71% indicated that they stayed on as clergy despite their feelings of burnout and experiencing depression regularly. For some clergy, the feeling of burnout was weekly, while others felt it daily. Berry et al. (2012) showed that clergy experience of stress does not need major events or trauma but can result from constant pressure from ordinary and everyday work.

Berry et al. (2012) explained that the stress from role-overload comes in the consistent routine of work that never seems to be completed for many pastors. Chandler's (2008) study found that clergy risks burnout because of inordinate ministerial demands, which may drain their emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical energy reserves and impair their overall effectiveness. Burnout advances across three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment. Not only do clergy face higher levels of burnout, but an increasing number of clergies also leave the profession because of it (Elkington, 2013).

Bell (2014) reported that much has changed in the clergy workload and even the clergy job description since Sales and House's study in 1971. The clergy is to look for other people's spiritual well-being. This could be a challenge as there is pressure from the denomination to be more managerial than pastoral with the various responsibilities of pastoral duties in a church and the local community (Berry et al., 2012). Many clergies enter the ministry because they believe that they have been called to use their gifts to lead churches. Furthermore, trusting upon the grace of God to cover their shortcomings, they target for less than leading their congregants to a

compassionate mission, steadfast evangelism, and holy living. Trihub (2010) supported those findings and argued that clergy's health is affected by the commitment to spiritual formation. The spiritual disciplines of prayer (Büssing et al., 2015), spiritual retreat (Muse et al., 2015), and keeping the Sabbath (Carter, 2013) were among those listed by previous scholars as providing greater resiliency and have shown to have a significant relationship to emotional exhaustion (Fee, 2018).

Nevertheless, without the time and training for self-care, burnout can lead to discouragement and depression, affecting the clergy and the church's overall spiritual health. Jackson-Jordan (2013) argued that clergy continue to find themselves fatigued, depressed, and in some cases, leave the ministry altogether. Clergy burnout is still a critical concern in where more qualitative research on clergy burnout is needed (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). There are little to no cultural assumptions about leadership and how those assumptions contribute to clergy burnout (Fee, 2018).

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the lived experiences of small church Assemblies of God (AG) pastors in San Antonio with regards to leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout. The study will evaluate data that can potentially benefit clergies and professionals in support of the church. The researcher hopes to unearth responses to the vast challenges for clergymen in ministry and retention.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the lived experiences of small church AG pastors in San Antonio with regards to: leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout. The study has evaluated data that

can potentially benefit clergies and professionals in support of the church. The researcher

unearths responses to the vast challenges for clergymen in ministry and retention.

Research Questions

RQ1. What is the perception regarding leadership style from the lived experiences of Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ2. What is the perception regarding leadership demands from the lived experiences of Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ3. What is the perception if any, regarding leadership stressors of Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ4. What is the perception, if any, regarding ministry burnout from Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

Assumptions and Delimitations

The Pentecostal denomination studied may have different assumptions and delimitations

of what constitutes burn out and the effects it may or may not have on the spiritual health of

clergy.

Research Assumptions

Qualitative research, while valuable in obtaining descriptive lived occurrences, holds a

higher possibility for the researcher's bias and assumptions as the qualitative researcher is closer

to the research (Creswell, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). In any qualitative work, the study's

assumptions are necessary to define a basic set of beliefs the researcher brings to the study

(Janesick, 2011).

Janesick (2011) stated that the researcher must identify their assumptions. In this

context, the researcher held the following foundational assumptions during the study:

1. The responses received by participants during the research reflected their personal experience and not that of the church population.

2. The participants in the study were agents of the phenomenon of transferability.

3. The participants had a Christian worldview through which they lived their lives and work in ministry.

4. The participants are truthful about the description of their experienced burnout.

5. The interview protocol and interview instrument are appropriate for the gathering of reliable data.

6. The participants had a vested interest in participating in the study because it may help them and future clergymen.

Delimitations of the Research Design

Simon and Goes (2013) reported that delimitations are the researcher's deliberate exclusions and inclusions.

1. The study exclusively explored AG pastors' understandings and lived experiences regarding leadership style, demands, stressors, and personal experience with ministry burnout.

2. This study was limited to one specific denomination of a Pentecostal Church in San Antonio, Texas. The location and selected denomination beliefs may have differed from other denominations and geographical regions.

3. This study was also limited in that it only considers small church pastors.

4. The study was limited to the selected participants' experiences. The individual participant's subjective perspective was critical to understanding the human experience of a specific phenomenon (Parry et al., 2014).

5. The researcher's experiences or lack thereof also limited this study.
The researcher's unintended bias could have introduced interpretive filters that affected how the data was initially entered and understood (Yin, 2014).

Definition of Terms

1. *Assemblies of God (*AG*)*: Officially known as the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, a group of over 144 autonomous self-governing associated national groupings of churches formed the world's largest Pentecostal denomination (Cross & Livingston, 2011).

2. *Assemblies of God pastors:* Assemblies of God pastors believe in the Pentecostal distinctive of Assemblies of God baptism with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The pastor is responsible for the life of the believing community, and teaching is a vital aspect of this office (King James Bible, 1769, Ephesians 4:11).

3. *Belief in God:* Believing in the God of the Bible. Creator of heaven and the earth (King James Bible, 1769, Genesis 1:1).

4. *Believer:* One who gives credit to the truth of the Scriptures as a revelation from God. In a more restricted sense, a Christian receives Christ as his Savior and accepts the way of salvation unfolded in the gospel (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

5. *Burnout*: A combination of chronic exhaustion and negative attitudes toward work and damaging consequences for employee health and productivity (Bakker & Costa, 2014).

6. *Calling:* A strong sense within the pastor or minister that his or her life was uniquely set apart for the work of the church. It comes with a strong conviction that divine action has set them apart for a specific purpose (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

7. *Church:* The gathering of worshippers in a local assembly. While the church can be used to define the larger denominational collective, in this study, it was specific to the description of the local Christian, and specifically Pentecostal, faith community (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

8. *Church leader*: An individual who exercises leadership over others. A church leader could be a pastor, elder, or layperson. "Those which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." (Carson, 2015, 1 Thessalonians 1-5).

9. *Clergy:* The professional body of pastors, ministers, or clergy who lead local churches and congregations. The terms clergy, pastor, and minister have been used interchangeably throughout this paper. They are not specific to gender and will refer to males and females (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

10. *Congregants:* The group of individuals associated with a local church assembly (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

11. *Halo Effect:* The tendency for an impression created in one area to influence opinion in another area (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

12. *Higher Calling:* A strong sense within the pastor or minister that his or her life was uniquely set apart for the work of the church. It comes with a strong conviction that divine action has set them apart for a specific purpose (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

13. *Leadership demands*: Rath and Connie (2008) suggested seven leadership demands: vision, maximizing values, challenging experiences, mentoring, building a constituency, making sense of experiences, and knowing self.

14. *Leadership stressors:* Campbell et al. (2007) place leadership into types of stressors: resources/time, developing others, establishing/maintaining relationships, high expectations, personal insecurity, team/collaboration, change management, miscellaneous, and lack of clarity from those above.

15. *Leadership style*: The behavior pattern of a person who attempts to influence others (Northouse, 2016).

16. *Living Water:* A biblical term which appears in both the Old and New Testaments.

17. *Ministry:* The work performed, duties, or roles that clergy carry out in the context of local church leadership (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

18. *Ministry burnout:* The point at which a pastor, church leader, or missionary gives up, unable, or unwilling to continue in the ministry (Mills & Parro, 2005).

19. *Pentecostal church leader:* A leader with a theological perspective. Pentecostals believe that faith must be powerfully experiential and not something found merely through ritual or thinking (Cross & Livingston, 2011).

20. *Population:* A group that possesses some common characteristic defined by the sampling criteria established by the researcher. The population in this research study was Assemblies of God pastors in San Antonio, Texas.

21. *Self-care:* The practice of taking an active role in protecting one's well-being and inner peace during periods of stress and life changes (Oswald, 1991).

22. *Small churches:* Chaves et al. (2014) reported that 86% of churches in the United States are smaller than 250 congregants. Churches over 300 congregants are considered large churches.

23. *Soul*: The spiritual part of a person, believed to exist after death (Merriam-Webster, 2021).

24. *Spirit*: The part of a person that includes their mind, feelings and character rather than their body ((Merriam-Webster, 2021).

25. *Spiritual health:* Inner peace and in relationship with God and others. Achieving spiritual health is living out one's purpose in divine peace (Kinnaman, 2017).

26. *Spiritual setback:* Negative change that contributes to a setback of spiritual health (Carson, 2015, Ezra 4:1-24).

27. *Vocation satisfaction*: A place where the world meets extreme happiness and a long desire (Buechner, 1993).

28. *Walking with God*: According to the Bible, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. Furthermore, what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Carson, 2015, Micah 6:8).

Significance of the Study

The study explored AG pastors' lived experiences and understanding regarding leadership style, demands, stressors, and personal experiences with ministry burnout. The discoveries in this research study can potentially benefit small church pastors. The efforts to alert mental health professionals of the clergy's specific challenges and needs were based on the study findings. Preventive and treatment recommendations can be implemented through training by denomination and experts in support of the clergy and the church. Lastly, the study will help close the literature gap found today in small churches in the AG denomination. It is the hope that this research study will render discoveries for future use in theories regarding clergy stressors, burnout, and retention.

Summary of the Design

This study consisted of 15 participating pastors from San Antonio, Texas. The participants required a minimum experience of three years of pastoral work. Hoge and Wegner (2003), in a study conducted by Duke University, showed that 85% of seminary students leave their initial pastoral roles within five years. Therefore, the three years' requirement allowed sufficient time for the participant to adjust to a new church and attain vocation training. The three years' time span is also a sufficient period of time for the evaluation of a person experiencing burnout. The size of the serving congregation was no more than 250 members. Chaves et al. (2014) reported that 86% of churches in the United States are smaller than 250 congregants.

The researcher collected the data through semi-structured interviews that allowed participants to respond to open-ended research questions. Open-ended research questions allowed for the participants to express themselves and their experiences without limitation. The

researcher pursued a qualitative study's fundamental concept that examines the participant's experiences and gets a sense of what is behind the thoughts. According to Janesick (2011), the researcher and participant must work together to develop a shared meaning. Therefore, the researcher's objective was to work together with the participant in understanding their response from their perspective.

Lastly, through Wielkiewicz's Leadership Attitude and Belief Scale (WLAB) (2000), the study participants addressed the research study questions. Wielkiewicz's study was designed to explore attitudes and beliefs by students about leadership related to the organizational context and was broad enough to be used in the church context (Fee, 2018). Once the researcher collected the data, through Wielkiewicz Leadership Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (WLAB) (2000), it was systematically coded and thoroughly analyzed by the researcher. Conclusively, the researcher produced common emerging themes from the data collected from the participants.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature demonstrated that the clergy's stress, burnout, and depression contribute to clergies leaving the ministry (Elkington, 2013; Fee, 2018; Jackson-Jordan, 2013). While researchers have generally agreed that clergy are at risk for burnout, they do not agree on the principal cause (Buchanan, 2014; Jackson-Jordan, 2013; Robbins et al., 2013).

Nonetheless, the clergy continues to struggle with burnout (Fee, 2018; Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Stress and burnout are issues that are increasingly reported by clergies (Barnard & Curry, 2012; Fee, 2018; Hendron et al., 2012). Francis and Robbins (2014) reported that while clergy still feel a sense of satisfaction with their jobs, they also feel vulnerable to burnout, describing significant stress and exhaustion (Bell, 2014; Frank et al., 2013). Additionally, Robbins and Hancock (2015) asserted that the clergy described significant stress and exhaustion while maintaining a strong sense of gratification in their work.

The clergy's commitment to spiritual health and personal development can address the clergy's spirit and soul's needs. However, with the vast responsibilities that the vocation entails, and little or no time to fulfill their spiritual and self-care needs, it is evident why the clergy may be at risk for burnout (Berry et al., 2012). Furthermore, there is a tendency for congregations to expect clergy to be all things to all people and able to fulfill whatever the people of God need (Stewart, 2003).

Ngo et al. (2005) established that role conflict exists when the pastor has to address differing expectations that seem incompatible. Additionally, poorly defined roles, processes, and measures for achievement are strongly connected to the stress associated with role ambiguity. Part of the problems with poor definition comes from the multiple hats that the clergy are

expected to wear, which is related to role conflict. Furthermore, because the clergy's role is frequently limitless and vague, it is consequently beset with role ambiguity. The stress of role conflict can harm job performance through conflicting demands, describing it as a condition where the amount of time in a day or week is insufficient to accomplish the job's demands. Ngo et al. (2005) argued that role ambiguity is inherent in the fabric of clergy life since there are no clear standards for defining effective or exceptional pastoral work.

Ultimately, the clergy is supposed to be sacrificial in putting others before themselves. The needs of the congregation and family traditionally come before their spiritual and self-care. The suggestion of self-help practices and recommendations is ineffective if the clergy fails to implement them into their daily ritual. The risk becomes more significant as the stress gets higher. When spiritual and physical needs are not being met, voids are then filled with destructive behaviors (Olivares-Faúndez et al., 2014). Pietkiewicz and Bachryj (2014) argued for taking the necessary steps in setting boundaries to address the role overload. Subsequently, failure to do this will bring about the loneliness that may likewise contribute to depression. Scholars have raised isolation as a factor in burnout, especially related to feeling alone in handling the role overload.

Wells (2013) mentioned a growing desire among clergy for support mechanisms, such as clergy prayer groups and clergy retreats, as well as specific services for clergy that can reduce the feelings of loneliness and isolation. Nonetheless, the clergy's vocational needs cannot just be addressed from a carnal perspective, but best described from a theological perspective. God's will for humanity is found in scriptures. In Genesis, God said:

> Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. God created mankind in His image. In the image of God, He created them male and female. He created them. God blessed them and

said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food. And it was so (King James Bible, 1769, Genesis 26-30).

The book of Genesis holds an account that God's will for humanity is to be blessed, fruitful, and rule over the things given to them by God. God's plan is for His children to find rest and wisdom through His counsel (King James Bible, 1769, Psalm 34:8). In doing so, this refreshes them with His living water so that they can continue His good works (King James Bible, 1769, John 4:10). Scripture encourages believers that they were created in God's image; this is comprised of the fruits of the Spirit, which are: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Nowhere in scripture does it read that God's plan for humanity is for them to work to exhaustion and compromise communion with Him for the sake of completing worldly tasks. Nevertheless, leadership in the image of God is sacrificial. God equips those He calls to do His will (King James Bible, 1769, Hebrews 13:21).

Likewise, Jesus incited to Martha that Mary had made the better choice by sitting at His feet to hear His wisdom as opposed to Martha, who was distracted by the preparations that had to be fulfilled. She came to Him and asked:

Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself. Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (King James Bible, 1769, Luke 10:38-42).

A pivotal belief of Christian faith is that yielding to a dependence on Christ will allow Him to provide for their needs. When a believer concedes time to God, God is able to accomplish beyond their own earthly capabilities. "For it is not your strength, it is God who is

effectively at work in you, both to will and to work this is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose for His good pleasure" (Carson, 2015, Philippians 2:13).

Applying the time and effort for spiritual and self-care is as crucial as recognizing that a vocation calling is worthy of seeking the self-serving care it entails. Paul specifically commanded his leaders to present themselves to God and align their minds and behavior, not with the world but with Christ (King James Bible, 1769, Romans 12:2). Identifying with Christ indicates a process of strengthening one's conscious association with Christ or strengthening one's self-categorization as a believer in Christ and a member of the Christ-group (Samra, 2008).

Theological Framework for the Study

Spiritual Self Care

A clergy's primary calling is to have an intimate relationship with God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Believers need both solitude and the body of Christ to be spiritually fulfilled and to mature as believers. It is the body of Christ that intercedes on behalf of believers in fleshly and spiritual struggles. Through spiritual formation, a believer will transition from living based on carnal desires to living a spiritual-driven life. Disciple Paul encourages believers to "Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Galatians 5:16). Paul reminded the followers of Christ that they were "bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your Spirit, which belongs to God" (Carson, 2015, 1 Corinthians 6:20).

God's people, God's Word, and God's Spirit are fundamental for believers to stay on their walk with God. Furthermore, spiritual formation involves attention to both inside 'heart work' and outside 'mouth work' of believers (Pettit, 2008). Likewise, self-control is a product of a

good heart which can only come from faith and an awareness of what would otherwise be evil desires without faith (King James Bible, 1769, 2 Peter 1:4).

A believer's acknowledgment and accountability of weakness are where God's supernatural power takes place. Transformation occurs when the Holy Spirit is summoned by the believer in those broken places. A believer in God's image manifests the fruit of the spirit of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Carson, 2015, Galatians 5:22-23). Nevertheless, this is not feasible without the help of the Holy Spirit. It is a credit to the Holy Spirit that believers become victors in becoming more like Christ and less like the world. Only the Holy Spirit can take away fleshly desires. It is through the work of both believer and the Holy Spirit that a believer morphs into the image of God.

Paul expected the believer's participation in the local community to be beneficial for their maturation (Samra, 2008). In a broken, fragmented world, the church is called to be the first fruits of a new creation by embodying a reconciled community; and the way believers begin to learn that is at the communion table (Smith, 2011). Paul specifically commanded his leaders to present themselves to God and align their minds and behavior, not with the world but with Christ (King James Bible, 1769, Romans 12:2).

God's desire is for His children to seek and rest in Him. Jesus says:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

There remains, then, a sabbath rest for the people of God. Anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from His work in completing creation (King James Bible, 1769, Exodus 20:8-11). "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience" (Carson, 2015, Hebrews 4:9-11).

God's plan is for His leaders to do His work through His power, not their own as demonstrated in John:

> I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples (King James Bible, 1769, John 15: 5-8).

Leadership in the Image of God

Ultimately, Christian leaders are trained to think about and pursue their vocations from a Christian perspective (Smith, 2011). A leader in the image of God must know their flock. The Bible's references to shepherding presupposes and understands the environment and the animals themselves (Laniak, 2006). "Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds. A Christian leader protects his flock" (Carson, 2015, Proverbs 27:23). "A Christ-like leader leads not by fear, power, and authority but by love" (Boers, 2015, p.156).

Leadership in the image of God is a matter of the heart, not power and authority. Through the shepherd and slave motif in the Bible, one sees that power and authority are given by God and not by man. Leading others through Christ-like leadership in the image of God is shepherding the flock and becoming a slave to the Master. To be a slave to Christ is to give up your will for His (Matthew 10:39). "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Carson, 2015, Matthew 20:28).

Boers (2015) asserted that a biblical theology of leadership is Jesus's pattern rooted in service and sacrifice, cautious about power and hierarchies, and prioritizes the vulnerable. In other words, it often reverses what we expect of leadership. It is different from what is written about secular leadership literature. From a biblical perspective, leadership condemns harsh and brutal leaders who are overbearing rulers (Laniak, 2006).

The Bible encourages the Christ-like leader to lead with humbleness and love, not abusing their power and authority. To grow spiritually and be forming in the image of God is to care for the flock that God has entrusted to you.

> Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly, not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Do not lord it over the people assigned to your care but lead them by good examples. The leader must be a slave as the slave must serve the leader as if his services are that towards God and not man (Carson, 2015, Colossians 3:23).

"But among you, it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant" (King James Bible, 1769, Luke 22:26).

Through admiration, followers will have the desire to replicate and imitate a leader's works. Imitation can be tied to moral progress, perfection, blamelessness, and more important than obedience, to the law (Samra, 2008). Paul revealed that imitating mature examples is a means of becoming like Christ (Samra, 2008). Apostle Paul sets forth himself as an example along with biblical patriarchs, which he has imitated in the Old Testament, as examples to be imitated in becoming like Christ.

If the development of one's character is the ultimate aim, we desire to mirror the character of God himself as just, merciful, and humble people who lead with others in mind (Pettit, 2008). Similarly, Laniak (2006) used Moses and King David's leadership style in the Old Testament as Christian leadership references. Howell (2003) traced the theme of leadership through the biblical record as a servanthood pattern. Furthermore, stating that biblical leadership is taking the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and passionately promote God's Kingdom's extension in the world.

Receiving and Living Out Wisdom from God

God's plan is for His children to find rest and wisdom through His counsel (Carson, 2015, Psalm 34:8). In doing so, refreshing themselves with His living water so that they can continue in

His works (Carson, 2015, John 4:10). To know God's plan, one must seek His wisdom. For all is done through His strength and not one's own. "For it is not your strength, it is God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work this is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose for His good pleasure" (Carson, 2015, Philippians 2:13). "Therefore, if any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (Carson, 2015, James 1:5).

Wisdom is a characteristic of mature believers, and cognitive elements were found to be part of the process of being conformed to the image of Christ (Samra, 2008). If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraided not; and it shall be given him (Carson, 2015, James 1:5–6).

There is the process of obedience, which is needed to receive and live out instructions from God. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Carson, 2015, Ephesians 2:10). Because the disciple Paul was obedient to Christ teachings, he was able to fulfill God's plan for him and His kingdom.

Enduring Suffering

Christian leadership in a broken world entails suffering (Carson, 2015, John 16:33). It is not possible to be a leader the way God intends without suffering. Nevertheless, Paul commands his readers explicitly to present themselves to God and align their minds and behavior, not with the world but with Christ (Carson, 2015, Romans 12:2). All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (King James Bible, 1769, 2 Timothy 3:12). Time spent in communion with God is crucial for the strengthening of the Spirit (King James Bible, 1769, Ephesians 3:16).

Christians ought to honor God through His example of what it is to come to serve others. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for

many (King James Bible, 1769, Matthew 20:26-28). Instead, whoever wants to become great among You must be Your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be Your slave. Any slavery to people amounts to a repudiation of slavery to Christ (Harris, 2001). "You do not belong to yourselves, for you were bought at a price" (King James Bible, 1769, 1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Similarly, Paul wrote that though he was free from all, he had enslaved himself to people to win the largest converts possible. Serving others is demonstrating and expressing their slavery to the Lord Christ (Harris, 2001). Serving others is the most challenging aspect for believers serving Christ due to humanity's self-serving nature (Carson, 2015, 2 Timothy 3:2). Furthermore, it is written, enslave yourselves to one another in the bondage of love (Carson, 2015, Galatians 5:13). Paul emphasizes the community's ability to help its members endure suffering so that they hold consistent in their faith and live in a way worthy of the gospel, whether He is present with them or not (Samra, 2008).

Though, suffering is the means to glory because it produces patience and tested character. The ongoing production of patience and character is part of the process of maturation (Samra, 2008). "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him" (Carson, 2015, James 1:12).

Likewise, Jethro addressed Moses in the book of Exodus:

Jethro saw all that Moses was doing for the people. He said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?" Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions." Moses' father-in-law replied, What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me, and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions and show them how they are to live and how they are to behave.

However, select capable men from all the people, men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied (Carson, 2015, Exodus 18:14-23).

Hence, the Body of Christ is meant to function as a whole, each member helps to carry the others' burdens, and all are intended to rest in Christ.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Burnout Theories

Burnout is a combination of chronic exhaustion and negative attitudes toward work and damaging consequences for employee health and productivity (Bakker & Costa, 2014). While burnout refers to a state of exhaustion and cynicism toward work, engagement is defined as a positive motivational state of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker et al., 2014). Cole et al. (2012) claimed that there are fundamental dimensions that exist between burnout and engagement.

Studies show that burnout predicts depressive symptoms and not vice versa (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012). Furthermore, Bianchi et al. (2015) suggested that the distinction between burnout and depression is conceptually fragile. Bakker and Costa (2014) stated that the process is slow but progressive when a person burns out. This leads to a loss of enthusiasm and energy. Maslach (2003) asserted that burnout is not an overnight phenomenon, but instead develops gradually over a prolonged period. Tomic et al. (2004) suggested that burnout progresses in a downward spiraling progression where the individual grows depressed and even more exhausted over time. Additionally, Bakker and Costa (2104) stated that once an individual has reached

burnout, they often continue in a state of burnout—arguing that too many studies look at burnout as an event and do not thoroughly investigate the progressive and lasting nature of it.

Personality

Armon et al. (2012) state that personality factors could play a substantial role in burnout. Similarly, gender plays a significant role in the relationship between personality and burnout. Armon et al. (2012) further reported that more personality factors are needed as personality and experienced burnout studies were still in infancy. Armon et al.'s research on personality and burnout focused on the individual's hardiness, examining the individual's personal-management or self-management capabilities. It was determined that if the individual had Type A behavior, it was a contributor to burnout.

Furthermore, it measured the individual's level of self-esteem and the individual's motivation to achieve (Bakker et al., 2014). Similarly, Francis et al. (2008) agreed that personality plays a more significant role in managing job stressors than the stressors themselves. Lastly, stating that personality could play a significant role in the experience of burnout; however, they also contended that most studies showed the environment or situational factors play a more substantial role. Lastly, Randall (2015) conducted a study to determine a connection between emotional intelligence and burnout and reported no significant connection between them. For clergy with low emotional intelligence, conflict provided even higher levels of stress and greater challenges (Hendron et al., 2013).

Internal and External

Brewster et al. (2015) and Parker and Martin (2011) argued that internal factors such as personality types, coping mechanisms, personal mastery, or conflict management can show how clergy are predisposed to leadership burnout. External factors, including: role conflict, excessive

activities, lack of personal time, or unrealistic expectations, are outside forces that contribute to the burnout phenomenon (Fernet et al., 2012; Joynt, 2012). Several researchers have identified secondary stress or compassion fatigue as external mitigating circumstances for burnout (Galek et al., 2011; Hendron et al., 2012; Hendron et al., 2014; Jacobson et al., 2013). Additionally, Lipsky and Burk (2009) stated that trauma exposure leads to burnout, and one must first acknowledge predisposition.

Lizano and Barak (2012), in a recent meta-analysis, showed that environmental factors (job demand, lower resources, and less adaptive work environments) had a more significant impact on burnout than most previous studies showed. In most studies, the emphasis is on job stress created by: high job demand, limited control, resources, space, time, or tools. In these conditions, the resulting job stress has been shown to have a significant association with burnout (Bakker et al., 2014; Fee, 2018; Lizano & Barak, 2012).

Role Overload

The literature on clergy and burnout acknowledged the significance of role overload in burnout development (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014). Boyas et al. (2012) agreed that when job expectations exceeded the individual worker's ability to provide or capability to perform, dissatisfaction and job burnout resulted. Schaufeli and Salanova (2014) argued that the younger generations of workers experience burnout because job overload is more real today than ever before, and they experience value discrepancy affecting their work understanding. Although not all researchers agreed that role overload is a causal attribute, all did agree that clergy experience role overload. There are additional considerations, such as the needs and pressures of the church community and the clergy's family (Morse, 2011).

Burnout Studies

Innstrand et al.'s (2011) study indicated that burnout in male church ministers may have multiple precursors in many cases. Individual factors, working environment, as well as work and home interaction are all important contributors to burnout. Furthermore, Brewster et al. (2015) stated that pastors from more fundamentalist traditions seem to have higher rates of depression than their more religiously liberal peers. It was found that clergy ministering in rural areas embracing a liberal theology experienced higher levels of psychological well-being than clergy of a conservative conviction.

Francis et al. (2013) found that clergy serving yoked congregations experienced no statistically significant differences in susceptibility to burn out, either in terms of levels of emotional exhaustion or in terms of levels of satisfaction in ministry, compared with colleagues serving just one congregation. Galek et al. (2011) stated that burnout results from the individual and the institution that together create a culture or system of burnout for clergy—reporting that clergy experience systems of pressure as opposed to individual or specific stressors, which is a critical piece in burnout experience.

Burnout Effects

Tomic et al. (2004) claimed that burnout is hard to detect until it is more fully developed and manifested through exhaustion, withdrawal, and lack of productivity. Deligkaris et al. (2014) showed that burnout was associated with a decline in three critical cognitive functions: (a) executive and decision-making functions, (b) attention and focus and, (c) and an individual's ability to remember. Hakanen and Schaufeli (2012) demonstrated that burnout is shown to have links with general depression and lower life satisfaction.

Bakker and Costa (2014) argued that chronic burnout weakens the gain cycle of daily job resources, work engagement, and job crafting. They concluded that employees with high burnout levels need help in structurally changing their working conditions and health status.

Bakker and Costa (2014) reported that job overload in younger generations has a physiological effect (which includes increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and increased hormonal activity). Bakker and Costa (2014) also reported that job overload has psychological costs (including exhaustion and psychological need thwarting). Bakker and Costa (2014) suggested that prolonged experience with high job demands, and insufficient resources resulted in employees regularly suffering from exhaustion and detaching themselves psychologically from their coworkers and their work.

Lastly, Fee (2018) and other research studies showed that burnout is positively associated with higher absenteeism (Campbell et al., 2013; Hallsten et al., 2011; Olivares-Faúndez, et al. , 2014), increased accidents and injuries at the worksite (Li, et al., 2013), chronic work disability (Lahelma et al., 2012), increased hospital admittances due to physical and mental disorders (Leiter et al., 2012), and poorer job performance (Demerouti et al., 2014; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014). Demerouti et al. (2014) and Tomic et al. (2004) argued that the lasting effect of burnout is on business productivity and eventually affects organizations' finances (Tomic et al., 2004). In contrast, researchers agreed that burnout's lasting impact is on business efficiency and turnover (Campbell et al., 2013; Demerouti et al., 2014; Han et al., 2013).

Retention Factors

Managing retention is a challenge for most organizations; the church is not an exception concerning retention. Retention of human resources refers to the attempts to ensure that employees stay in the organization and that voluntary turnover is minimized (Wakabi, 2016).

Although multiple studies have been conducted showing the impact of burnout on absenteeism and turnover (Hallsten et al., 2011). Correspondingly, Jacobson et al. (2013) found that burnout was a risk for clergy dealing with turnover (Han et al., 2013).

Randall (2013) stated that clergy experiencing burnout symptoms (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lower levels of personal accomplishment) were also shown to experience desires to leave ministry more frequently. Hoge and Wenger (2003) said that of the clergy who had left the church, more than 25% had done so due to conflicts within the church or denomination, while over 20% had done so due to burnout. Miner et al. (2010) listed conflict with church members as a significant source of stress for clergy. From a review of the literature, most conflicts fell into two main categories: (a) interpersonal conflict between the clergy and members of the congregation (Kanipe, 2007); and (b) conflict between clergy and the demands from denominational leadership (Berry et al., 2012). Interpersonal conflicts with congregational members were the most numerous.

Jinkins' (2002) study of pastors that had left the ministry for various reasons, including burnout, showed that the one significant reason clergy left was that they felt unprepared to meet leadership tasks. Muhangi (2016) stated that ambiguity in roles and responsibilities causes uncertainty, which generally leads to job stress and, finally, turnover. Misunderstanding what is expected of the follower is a cause of stress that can lead to turnover. Ngo et al. (2005) posited that poorly defined roles, processes, and achievement measures are strongly connected to the stress associated with role ambiguity. Randall (2013) theorized that clergy high levels of neuroticism were also associated with the frequency of thought about leaving ministry altogether.

Several reports included examinations of the effect of burnout on clergy in dual capacities. Francis et al. (2013) reported a growing phenomenon of clergy that served as lead pastors of two or more congregations. Francis et al. (2013) reported that many denominations are experiencing a decline in membership. The result is single pastors asked to care for two or more congregations. Francis et al.'s study did not show a greater degree of burnout among the clergy in these roles. The clergy asked to minister in bi-vocation capacities did show higher exhaustion levels and consequently reported a higher chance of leaving ministry altogether (Robertson, 2013).

Despite the importance of successfully managing turnover, many retention management efforts are based on misleading or incomplete data, generic best practices that do not translate, or managerial gut instinct at odds with research evidence (Allen & Bryant, 2012). In a survey study, ministers were asked about their experiences with forced termination, as well as measures of their personal and family well-being. In general, ministers who had been forced from a ministry position had less family well-being and more health problems than those who had not been forced out (Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011).

Leadership Theories

Pastoral leadership is vital to the church. The clergy's leadership style can be detrimental to the well-being of both the clergy and the church. Robertson (2013) stated that the clergy's understanding of leadership demonstrated that leadership style was significant in the experience of burnout. The leadership style is roughly equivalent to the leader's behavior-oriented approach. Subordinates typically look at their leader's behavior as their leadership style to understand the concept of leadership (Muhangi, 2014). More so, it is how the leader influences the followers (Luthans, 2011). Researchers who have evaluated the significance of leadership style as a crucial

project success factor in recent years believe that project managers' style of leadership will have

an impact on employees (Khan & Qureshi, 2015).

Biezen and Poguntke (2014) argued that post-modernism is changing how congregations

understand leadership, which shapes the way leadership sees itself. Day et al. (2014) examined

the latest trends in leadership development. Their study's leadership theories were:

transformational leadership, shared leadership, authentic leadership, and servant leadership.

Maher (2013) and Ward (2012) argued that a dichotomy between clergy and laity exists and

informs the church about clergy as people set apart from the rest of the church congregation.

This has raised the church's level of leadership to the place of a few elite individuals. Ward said

the failure to understand the sacred texts is the reason for any evidence of hierarchy in the church

(Maher, 2013).

Sandling (2015) stated that the autocratic leadership style, based on authority, is the least

effective of these style options. Authority-based leadership is founded on power and fear and

discourages employees, driving out creative and innovative employees. This ineffective,

authority-based leadership style results in the wrong people leaving the organization. Laniak

(2006) made the case that the biblical perspective of Christian leadership condemns harsh, brutal,

and overbearing rulers while teaching that correction could be done with humility, honor, and

encouragement.

Furthermore, Maxwell (2007) argued that true leadership begins with the inner person.

People can sense depth in character as it was so with Billy Graham's influence over the masses.

It is who and what you know through creating relationships and expanding your knowledge that

constitutes a leader. Leaders seek to recognize and influence intangibles such as: energy, morale,

timing, and momentum. Sampson (2011) pointed out that there are six powerful attributes to

leaders that work to draw people to their authority regardless of whether it is formal or informal. All six attributes (intellectual, sociability, emotionality, personability, morality, and physicality) could be developed and improved in every person. Studies continue to focus on which traits (inherited or learned) identify with leadership and make a leader stand out in society (Colbert et al., 2012; Fleeson & Jayawickreme, 2015; Xu, 2017).

Robertson (2013) and Western (2008) sought to establish a link between transformational leadership and clergy to identify the effectiveness of transformational leadership in a church context. Western (2008) critiqued transformational leadership and its application in western churches. Western claimed that leadership is viewed as heroic in the church's context, bordering on the messianic. According to Western, messianic leadership is where one individual leader is imbued with the ability to do all things in all situations. Such a leadership view focuses on power, control, creativity, and privilege in one specific leader's hands. Western argued that instead of empowering followers, transformational leaders often create cultures that do the opposite and disempower, as direction, vision, and authority to act concentrates on the single transformational leader's hand.

Meier (2014) examined the ethical considerations of transformational leadership in the church context. Robertson (2013) argued that most studies on transformational leadership in the church context reflect the secular version of transformational leadership with Jesus as the primary model of a transformational leader. He argued that transformational leadership had more appeal and application in Christian settings with Jesus as a positive example. Again, as with servant leadership, there is a wealth of literature written from a non-academic approach declaring transformational leadership's benefits in the church context. Sass (2012) agreed that the transformational leadership theory is rooted in the church's ancient texts. Sass's argument is

developed from his understanding of scripture and its relationship to this current leadership theory.

Pearce (2008) asserted that leadership has to be distributed or shared across the organization to ensure speedier response times. The final force driving the need for shared leadership has to do with the complexity of the senior-most leader's job, the chief officer. This individual is increasingly hard-pressed to possess all the leadership skills and knowledge necessary to guide complex organizations in a dynamic and global market. Xu (2017) believed that different leadership styles are needed for different situations, and leaders should know which approach is most effective in a given scenario to achieve the organization's goals. Alvesson and Spicer (2012) argued that leadership is seen as a catch-all solution for the problems in all organizational contexts and that leadership's impact has reached a myth-like status.

Related Literature

Marriage and Family

Trihub et al. (2010) and Hull (1990) independently used an illustration of the fishbowl effect about clergy and military families. The expression refers to the scrutiny that clergy and military members endure due to their public persona. The clergy family is considerably like the military family due to the service-before-self vocation. The challenges in their chosen vocation impact the entire family. The uniqueness among the two is that the clergy renders service unto God, the soldier serves the country. The soldier as chaplain in the military is in the unique position of serving both God and country. Nevertheless, the trials are similar in that the family also sacrifices for the particular calling.

Comparable, the clergy and soldier share a common work regime of having to spend long hours away from home. Both the clergy and soldier are in constant mobility, having to recreate a

new life with each relocation (Wilhagen et al., 2005), creating a sense of loneliness for them and their partner and children. The emotional toll on the clergy leaves them with little energy for their spouse and children (Wells et al., 2011). The demands on clergy, equivalent to the soldier's work demands are extensive, decreasing time spent with family. For some families, this conflict may be a distinct construct. Still, for many others, the more significant conflict arises when there is an inability to isolate the issue (Wells, 2012).

Furthermore, the clergy's absence in the home adds additional family duties and responsibilities to the spouse and children. It is also understood that boundary ambiguity and intrusions upon family time will produce stress within the family system (Wells et al., 2011). Similarly, Darling et al. (2004) stated that the clergy and their spouses are expected to be always available to help others with compassion and empathy for those who are in spiritual pain, regardless of the time of day or night.

Wells et al. (2011) argued that the work-family conflict occurs from two types of challenges. First, conflict develops with stressors that arise from the heavy demands of work, called work-related stress. The high demands of the vocation often leave little to no time or energy for family life. Second, stressors that stem from the way that work infringes on family life or crosses family boundaries are called boundary-related stress. Correspondingly, Jinkins (2002) stated that 74% of clergy felt that there were just many demands for their time and had experienced at least one significant stress-induced crisis.

More so, the emotional toll on the clergy leaves them with little energy for their spouses and children (Jinkins, 2002; Wells et al., 2011). In some cases, burnout was shown to have a similar effect on the children, as they experienced burnout (Salmela-Aro et al., 2011). On the contrary, Trihub et al. (2010) argued that most congregations do not believe that clergy and their

families can suffer from depression, burnout, or other work-related psychological health issues. Additionally, Trihub et al. (2010) asserted that the family may have to deal with depression, anxiety, alcohol abuse, sexual infidelity, or other dysfunctional coping by the clergy. For many clergy families, this amounts to enduring increased scrutiny and unreasonable expectations.

Wells et al. (2011) claimed that clergy's high demands increased work-family conflict and direct association with clergy dissatisfaction. Wells et al. (2011) reported that nonstandard work hours, working evenings, lack of privacy or ability to be vulnerable, and inability to separate church life from family life are just a few of the concerns families raise. For some other clergy, the time with family may not be directly affected, but the emotional exhaustion does occur. When the clergy gets out of balance or on the path to burnout, the ramifications on the family are catastrophic. There may be little emotional support left to be given by the family. There also may emerge marital dissatisfaction and a sense of disconnectedness in the clergy couple (Wells et al., 2011).

Warner and Carter (1982) found a diminished quality of marriages and high loneliness levels for clergy marriages compared to the general population. Darling et al. (2004) reported that clergy spouses experience more stress than their clergy husbands. This is due, in part, to the frequent interruptions related to ministry that take the pastor away from home and family. As a result, the spouse may often be left to handle family issues that are meant to be shared with the spouse. The effects of secondary stress affect feelings of exhaustion and burnout (Hendron et al., 2012). Hall (1997) identified six stressors that are particularly challenging for every clergy couple who lack privacy: time with family, financial troubles, frequent moves, their spouse being available and serving to others, and the absence of ministry to the clergy family.

Church Community

Veliquette (2013) contended that the well-being of the larger church is neglected when the ministry's focus is on one individual, no matter how gifted or talented he or she may be. The typical and traditional ministry and leadership models focus on one pastor, even within churches of multiple staff. In larger churches with multiple staff, the ultimate responsibility falls on the shoulders of one executive or senior pastor (Veliquette, 2013). He went on to say that this is problematic to the broader idea of the church as a community of believers.

Clergy have a prominent role in society. It often includes a specific public persona that does not allow clergy to be vulnerable or admit stress (Barnard & Curry, 2012; Schmidt, 2013). The clergy's position can potentially be a lonely one because although the clergy may desire to obtain close relationships with others outside their immediate family, this becomes difficult to obtain due to the endless demands of the vocation. The clergy must forgo finding relationships within these realms to maintain healthy boundaries within the congregation and community. Without social interactions outside of the role of clergy, the exclusion from these outlets can further contribute to loneliness. Proffitt et al. (2007) pointed out that this is due to the high level of social constraints with which clergy live because of their occupation. Shinhwan (2006) identified that the Korean clergy do not have close friends. They are less likely to have social support than any other person in their communities. Their needs for reverence and holiness separate them from their neighbors.

Clergies need to find support for their emotional well-being within close surroundings, seeking help from a mental health professional when needed so that they may have an outlet to vent their concerns. Healthy pastors tend to produce healthier churches (Trihub et al., 2010). Also, finding that the clergy appreciating and utilizing the mental health services available to

them, such as personal time off, clergy-specific prayer support retreats, and sabbaticals, fills this void. Clergies require supportive relationships where they can also enjoy other interests and free their minds without judgment. Due to their vocation, it becomes difficult to find relationships they can cultivate, where they can be themselves and not be judged (Trihub et al., 2010).

Furthermore, churches have failed to look critically at their leadership assumptions. Previous research studies provide an understanding that certain leadership assumptions can lead to burnout (Meek et al., 2003). High demands on ministers alone as solo actors often lead to burnout (Huizing, 2011). Ward (2012) claims the clergy do not take advantage of current leadership theories that encourage workforce empowerment and sharing of leadership. Ward argued that little has changed in the last few decades in how churches are organized and operate and how pastors lead them.

Denominational Care

Sweeney and Witmer (1991) stated that work is an essential task of life that can provide the time for contributing to wellness and satisfaction, provide an opportunity for great satisfaction, contribute and help with discouragement, and support possible illness (Meek et al., 2003). Furthermore, they stated that it is crucial how seminaries handle the issues involved with pastoral resiliency. In the beginning stages of a pastoral calling, spiritual and self-care should be made a top priority. The spiritual and self-care of the clergy should be proactive and not reactive. Hence, the lack of information and training affects the retention of clergies in the church.

Most clergy do not enter the ministry so that they can manage an organization. Initially, they often respond to a sense of spiritual calling to serve people's spiritual needs. The lack of training in leadership areas and the lack of the skills necessary to prevent stress and burnout are some of the reasons why clergies are leaving the ministry (Meek et al., 2003).

Kemery (2006) stated that the clergy often find themselves doing organizational management for which they are not equipped. They do not receive comparable training in management practices. Seminary training related to management practices such as budgeting, conflict resolution, and managing staff would be advantageous. The better equipped a clergy is for their vocation, the less likely they will be burning out or leaving the ministry.

Pietkiewicz and Bachryj (2014) reported the difficulty that clergy members have in sharing their struggles with overload due to their fear of creating a negative image of themselves in the congregation's eyes. The clergy's fear of exposing vulnerabilities may prevent clergy from asking for help from those that could potentially be in the position to promote or terminate them.

Vocational Satisfaction

It is vital to find satisfaction among the many stresses that come with various responsibilities. Vocational satisfaction is a positive or pleasure state of emotion from their job's evaluation or experiences (Park et al., 2016). The percentage of clergy who still find their job deeply satisfying is still relatively high (60%). The same group of clergies surveyed also reported feeling depressed most of the time (40%), and 40% also had considered leaving the profession (Francis et al., 2008). Those numbers would probably be higher if the clergy felt they had reasonable opportunities outside working in a church (Sherman, 2014).

The amount in which an individual is vocationally satisfied depends on the degree of stress the individual is enduring on the job. Stress is expected on the job. How the individual interprets the stress and the amount of it will translate to vocational satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The vocational satisfaction must outweigh the stressors that are encountered on the job. The stressors encountered influence the individual's overall level of psychological well-being (Mezuk et al., 2011).

For instance, Mezuk et al. (2011) found that older workers experiencing high levels of job-related stress and low levels of vocational satisfaction had a much higher risk of experiencing depressive symptomology than those older workers. The latter were experiencing lower job-related stressors and higher levels of job satisfaction. Knox et al. (2002) found low vocational satisfaction to be predictive of higher rates of depression, as well as higher levels of anxiety. Greater vocation satisfaction was likewise predictive of lower stress levels, and more possibility for depression associated with the stress.

Coping

Hendron et al. (2012) reported that clergy are exposed to devasting events, including: bereavement, eating disorders, abortions, addictions, illnesses, and psychotic problems. Hendron et al. (2012) maintain that clergies who witness the effect of human tragedy in others often are profoundly impacted as well. That impact can even reach the pastor's family and support network.

Doolittle (2010) found a pattern to emerge from the behaviors that protect against burnout, a pattern of stability and decisiveness. The clergy must develop the ability to establish personal boundaries and manage their time to realize these healthy practices. Three potentially preventative or mitigating factors (spiritual renewal, rest-taking, and support system practices) aid the debilitating effects of pastoral burnout (Chandler, 2008). Also, meeting with a professional counselor can be a beneficial coping strategy. These findings expand the burnout construct and promote leaders' self-care practices that foster resilience, vitality, and well-being. Some of the coping mechanisms include: sabbatical, social meetings, and personal interests that are calming and nurturing such as seeking counselors or mentors and professionals, which are less threatening due to the benefit of complete confidentiality (Doolittle, 2010).

Furthermore, self-care is also partaking in physical activity for a mind-body balance. Equally, these types of self-care practices allow clergy to manage their stress level and remain healthy in the long term. Doolittle (2010) stated outside challenges do not take away from their call but strengthen it. Maintaining balance is often ignored or dismissed in light of pending events (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2011). They also argued that ministry orientation is so other-focused that clergy fail to develop the tendencies toward self-care, self-rejuvenation, or self-reflection.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, 1 Thessalonians 5:23). God created man with two distinct elements: a spiritual being in a physical body walking with God out of a free will, and a soul clothed in a body that is to take dominion over self and the things prearranged to him by God (King James Bible, 1769, Genesis1-2). The Bible gives instructions for His creation. The importance of caring for the spirit, soul, and body until His return is in 1 Thessalonians 5. Moreover, Isaac said, "A man cannot know God unless he knows, his soul, his breath, or his Spirit, and his body" (Garza, 2018).

Small Churches

A substantial percentage of every denomination is made up of smaller churches with less than 250 members in their congregation. Johnson (2001) gives four classifications for churches when he describes the different church sizes as: Family (1-50), Pastoral (51-150), Program (151-350), and Corporation (351 and over). The challenges that small churches face are different than those of the larger churches. The great church growth leader, Peter Wagner, comments on the

differences between small and large churches when he states: "Churches that have remained small for some time are not merely miniature large churches. They have a different character altogether. The significant difference lies in interpersonal relationships. In the small church, there are no strangers. Everyone knows everyone else. The social situation is predictable and, therefore, comfortable" (Wagner, 1979).

There is a tendency for people to conceptualize reality in terms of functional categories in large congregations, whether in describing the pastor's most excellent competence, categorizing people, designing the organizational structure for the congregation, or evaluating the performance of that congregation. In contrast, in small congregations, the members tend to think in terms of interpersonal relationships. Rather than the church's functions, the relationships of life top the priority list in the small church (Wagner, 1979).

Small churches create an atmosphere for intimate relationships that often clash among personalities. These personality clashes frequently divide the congregation. This is due to the strong interpersonal relationships that are built in smaller churches. This is not dismissing that larger churches' issues are not difficult, but smaller churches can eradicate the ministry. The smaller church problems demand personal sacrifices that pastors in larger churches would never have to face. But leadership, many times, does demand sacrifice (Wagner, 1979).

Furthermore, Mavis states: "Most of the smaller churches, whether tiny or larger, carry on their work in a social-psychological atmosphere that is characterized by three limitations" (Mavis, 1982). Mavis' three limitations small churches face are, a lack of denominational or community status; a lack of workers; limited finance.

Similarly, McIntyre (2020) identifies the following eight challenges for small membership churches:

1. There is an attitude that pervades small churches that hinder them from growing.

2. Small churches are often stuck in buildings that don't have adequate facilities.

3. Leadership development and training is a problem because the talent pool is so small.

4. Money for conferences and training are a problem in small churches, yet they are expected to pay the same price for conferences that larger churches pay with having the finances.

5. The struggle for technology due to a lack of finances.

6. The travel gap due to a lack of finances; leaders lack the training that constitutes airfare or hotel reservations.

7. Burnout and overcommitment due to the lack of congregation involvement.

8. The shallow talent pool due to the lack of members. (McIntyre, 2020)

Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God was founded in Hot Springs, Arkansas. The formation convention was comprised of 300 members. "Today there are nearly 13,000 churches in the U.S. with over 3 million members and adherents. There are more than 69 million Assemblies of God members worldwide, making the Assemblies of God the world's largest Pentecostal denomination" (Assemblies of God, 2020).

According to the Assemblies of God website:

The Assemblies of God was organized in 1914 by a broad coalition of ministers who desired to work together to fulfill common objectives, such as sending missionaries and providing fellowship and accountability. Formed in the midst of the emerging worldwide Pentecostal revival, the Assemblies of God quickly took root in other countries and formed indigenous national organizations. The Assemblies of God

(USA) is a constituent member of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, the world's largest Pentecostal fellowship (Assemblies of God, 2020).

Ultimately, Protestants were the ones that led the formation of the Assemblies of God during the latter half of the 19th century in the United States. These Protestants from various backgrounds were earnestly seeking God, in hope of a revival.

> Protestants from various backgrounds began to ask themselves, why their churches did not display the same vibrant, faith-filled life like those in the New Testament. Numerous believers who joined the evangelical or Holiness churches were engaged in ardent prayer and earnestly sought God. It was in this spiritual hunger that people began experiencing spiritual gifts described in the Bible (Assemblies of God, 2020). Alike, Pentecostal pioneers were longing for authentic Christianity, and they studied the previous spiritual outpourings, such as the First Great Awakening (1730s-40s) and the Second Great Awakening (1800s-30s), for inspiration and instruction. They identified themselves in the tradition of reformers and revivalists such as Martin Luther, John Wesley, and Dwight L Moody and sought-after similar occurrences in their ministries (Assemblies of God, 2020).

Furthermore, the Azusa Street rival of 1906-1909 emerged into a Pentecostal undertaking. Forming a new Apostolic congregation that met on Azusa Street in Los Angeles. An African American preacher by the name of William J. Seymour led the new congregation. Seymour preached on race unification and on the gifts of the spirit, despite his history as a Baptist.

> Raised as a Baptist, his insatiable hunger for the truth of God's Word increased throughout his youth. Since his early years, he had experienced divine visions and looked fervently to Christ's Second Coming. In 1900 he went to Cincinnati and became immersed in the radical *Holiness theology*. This theology is a belief that sanctification is a post-conversion experience that results in complete holiness, divine healing, premillennialism, and the promise of a worldwide Holy Spirit revival. In 1903 Seymour moved to Houston, Texas, in search of his kin. It was there that he was connected to a small Holiness church pastored by an African American woman, Lucy Farrow, who soon put him touch with Charles Fox Parham. Parham was a Holiness teacher, where under his ministry, a student had received the gift of tongues (glossolalia) two years before. For Parham, this was the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as stated in the Bible. After he founded a Bible school to train disciples in "Apostolic Faith" in Houston, Farrow urged Seymour to attend the school (Assemblies of God, 2020).

Since Texas law forbade African Americans to sit in the same classrooms with the white people, Parham encouraged Seymour to remain in the hallway and listen to his lectures through the doorway. Here, Seymour accepted Parham's premise of a "third blessing" of baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. Though Seymour had not yet personally experienced tongues, he sometimes preached this message with Parham in Houston churches. In early 1906, Seymour was invited to help Julia Hutchins pastor a Holiness church in Los Angeles. With Parham's support, Seymour travelled to California, where he preached the new Pentecostal doctrine using Acts 2:4 as his text. Hutchins, however, rejected Seymour's teaching on tongues, and padlocked the door to him and his message. This rejection was God's providence to fulfill His supreme purpose (Assemblies of God, 2020).

Moreover, evangelism and missions have always been a priority for the AG denomination. The AG rapid growth in the United States and abroad is due to focusing on missions and evangelism.

At its centennial in 2014, the Assemblies of God claimed a constituency in the United States of 3,146,741 followers, 12,849 churches, and 36,884 ministers. The General Council supported 2,847 foreign missionaries and associates working with the broader World Assemblies of God Fellowship, whose followers numbered more than 67 million. The church's aggressive missions' programs are designed to establish self-supporting and self-propagating national church bodies in every country. Ministers and leaders are trained in over 2,500 foreign Bible schools and extension programs. The Assemblies of God has 17 endorsed Bible colleges, universities, and a seminary in the United States (Assemblies of God, 2020).

Mission

The Assemblies of God is committed to fulfilling a four-fold mission. Its principal reason for being is:

1. Evangelize the lost.

2. Worship God.

3. Disciple believers.

4. Show compassion.

Core Values

The Assemblies of God is committed to the following core values:

1. Passionately proclaim, at home and abroad, by Word and deed Jesus as Savior, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer, and Soon Coming King.

2. Strategically invest in the next generation.

3. Vigorously plant new churches and revitalize existing ones.

4. Skillfully resource the fellowship.

5. Fervently pray for God's favor and help while serving Him with pure hearts and noble purpose. (Assemblies of God, 2020)

The AG denomination recognizes Christ as the head of the church. Furthermore, the

congregation elects the clergy, one who is devoted to the Word of God and public ministry.

He is supreme, and His life is the pattern for all ministry and conduct of the church (Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18). The pastor is elected by the local congregation. He leads through preaching and teaching of the Word as well as by example. The pastor is responsible for much of the public ministry and day-to-day operation of the local church. A board of deacons is elected to assist the pastor in spiritual matters and to help conduct the business operation of the church (Assemblies of God, 2020, Carson, 2015, Ephesians 4:11, 12; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Furthermore, within the fellowship of the Assemblies of God there are two classifications of churches - General Council affiliated churches and district affiliated churches. General Council affiliated churches enjoy full autonomy, having developed to the point of where they are self-governing and self-supporting. These fundamental principles have been catalysts for growth in the Fellowship. District affiliated churches are those which have not yet developed to the point where they qualify for full autonomy. All assemblies are required to adhere to the Statement of Fundamental Truths and a biblical pattern of conduct (Assemblies of God, 2020).

Each assembly operates its ministries under both a district and national structure. The 66 districts basically follow state boundaries or are set according to specific language groups. Districts oversee the ministries in their areas, such as camps and outreaches, as well as provide ministry opportunities and avenues of fellowship for ministers and constituents. Districts also recommend ministers for national credentialing. They are authorized to lead, solving matters of leadership and direction for local assemblies. They operate as a type of regional leadership between the local church and the national Fellowship (Assemblies of God, 2020).

The national church is called "The General Council of the Assemblies of God." In keeping with the original intention of the founding body, the Assemblies of God is considered a cooperative fellowship instead of a denomination. As a result, the national headquarters operation exists primarily as a service organization - providing educational curriculum, organizing the mission's programs, credentialing ministers, overseeing the church's colleges and seminary, producing communication channels for the churched and non-churched publics, and providing leadership for many national programs and ministries of the Assemblies of God (Assemblies of God, 2020, Acts 16:4, 5; Hebrews 13:17).

Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Literature

The literature reviewed for this study suggests that the clergy's role is composed of various factors which possess stress potential. Another collective experience of the clergy is a profound sense of loneliness and isolation, which is an additional contributor to stress. Furthermore, the unrealistic expectations of perfection from the congregation and community, and many times, the clergy, also expecting perfection from themselves, add to the stressors incurred.

The clergy vocation requires a vast amount of support, training, and resources so the clergy may maintain spiritual and physical health. Without the much-needed self-care and feeding of the Spirit, there is a potential for adopting negative behaviors that may be of harm to the clergy and possibly others. Without preventive care, these potential stressors can lead to burnout and even cause the clergy to leave the ministry (Elkington, 2013; Jackson-Jordan, 2013).

Researchers on clergy burnout have addressed one of two aspects that lead to burnout: internal factors (Brewster et al., 2015) or external factors (Ngo et al., 2005). Internal factors such as personality types, coping mechanisms, personal mastery, or conflict management show how clergy are predisposed to leadership burnout (Brewster et al., 2015; Parker & Martin, 2011). External factors, including role conflict, excessive activities, lack of personal time, or unrealistic expectations, are outside forces that contribute to the burnout phenomenon (Fernet et al., 2012; Joynt, 2012; Ngo et al., 2005).

Researchers have also examined internal variables such as personality traits and personality dimensions (Brewster et al., 2015; Parker & Martin, 2011). Burnout and clergy issues are still current, relevant, and viable in general study. So much so that a shift in studies has occurred as researchers have begun to think more about a remedy for burnout and how to address the ways to mitigate clergy burnout (Bickerton et al., 2014; Carter, 2013; Jackson-Jordan, 2013). There has been a lack of inquiry into cultural assumptions about leadership and how those assumptions contributed to clergy burnout (Fee, 2018); more research on clergy burnout is needed (Fee, 2018; Jackson-Jordan, 2013).

It was essential to learn clergy experiences on leadership style, stressors, demands, and ministry burnout. Current literature provides minimal qualitative research in this area, which, consequently, is the rationale for a qualitative phenomenological approach in this area of study. The clergy experienced that challenges and successes in pursuing a spiritually filled and healthy life in ministry can cultivate a spiritual and self-care practice model for the ministry's benefit. Doolittle (2010) observed that more is currently known about the prevalence of burnout than preventing it by using effective coping strategies. It would be beneficial for the clergy's emotional health to learn and practice coping with their stress. Likewise, Darling et al. (2004) recommended future research to increase understanding of clergy family qualities who are at risk when compared with those who are not, to explore the specific causes of stress that lead to burnout. Similarly, Lee (2007) recommended future research on the relationship between the pastor and the congregation.

As technology continues to change the world, the clergy's spiritual and self-care should evolve with the rise of technology and globalization. Due to technology, local churches are accessible globally. Today's clergies are needed to spiritually fill and heal their local community

and the world. With such a monumental task, extensive exploration of the tools, resources, and practices that can aid in the clergy's spiritual and self-care is needed. Based on this literature review, it was crucial to examine what leads to the stresses that cause the clergy to burn out from the ministry and explore ways to help the clergy maintain good spiritual health and self-care. It was also necessary to explore what services and tools professionals utilize to benefit the clergy's spiritual and physical health.

Most importantly, it was imperative to explore the motivating factors and identify the spiritual setbacks that contribute to ministry clergies' departure. Conducting this study will provide denominational leaders with critical information correlated to clergy retention. Findings will also prove valuable for the preparation of future clergy in small churches. Moreover, it will offer clergy families, congregations, and professionals useful information to add to clergy support and education.

Despite theoretical and practical concepts in this area of study, minimal qualitative research was found. More qualitative research on clergy burnout is needed (Fee, 2018; Jackson-Jordan, 2013). There has been a lack of inquiry into cultural assumptions about leadership and how those assumptions contribute to clergy burnout (Fee, 2018). The study of AG pastors' lived experiences and their understanding concerning: leadership style, demands, stressors, and ministry burnout in small churches has helped fill the literature gap.

Profile of the Current Study

The clergy is often called upon to be counselors, preachers, project managers, students, social activists, and a moral compass for those they lead. The literature on clergy and burnout acknowledges the significance of role overload in burnout development (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014). Travis et al. (2015) and Bakker et al. (2014) described job demand elements as: role

ambiguity, lack of control over the environment, conflicts associated with the job role, and the stress associated with the job role, stressful events, excessive workload, and work pressure. Role conflicts have negative internal ramifications that often lead to burnout (Schaefer & Jacobsen, 2009).

Hendron et al. (2012) reported that the common expectation is that clergy must be available to the congregation in times of personal crisis, including mental or emotional trauma. Clergy is expected and necessitated to accomplish a load of responsibilities to congregants and the surrounding community that takes a heavy toll on their time and energy (Stewart, 2003). Gyntelberg et al. (2012) demonstrated a significant connection between the pace of work, the amount of work, and experienced burnout.

Hendron et al. (2012) showed that the clergy are most often seen as the first source of support during critically troubling times. Furthermore, clergy members often feel as though they are expected not just to perform various tasks, but they often expect clergy to be masters of multiple roles (Fairlie, 2014). Elitism has developed exaggerated levels of respect for church leadership. Churches excessively focus on the clergy position that has raised leaders to positions of extreme power and control in their church context, so much so that they have in many instances become beyond reproach (Maher, 2013). Ward (2012) argued even more intensely regarding the issue of clergy in hierarchical structures, and that dichotomy between clergy and laity exists and continues to inform the church about clergy as people set apart from the rest of the church congregation.

Maher (2013) went on to say that this has simply raised the level of leadership in the church to the place of a few elite individuals where they are put on a higher level than of the average person as if they are invisible, more so when making a mistake in elevating themselves

above their congregation (Pooler, 2011). Too often, pastors are expected to perform duties with superhuman perfection. Life and ministry can get so crowded with obligations and emergencies that the pastor's maintenance of a healthy lifestyle can become unbalanced or cease to exist (Johnson, 2018). Adu (2015) claimed a lack of clearly defined organizational structures comes from the sacred texts. Without explicitly defined leadership and leadership structural ideas, the church's historical context significantly influenced its structure (Adu, 2015).

Furthermore, Jinkins (2002) argued that most pastors do not feel like their seminary training and preparation equipped them to lead or negotiate the variety of roles expected of them. Faucett et al., (2013) added that most pastors operate with unclear job descriptions and even more undefined performance expectations. Defining job performance expectations can be quite difficult when clergy graduate from seminary with the expectation that they seek to develop moral character (Jinkins, 2002).

Most notably, a clergy's primary calling is to have an intimate relationship with God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Believers need both solitude and the body of Christ to be spiritually fulfilled and maturing as followers. It is the body of Christ that intercedes on behalf of believers in fleshly and spiritual struggles. A believer through spiritual formation will go from living based on carnal desires to living a spiritual life. The disciple Paul encourages believers to "Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Carson, 2015, Galatians 5:16).

How will the clergy lead in the image of God and do God's will for the Kingdom without the time to receive and live out God's wisdom?

> I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples (Carson, 2015, John 15: 5-8).

Francis et al. (2013) asserted that some clergy may themselves believe in the profession's persona and exert considerable effort into what they think they should be. This brings about concern when people begin to define being in God's image in terms of currently having attributes of God (Kilner, 2015). Like the congregation members they serve, the clergy must remember that they also share in the human experience of imperfection, in need of the supernatural power given by the Holy Spirit (Carson, 2015, Ephesians 3:20).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter encompasses a research design outline, which has effectively served the qualitative phenomenological study exploring the perception of leadership and burnout amid AG pastors in San Antonio, Texas. This chapter states the research problem, research questions, and an explanatory design and methodology for the research study.

Research Design Synopsis

The study consisted of 15 pastors from San Antonio, Texas. The participants required a minimum experience of three years of pastoral work, which was a sufficient time allowed to adjust to a new church and complete vocation training. The size of the serving congregation has been no more than 250 members.

The researcher collected the data through semi-structured interviews that allowed participants to respond to open-ended research questions. A fundamental concept in a qualitative study is examining the participant's experiences and getting a sense of what is behind the thoughts. Janesick (2011) argued that it is essential to work together with the participants to develop shared meaning.

Through the Wielkiewicz Leadership Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (WLAB), the study participants addressed research study questions. After the researcher collected the data, it was systematically coded and analyzed. Conclusively, the researcher produced common emerging themes from the data collected.

The Problem

Literature supports that clergies are at higher risk for anxiety and depression due to the significant demands of the vocation; therefore, clergy are at higher risk of burnout because of inordinate ministerial demands causing fatigue, in some cases giving clergy reason to leave the

ministry (Buchanan, 2014; Chandler, 2008; Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Furthermore, research reveals that years in service and reported depression significantly predicted burnout (Jackson-Jordan, 2013; Jacobson et al., 2013). Proeschold-Bell et al. (2013) stated that the high rate of clergy depression signals the need for preventive policies and programs for clergy.

Bledsoe and Setterlund (2015) discussed that clergies face countless challenges requiring support systems and self-care practices for resilience and perseverance. Eventually, if not attaining the necessary self-care, the clergy will experience anxiety or stress that may lead to burnout (Brewster et al., 2015). Without the time and training for self-care, burnout can lead to discouragement and depression, affecting the clergy's overall spiritual health, increasing hospital admittances due to physical and mental disorders (Leiter et al., 2012; Toppinen-Tanner, 2011).

Pastoral leadership is vital to the church's health and sustenance, and yet clergy are leaving the church daily (Elkington, 2013). Ultimately, the role of the clergy is to look after the congregation's spiritual well-being. The various tasks elicited by their vocation leave less time for pastoral work as they care for the church's managerial demands (Berry et al., 2012). Pietkiewicz and Bachryj (2014) argued that ministry and pastoral leadership incorporate many duties that cause identity, confusion, and loneliness, leading to depression. Elm (2012) added that the clergy's leadership carries a divine image, where clergy are often seen as God's agents. They hold themselves to a higher standard than the rest of the congregation, consequently lacking the support and relationships necessary to reach out for help.

The overall problem in this area of study is that clergy burnout is still a critical concern worthy of research. Researchers are not in agreement about the cause despite decades of studies (Buchanan, 2014; Francis et al., 2013; Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Previous studies have demonstrated that internal factors such as personality types, personal mastery, conflict

management, and external factors such as role conflict, excessive activities, or unrealistic

expectations, can lead to burnout. Today, the clergy continues to struggle with burnout (Fee,

2018; Buchanan, 2014; Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Nevertheless, minimal qualitative research is

found in the current literature. Little to no research has examined church culture's effect on

clergy burnout (Fee, 2018).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the lived

experiences of small church AG pastors in San Antonio with regards to: leadership style,

leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout. The study has evaluated data that

can potentially benefit clergies and professionals in support of the church. The researcher

unearths responses to the vast challenges for clergymen in ministry and retention.

Research Questions

RQ1. What is the perception regarding leadership style from the lived experiences of
Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ2. What is the perception regarding leadership demands from the lived experiences of
Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ3. What is the perception if any, regarding leadership stressors of Assemblies of God
pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ4. What is the perception, if any, regarding ministry burnout from Assemblies of God
pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

Research Design and Methodology

Marshall and Rossman (2016) believed that when the focus of the research is on a study

group concerning a phenomenon, the study is most suitable for phenomenological research. A

study group's focus on a phenomenon made this study most ideal for phenomenological research

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The researcher selected the qualitative method because it is more inductive; it is used to discover truth through investigation or examination.

The researcher collected the data through semi-structured interviews that allowed participants to respond to open-ended research questions. The additional interview instrument was the WLAB scale and the burnout inventory instrument from Iverson, Olekalns, and Erwin (1998). Through semi-structured interviews that allowed participants to respond to open-ended questions, the participants had the option to respond to the research questions without limitations. The researcher has gathered data and explored a phenomenon within the actual context through in-depth data collection (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, qualitative studies have emergent qualities as collected data builds from details to general categories, meaning arguments are not tested but discovered through the research (Maxwell, 2013).

Upon approval from Liberty University's IRB, the researcher sent out emails that included the introduction to the study, along with the consent form and a brief burnout survey to the San Antonio churches selected from the AG online database. After receiving the response, the researcher contacted the participants and interviewed them in the participant's church office. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and scheduled for 30 minutes. Furthermore, the researcher added back up participants to the research study if preliminary participants dropped out of the survey by selecting over 20 participants from the initial screening.

Setting

The study consisted of AG pastors within the San Antonio, Texas, area. The study was conducted in a single denomination, as opposed to pastoral work throughout various denominations. The participants came from a common context and have shared experiences in common (Compton-Lilly et al., 2014).

Each participant in this study had pastored an AG church located in San Antonio, Texas, for a minimum of three years. The size of the congregation was no more than 250 active members. More significantly, the participants have experienced some level of burnout in ministry. The burnout survey was the primary indicator.

The face-to-face interviews were audio recorded. The researcher exclusively selected this interview option to build rapport with participants and minimize interview bias, such as the halo effect (the tendency for an impression created in one area to influence opinion in another area) (Halo Effect, 2019). Bias in qualitative research can be reduced if one knows what to look for and how to manage it. By asking quality questions at the right time and remaining aware and focused on sources of bias, researchers can enable the most accurate respondent perspectives and ensure that the resulting research lives up to the highest qualitative standards (Sarniak, 2015). Furthermore, an observer accompanied the researcher to point out inconsistencies, if any.

Participants

The researcher selected the participants from the AG online church directory provided by the Pentecostal denomination. Participants constituted pastors expressing interest in the research study upon the researcher's contact with the AG churches in the San Antonio, Texas area. The study consisted of 15 pastors with a minimum of three years of pastoral work in ministry, which allowed sufficient time to adjust to a new church and complete vocation training.

The researcher-initiated contact with AG churches through email and then invited potential subjects to participate in the research study. Once participants expressed interest in the research study, the research questions were responded to in the participants' church office. The researcher encouraged the participant before the interview taking place for the participant to choose a church office seating area of their highest comfort level, as not to restrict conversation

between researcher and participant and thus encouraged the participant to be expressive and communicate freely.

Role of the Researcher

The study's research process was of emergent design, therefore not tightly prescribed, which required changes after the researcher entered the field and began to collect data. The research's key was to learn about the problem from the pastors and address the research questions with the constructed research tools to obtain the participant's information. The researcher's focused on learning the meaning that the participants held about the problem, not the meaning that the researcher brought to the research or that writers expressed in the literature. Furthermore, the researcher reflected on their background, culture, and experiences, which held the potential for shaping their interpretations, such as the themes they advanced and the meaning they ascribed to the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative research, while valuable in obtaining descriptive lived occurrences, holds a higher possibility for the researcher's bias and assumptions as the qualitative researcher is closer to the research (Creswell, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). In this context, the researcher will hold the following foundational assumptions during the study:

1. The response received by participants during the research has reflected their personal experience and not that of the population.
2. The participants in the study are agents of the phenomenon of transferability.
3. The participants had a Christian worldview through which they lived their lives and work in ministry.
4. The participants had been truthful about the description of their experienced burnout.

5. The interview protocol and interview instrument were appropriate for the gathering of reliable data.

6. The participants have a vested interest in participating in the study because it may help them and future clergymen.

7. The researcher reported participants' lived experiences. The observer assisted in creating a detached interpretation of the recorded lived experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Following ethical practices, the researcher disclosed their rights as participants in the research study before requesting consent. The researcher provided the participants with the interview transcript to allow the removal of or any reconsidered information provided in response to the research questions and any additional reviewed information that the participant may not want to disclose for research purposes. This was intended not to harm the participant and have the participants' interests at the forefront of the research study.

Furthermore, the participants' identities will be kept confidential. Roberts (2014) defined confidentiality as it refers to individual participants' identity and data from participants. All participants were assured that all data will be held in confidence. Individual names would not be used in any publication about the research study (Roberts, 2014, p. 52).

Additionally, Roberts (2014) stated, "Assuring confidentiality is a primary responsibility" (p. 52). Equally, the IRB makes sure to protect participants in the research. Ultimately, the purpose of an IRB is "the protection of those participating in a research study, particularly around ethical issues such as informed consent, protection from harm, and confidentiality" (Roberts, 2014, p. 32). Roberts (1992) wrote on the role of IRB is to protect participants from

"stress, discomfort, embarrassment, invasion of privacy, or potential threat to reputation"
(Roberts, 2014, p. 50).

The collected data is safeguarded through reverse coding. The participants had a number assigned initially from one to fifteen. The answers to the research questions were numbered in reverse to the participants' identification number. Additionally, the collected interviews were kept in a password-protected database, which the researcher had sole access to during the research study. The researcher allowed the participants to withdraw from the research study during the data collection period, before analysis, and publication. The researcher gave the participants full disclosure of the study in the initial contact and again before the interview. Furthermore, it highlighted the option to remove themselves from the research study data collection no later than one month after the interview.

Finally, the research study was submitted to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board. After completing a successful prospectus hearing, the researcher applied for review and approval by the Liberty University's IRB. This oriented the researcher to the timeline and the process of this review. Once IRB approval was obtained, the First Reader cleared the student to begin field testing and data gathering. Upon approval of the Dissertation Supervisor and the IRB, the researcher collected data relevant to the research conducted, as stated in the dissertation. The researcher is preserving all gathered data and computations attained for five years following graduation. The data will be disposed of through shredding of documentation and irrecoverable deletion of stored data.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The selection of the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach was due to the openness it provided in creativity, analysis, and interviewing techniques (Smith et al., 2013).

Furthermore, IPA is a fast-growing approach developed for qualitative inquiry and prevalent for not commanding interview limitations. The semi-structured, open-ended questions in the IPA methodology allowed participants to respond without time limits to research questions and further elaborate on their experiences.

Collection Methods

The researcher had implemented the data collection plan as submitted to and approved by the Liberty University IRB. The researcher collected the data through scheduled semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews tended to be the preferred means for collecting data. One-to-one interviews were easily managed, allowing a rapport to be developed and giving participants the space to think, speak, and be heard (Smith et al., 2013).

Instruments and Protocols

The additional interview instruments were the WLAB and the burnout inventory instrument from Iverson et al. (1998). After that, the data collected was coded to mask the participant's identity and the participant's responses to the research questions. The researcher produced common, emerging themes, ultimately finding patterns across participants' cases.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a recently developed and rapidly growing approach to qualitative inquiry. It is committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences. IPA is phenomenological because it is concerned with exploring experience in its terms (Smith et al., 2013). An IPA researcher is interested in looking in detail at how someone makes sense of a major transition in their life. It also recognizes that access to experience depends on what participants say about that experience. The researcher then interprets that account from the participant to understand their experience. As such, the

researcher's sense-making is second order; they only had access to the participant's experience through the participant's account (Smith et al., 2013).

IPA studies usually have a small number of participants. The aim is to reveal something of each of those individuals' experiences. Furthermore, the objective is to find a reasonable homogeneous sample to be convergently and divergently examined in detail (Smith et al., 2013). As part of this, the study explored in detail the similarities and differences between each case. Data collection was usually in the form of semi-structured interviews, where the participants' responses were open-ended. This is followed by transcriptions of interviews analyzed individually and, later on, case by case through a systematic, qualitative analysis through careful examination. This was then turned into a narrative account where the researcher's analytic interpretation is presented in detail and supported with verbatim extracts from participants (Smith et al., 2013).

Husserl (as cited in Smith et al., 2013) put forth that for a phenomenology philosopher, phenomenology involves the careful examination of human experience. Husserl established the importance and relevance of a focus on experience and perception. The complex understanding of experience invokes a lived process, an unfurling of perspectives and meanings unique to the person's embodied and situated relationship to the world. The attempt was to understand other people's relationships to the world are necessarily interpretative and focused upon their attempts to make meaning of their activities and the things happening to them in IPA research (Smith et al., 2013).

Interviews

The researcher used a model instrument with general and open-ended research questions, which helped obtain the participants' lived experiences regarding leadership and burnout, the

primary question in the research study *Lived Experiences of Assemblies of God Pastors with Regards to Leadership Style, Demands, Stressors, and Ministry Burnout.* The open-ended questions provided an opportunity for the respondents to answer without restrictions (Yin, 2014).

The interview model instrument was the WLAB scale. Wielkiewicz's study was designed to explore attitudes and beliefs by students about leadership related to the organizational context and was broad enough to be used in the context of the church (Fee, 2018).

Surveys/Questionnaires

The research study consisted of 15 participating pastors from the AG churches in San Antonio, Texas. The participants required a minimum experience of three years of pastoral work, a sufficient amount of time to adjust to a new church, and complete vocation training. The researcher selected the participants from the AG online church directory provided by the Pentecostal denomination.

The researcher-initiated contact with local AG churches through email, inviting potential subjects to participate in the research study if and only criteria were met. Once participants expressed interest in the research study, the measuring burnout survey was sent out. If there was an indication of burnout, the participant was invited to a 30-minute interview containing research questions, which would be scheduled at the participants' church office. Research shows that a proper location needed to be arranged so that participants and researchers can meet. This helped the researchers gather the data based on the participants (Creswell, 2014).

The participants were interviewed face-to-face in their church offices. The researcher built a rapport with the participant and encouraged a comfortable seating area for the participant's

privacy. This allowed the participants to think thoughtfully, develop their ideas, and express their responses at some length.

Observations

The researcher was accompanied by an observer to interview participants. This was done to ensure the researcher's actions were consistent and in line with IRB guidelines. With interviews, the data collected could be subjective, so the observer assisted in an accurate interpretation of the participant's response to avoid skewed data. Furthermore, the observer assisted in pointing out any discrepancies by the researcher so that the interviews were consistent throughout the data collection process.

Qualitative researchers use many forms of data, including observation, interviews, visual information, and documents. They do so rather than rely on a single source so that the researcher reviewed all of the data, made sense of it, and organized it into categories or themes that cut across all data sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The data collected was managed with sensitivity and care. As the data collected was done through recording and notes, then transcribed, coded, and analyzed by the researcher into common emerging patterns.

Furthermore, the researcher gathered data on the participant's leadership and ministry experience through opening questions. This foundation served as a basis for the analysis of data. The researcher and observer also recorded observations throughout the participant's interview. Additionally, noted was the body language and facial expressions concerning the participant's expressing experiences throughout the interview. Janesick (2011) stated that notes regarding gestures, facial expressions, and bodily movement highlighted particular interest areas with each participant.

Procedures

The purpose of selecting the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach was the openness it provided in creativity, analysis, and interviewing techniques. IPA is a fast-growing approach developed for qualitative inquiry and prevalent for not commanding interview limitations. The researcher was the primary instrument in collecting the data through scheduled semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were preferred as a means for collecting data. The researcher used voice recording equipment in the interview and transcribed information obtained by participants. Data was collected and analyzed using keywords, phrases, or explanations in chronological order. The participants' experiences were highlighted by descriptions, assumptions, sound bites, acronyms, idiosyncratic figures of speech, and emotional responses. The one-to-one interviews were easily managed, allowing a rapport to be developed and giving participants the space to think, speak, and be heard (Smith et al., 2013).

The use of an interview protocol was essential to guide the interview process (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). When the participant was not responding to interview questions in narrative form, the researcher scheduled the questions elaborately through personal experiences instead of one or two-word answers. The participants gathered their thoughts and momentum while building rapport with the researcher.

Data Analysis

Maxwell (2013) explained that interpretation is making sense of the data. Data analysis was conducted in phases through a hand-coding process. This phase primarily consisted of: (a) pre-coding setup, (b) code adjustments, and (c) the labeling of the collected data according to established codes. Neuman (2007) suggested the use of open coding for the first pass through the data. Open coding involves reading through the data to find manageable data and assigning

labels to preliminary concepts (Bowen, 2008). Axial coding identified key concepts and relationships between the open codes. The use of selective coding selected the central or core concepts that emerge after systematic analysis (Bowen, 2008). The researcher used open and axial coding when reviewing participants' transcripts. Through careful examination, the researcher assigned codes and labels accordingly.

Second, the data analysis phase involved the examination of raw information by theme and frequency of word usage. Coding was done concerning research questions and emerging themes upon discovery. Codes were adjusted accordingly to keep up with data extraction and expansion. Transcriptions of interviews were analyzed case by case through a systematic, qualitative analysis with careful examination. This then was turned into a narrative account where the researcher's analytic interpretation presented in detail was supported with verbatim extracts from participants (Smith et al., 2013). The analysis process was initiated with the NVivo 12 software. Participants were entered individually, each having their own file. The interview transcripts were uploaded along with additional notes from the observer. Through analysis of transcripts, notes and coding, the program produced common emerging key themes.

Analysis Methods

The researcher examined the subjects' recorded data for associations through emergent themes extracted from the participants' interviews, through abstraction, and identifying polarization. The themes reflected the participant's original words and thoughts and the analyst's interpretations to capture an understanding. The development of charting, mapping, how the researcher themes fit together is presented (Smith et al., 2013).

Lastly, the researcher looked for patterns across the study participants' cases through inductive and deductive data analysis. The researcher-built patterns, categories, and themes from

the bottom up by organizing data into increasingly abstract information units. This inductive process illustrated working back and forth between the themes and the data until the researcher established a comprehensive set of themes. Then deductively, the researcher looked back at their data from the themes to determine if more evidence could support each theme or whether there was a need to gather additional information. Thus, while the process began inductively, deductive thinking also played an important role in moving the analysis forward (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Ultimately, constructing and documenting a thinking pattern defined by themes can be emulated to replicate the research, producing the same results.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a study is not guaranteed; however, Maxwell (2013) claimed that steps outlined below could be taken to avoid threats to a study's validity. Flagler (2004) considered the components of trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability or reliability, and confirmability or objectivity.

Credibility

Credibility is significant to the audience's ability to find a study's results believable and probable (Hays et al., 2016). Maxwell (2013) listed several processes to help establish reliability and validity, including: triangulation, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, respondent checks of verification and reflexivity, and rich descriptions. The researcher in this case provided a dense description, triangulation, code/recode procedures and an audit trail throughout the research study. The researcher addressed researcher bias through reflexive journaling throughout the interview process, making notes of personal thoughts, reactions, and reflections throughout. The reflexive journaling added to the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the study.

Dependability

Data management, including data collection and data analysis, was critical to creating study dependability (Patton, 2002). The researcher documented the participant's responses and data analysis independently. Followed by a secondary analysis phase incorporating the subjects' reactions and emotions. This allowed for confirmation of subjects' responses. The process created a systematic audit trail in handling and interpreting collected data, and triangulation added to the study's dependability.

Confirmability

Yin (2014) suggested that qualitative researchers need to document the steps of the procedures as possible. He also recommended setting up a detailed case study protocol and database to follow the procedures. The researcher did this by checking transcripts for inaccuracies and reviewing and cross-checking codes and data for discrepancies.

Transferability

This study is transferable due to the chosen approach to data collection through interviews and analysis. The data collection procedures were transcribed in detail so that this or a similar study may be conducted with an imitating sample population. This study used established interview instruments and protocols previously established in phenomenological studies.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to discover the understanding and lived experiences regarding leadership and burnout within small AG churches. The study consisted of 15 participating pastors in San Antonio, Texas. The participants required a minimum experience of three years of pastoral work, which was sufficient time admissible for the prospective participant to have adjusted to a new church and complete vocation training.

The researcher was the primary instrument in collecting the data through semi-structured interviews. The WLAB scale was the researcher's tool of choice for addressing the research questions. Successively, the researcher found that IPA was the best fit for collecting data in the research study. This allowed the participants to respond to the research questions elaborately and without constraints. Narrative studies involve telling a story through a reflective, autobiographical lens (Bernard, 2013).

The data collected was validated throughout the process of the research study. The researcher carefully analyzed and coded the collected data. By analyzing the participants' experiences, the researcher produced common emerging themes from the collected data implementing a creative examination of common themes and identifying patterns throughout the participants' cases.

In conclusion, the researcher completed the research study by explaining the sequence of analysis and documenting the research findings in a narrative form. Thus, the researcher concluded by describing the qualitative method chosen by demonstrating the purposeful use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and a suitable instrument for the research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the lived experiences of small church AG pastors in San Antonio with regards to leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout. The essential research question for this study was, "What are Assemblies of God pastors' lived experiences in regard to leadership and burnout within a small church?" Another question posed was: "What are your personal experiences, if any, regarding ministry burnout?" In this chapter, the framework in which the research study was managed will be presented along with: the demographics, expand on the research study method used for the data collection, data analysis, and elaborating on the study results. Lastly, it will conclude with the evidence of the study's trustworthiness.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

The sampling technique used for this study was purposeful sampling. The rationale for purposeful sampling was that it permitted the researcher to obtain a broad understanding of the phenomenon and how the participants experienced that phenomenon in their specific context, which contributed to the study's reliability (Petty et al., 2012). Each participant in this study met the following criteria: (a) AG pastor for a minimum of 3 years, (b) located in San Antonio, Texas, (c) a senior pastor of a congregation, (d) in a congregation of no more than 250 members, and (e) experiencing some level of burnout.

Upon approval from Liberty University's IRB, the researcher sent out emails introducing the study and the burnout survey (Appendix B). The AG online database provided a list of San Antonio churches for the researcher to contact. Upon the response, the researcher contacted the participants for an interview only if they met the eligibility research study criteria. The

interviews were conducted in the participant's church office and scheduled for 30-45 minutes. Interviews were conducted face-to-face. The consent form was given to the participant before the interview after answering the questions participants had regarding the research study. Furthermore, the researcher was accompanied by an observer to enhance the objectivity in the interview process. The observer helped the researcher interpret the participant's response and pointed out the researcher's interview discrepancies if any.

Demographic and Sample Data

The lived experiences of 15 AG pastors in San Antonio regarding leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout was collected. Each of the interviewed pastors had experienced some degree of burnout. The pastors agreed to have been following the AG's guidelines. According to AG, pastors interviewed AG guidelines were flexible. They can manage their congregation without adhering to strict denomination guidelines. Every pastor interviewed was male, except for one female pastor. The pastors were from various races. All of the pastors studied were solely responsible for the spiritual education and training of the attendees to their churches. Still, a few did have additional help through appointed church elders and program volunteers. Despite extra help in carrying out their pastoral duties, burnout was experienced by each participant, despite years in service, background, race, or education. For this reason, these factors are not included in the research study.

The majority of pastors were Bible college graduates. A few pastors were self-taught, and most were led to pastor due to a calling or parents and grandparents pastoring a church. The example of a Biblical worldview was exemplified in the home by parents or grandparents that lead these individuals to pastor a church.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data was collected from 15 AG pastors in San Antonio regarding leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout. Each of the pastors had experienced some degree of burnout. The 15 pastors met all the criteria for eligibility in the research study. The interviews were conducted in the participant's church office and scheduled for 30-45 minutes. Interviews were conducted face-to-face. After the first five interviews, the participants' responses were repetitious or very similar.

Furthermore, it was challenging to get participants involved in the research study due to the pandemic and the distancing protocol that accompanies the Covid-19 epidemic. There was persistence in following up with potential participants with multiple follow up emails or a phone call. Many emails anticipated invitations were sent out from the AG San Antonio Church Directory website. From the 64 email invitations sent out, 20 replied. Within the 20, 15 qualified to have experienced burnout through the burnout survey emailed. There was no other alternative but to stop at 15 participants as the additional participants did not keep their appointment dates. They would not respond to follow-up emails, phone calls and ultimately were not interested in participating in the research study.

The data collection took 15 days to complete. The data was collected at the participants' convenient day and time, most of which were before or after service during the week or Sundays. The initial interview was conducted on September 9, 2020, and the last participant was interviewed on September 23, 2020. The interview was recorded on a REV voice recorder, a phone application that transcribes audio recordings. The participants gave consent for recording before the interview took place. Every participant was eager to share their experience and was

elaborate when responding to research questions. The interviews were on average 30 minutes, except for a few that were approximately 45 minutes in length.

The data collected included the participants' recorded interviews, researcher, and observer's notes and observations. There was an examination for links by developing themes extricated from the participants' interviews, abstraction, and identifying polarization. The themes revealed the participant's original words and thoughts and the analyst's interpretations to apprehend an understanding. In the analysis, common emerging themes were found. The participants' experiences were emphasized by narratives, assumptions, personal figures of speech, and emotional responses.

The research findings were arrived at through inductive and deductive data analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organizing data into increasingly more abstract data elements were built. This inductive process exemplified working back and forth between the themes and the data until the researcher established a broad set of themes. The collected data was looked at deductively as well, furthermore determining if there was a need to collect additional data for further analysis.

The hand-coding progression continued with the expansion of themes (see Table 1). The researcher grouped initial key concepts and codes into larger groups of ideas and themes. In these themes the participants expressed their lived experiences in leadership and burnout. The coding process was open, axial, and selective.

Table 1

Expansion of Themes

Key Concepts	Themes
Leadership and burnout	Relationship between leadership and burnout
	Personal contributions
	Church stressors
Leadership is empowering	Develop others' gifts
	Delegation
	Everyone contributing
	Creating disciples
Leadership by example	Leading like Jesus
	Examples learned from previous leaders
	People need a barometer of what to follow
Servant Leadership	Christ came to serve others
	Ministry is sacrificial service
	Called to serve others
	Biblically mandated
	Glorifies God

Table 2 is the theme and description of the theme in Table 1, of the lived experiences of AG pastors in small churches.

Table 2

Themes and Descriptions

Theme	Description
Leadership and burnout	Pastors find an association with leadership and burnout when working within their own strength
Leadership as empowering	The role of the pastor is to empower congregants to work according to their own God-given gifts
Leadership by example	Pastors find their most crucial learning experiences through working under others. They find that leading by example is the best form of mentoring.
Servant Leadership	The purpose of leadership, according to pastors, is to lead by example, as Jesus led by serving others

Result Tables

General Opening Questions about Leadership

Table 3

Question: What leadership roles exist in your context? (current circumstances)

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Administration and Operations	1	06
Building Maintenance	2	03, 05,
Discipleship	5	03, 05, 08, 13,14
Empower staff	2	07, 09
Mission and Vision	2	06, 07
Pastoral care	7	01, 03, 04, 05, 06, 13, 14
Preach and Prepare	7	01, 02, 04, 05, 06, 10, 13

The opening question was intended to gather information on the pastor's current tasks in leadership. Additionally, they were asked if their job description or listing of duties and responsibilities was documented anywhere. The majority of the participants responded that their job descriptions were documented in the bylaws and constitution. A selected few replied that it was a biblical mandate, and their role was scripturally based. In general, there was no one specific response as to an essential role as a leader. It was a unanimous response that the leadership role entailed all the church's and congregation's needs and demands.

> **P05:** As a Senior Pastor of the church, it is my duty to lead the congregation and lead the leaders. It's my desire to lead the congregation into a deeper walk with Jesus Christ. That's my primary purpose, and another word for that is discipleship. Also, to lead the leaders to do the work of the ministry because the Bible says in Ephesians 4 (King James Bible, 1769), that is the work of apostles, prophets, evangelist, and preachers to equip the saints. I'm not the only one that leads people, but I disciple those that also lead others.

> **P06:** I am the Chief Shepherd of the congregation, and so I prepare messages for the church. My responsibilities include overseeing the overall vision of the church and overseeing all of the ministries in the church. Also operating the administration and operations of the church.

Table 4

Question: Is this documented?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
AG	1	14
Constitution and Bylaws	4	01, 03, 04, 06
Self-determined	10	01, 02, 03, 05, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15

The intent of this question was to understand where the pastor's role description came from. This determined if the pastor operated under his own leadership style and authority or if their role was dictated by the denomination, constitution, or bylaws. This also determined if the pastor's assigned role contributed to burnout.

All of the pastors stated that the AG discipline was extremely flexible regarding governing, allowing the pastors to exercise their leadership style and determine their role.

P03: My role is as Senior Pastor, founder, and organizer. The leadership role is in the constitution and bylaws. They have been in place for over three generations.

P12: The role is self-determined as a relationship with the Lord, and everything is secondary from there. Having personal and devotional time with the Lord. The role was ultimately determined by seeing my father and grandfather that were an inspiration in leading their church.

Table 5

Question: How would you describe the leadership structure of this church?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Deacons/Elders	4	03, 04, 13, 15
Elected board members	6	01, 02, 05, 06, 10, 15
Pastors overseeing ministries	3	09, 12, 14
Solo Pastor	2	08, 11

       The response to this question varied among pastors. Due to the AG being flexible on how pastors' structure and run their congregation, the churches' structure varied significantly. Most churches choose to elect a board to help make church decisions, ultimately the pastor having the final say. All of the smaller churches were run solely by a pastor who made all the church decisions. The larger churches had a senior pastor with ministry pastors that oversaw specific ministries as well as having deacons and elders that helped in the running of the church and congregation.

> **P01**: I do have an elder board; I seek their advice. They are voted in as well as the Deacons. My role is to ultimately make the final decisions. I have the authority to make the decision to dismiss someone immediately if there is a false doctrine practiced. But as far as any kind of major purchase or anything like this, I will go to the Elder board or for any kind of problems we have within the church as well. We have a lot of problems when dealing with the congregation.

> **P05:** The board is even with me; we make joint decisions. I know that in some churches, the board hires the pastor and pays him to do the preaching, and in others, the board does not make decisions. Our role is to make joint decisions. After the board and the Senior pastor, we have associated pastors in different ministries that they lead and oversee.

Table 6

Question: **Are you following the church structure from an AG discipline? If not, could you explain the organizational structure?**

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Deacons/Elders	4	03, 04, 13, 15
Elected board members	6	01, 02, 05, 06, 10, 15
Pastors overseeing ministries	3	09, 12, 14
Solo Pastor	2	08, 11

This question's response is identical to the previous question because the AG allows their pastors to run their congregation at their own discretion provided, they are following sound doctrine.

> **P05:** The AG's guidelines and policies are suggestions for the pastors to follow but not required to adhere to. The Assemblies of God do not have a cookie-cutter structure. They allow us to do our own constitution and bylaws.

Table 7

Question: What is the description of your role as a leader?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Discipleship	5	03, 05, 08, 13,14
Empower staff	2	07, 09
Mission and Vision	2	06, 07
Pastoral care	7	01, 03, 04, 05, 06, 13, 14
Preach and Prepare	7	01, 02, 04, 05, 06, 10, 13

The description of the role of the pastors varied from one extreme to another. There was no agreement as to their role as a leader. The only consistency in response was that the pastors were responsible for everything related to the congregation and the church structure in the smallest of churches. Those that had the assistance of deacons, elders, and associated pastors had less responsibility concerning the congregation and the church structure. The assistive roles allowed the senior pastors to dedicate time to preparing sermons and overseeing the mission and vision for the congregation.

> **P04:** I preach on Sundays. I make all the major decisions in the church. I visit the sick. I perform the ceremonies. I do the funerals. I focus a lot on making disciples. I do try to disciple the people in the church so they can be leaders and make the church fruitful.

> **P05:** Day-to-day, every day looks different. First of all, there is pastoral care, making sure that people are taken care of and visited in the hospital and prayed for. Organizing ministry, worship service, and small groups for discipleship and spiritual growth. Then leading the leaders that lead small groups that are mostly volunteers so they can disciple the people in the church.

Table 8

Question: **What are the main tasks of leadership?**

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Building Maintenance	2	03, 05
Decision maker	1	04
Discipleship	1	03
Empower staff	2	05, 09
Lead others	2	05, 07
Mission and Vision	1	09
Pastoral care	6	01, 03, 04, 05, 09, 14
Prayer/Devotion	2	01, 06
Preach and Prepare	5	01, 04, 06, 09, 13
Study the Word	1	01

The pastors responded to this question very similar to the opening question in Table 3, which asks about their leadership role. This question's intent was to see from the pastor's perspective what they saw as their tasks as a leader. Yet there was no agreement on the pastors' main task of leadership.

Table 9

Question: Who is Responsible for Defining Your Role as the Leader?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Assemblies of God	1	14
Constitution and Bylaws	3	01, 04, 06
Self-determined	9	01, 02, 03, 05, 09, 10, 11, 13, 15

This question's intent was to gather a greater understanding of the pastor's perception of where his defining role comes from. This determined their flexibility in exercising their own leadership style and role in the congregation and managing the congregation by denomination, constitution, and bylaws. This also identified if the pastor's lack of exercising their personal choice of leadership style for a mandated role contributed to burnout.

Every pastor stated that the Assemblies of God rules of governance are extremely flexible regarding governing. The AOG rules of governance allow flexibility for pastors to manage their congregations according to their discretion. Several pastors stated they appreciated the flexibility the AG allows the pastor to exercise their leadership style and determine their role.

> **P06**: In the Assemblies of God there are two types of churches. There are sovereign churches and dependent churches. We are a sovereign church in which we govern ourselves. We fellowship with the AG, and we are part of the AG, but as far as government of the church, it's up to the sovereign church to choose their constitutional bylaws and also to govern themselves. Unless we ask the general counsel or the district to come in to intervene, then they are only to come in by request of the pastor or by request by two-thirds of the membership to handle any given situation. They only come in if they are invited. That is the uniqueness of the Assemblies of God that some churches that are smaller they are dependent on the Assemblies of God, and the governing board are the Assemblies of God, but those churches that are sovereign govern themselves. Some Assemblies of God churches may have different structures and policies than other Assemblies of God churches. The Assemblies of God gives guidelines, but they only serve as guidelines. The Assemblies of God gives recommendations, and we follow the recommendation and guidelines. That makes the uniqueness of the Assemblies of God

over other denominations, it's basically a Presbyterian congressional form of government.

P01: The AG gives you leeway; there are congregations that are affiliated with AG and others that are run by AG. Those that are run by AG have members from AG on their board. Yet with affiliation comes a little more liberty; we have the liberty to conduct our own affairs so long as we stay within the sound doctrine.

RQ1. What is the perception regarding leadership style from the lived experiences of AG pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

Table 10

Question: How did you determine to follow that style?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Collaborative	6	02, 05, 06, 07, 09, 10
Empower	2	03,14
Hands-on	1	02
Lead by example	5	04, 08, 12, 13, 15
Servant leadership	1	01

The majority of pastors' responses to this question was to lead as Jesus led and to be a servant to others in leading by example. Along with the leadership style of empowering others, so they may be working within their own spiritual gifts and calling. The overall response was to work in unity as the body of Christ. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." (King James Bible, 1769, Proverbs 27:17). Furthermore, the pastors felt a sense of responsibility. Stating that they should create opportunities for the saints to work out their gifts while serving in the church.

P04: For people to realize their potential and to give the people the opportunity to serve so their potential can rise up.

P04: Seeing my dad was the best example on how to lead people. He was one of the greatest pastors and leaders to duplicate. I've been blessed to sit under several ministries and see what was done right and what was done wrong. You go under church pain and hurt, and for me, at least I always took it as when I'm in a place of leadership, I will never do that. I had a lot of those experiences. I learned everything of what not to do. Sometimes that's the best place of learning as oppose of learning what to do. Cause if you keep getting wins and not experiencing losses, your character is not shaped. You have to be at the bottom to seek the lord's help. You need to depend on him to get revelation on how to lead effectively. I'm an easy-going person, but at the same time, I expect people to work towards excellence in their craft/gift.

Table 11

Question: How did you learn about this style?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Mentors within Ministry work	4	02, 10, 14,15
Pastoral parent/grandparent	5	01, 05, 08, 09, 14
Self-learned	6	04, 05, 06, 08, 11,13
Holy Spirit	2	03, 07

The interesting discovery in this question is that a significant number of pastors interviewed had a parent/s or grandparent/s that were pastoring or had previously pastored as they were growing up. They were greatly influenced in the home on how to lead through given examples by parents/grandparents that pastored a church. Their calling came at a young age. They knew they would minister similarly to what they had witnessed in the home, a biblical example of leadership. The second leading response to this question was that most pastors learned through prior experiences and mentors within their ministry work. Through experiencing poor and good leadership, they were able to come upon their own leadership style, stating that the poorest of leadership was the most crucial experience that had taught them the most, determining how they would lead. Yet, most pastors announced that they depend on the Holy Spirit to lead.

> **P02:** It's the mentoring of raising up leadership. It's experience that works best. I'm like middle of the road. You can't let people have no barometer and not know where they are shooting, not letting them know where they are wrong. There is a high level of trust in my ministry. They have the ability to know what needs to be done and get it done. We set the vision, and they carry it out, or they give me the vision…it's collaboration.

> **P05:** From day one, I'm very much into self-assessments. I've always been into that to identify my strengths and my leadership style. I have identified that from the beginning. That's the way I lead because that's how God wired me to lead.

Table 12

Question: What training did you receive in leading?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Bible School	4	01, 02, 03, 12
Self-taught	5	01, 06, 13, 14, 15
AG college	7	04, 05, 07, 08. 09, 10, 11

The majority of pastors interviewed have received their training through the AG. The location of training varied throughout the United States. Others had attended 2-4year bible schools located throughout the United States. Several have received their training through self-teaching in the Word of God. Participant 05 had the highest level of education, receiving a MA in Christian Leadership from Liberty University. All the pastors have worked through the certification and licensing required within the AG denomination.

> **P02:** I attended Christ for the Nations Bible College in Dallas, Texas. It is a 2-year school and then continue education with AG. Some training required was ordained, and all other licenses and ordination level /were required through the AG.

> **P01:** I attended an AG college in Costa Mesa, California. Today[it] is known as Vanguard University. Later receiving a MA in Christian Leadership from Liberty University. Also, I had the privilege of growing up in a pastor's home. My parents pastored an AG church for 66 years in San Antonio, Texas.

RQ2. What is the perception regarding leadership demands from the lived experiences of Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

Table 13

Question: What happens when you, as a leader, are not successful?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Depression	1	10
Frustration	3	01, 09, 10
Growth opportunity	7	02, 03, 04, 06, 08, 13,14
Lose confidence	4	03, 06, 07, 12

The responses to this question were mixed among pastors. The majority of pastors did not concede to failure but saw it as an opportunity for growth both professionally and spiritually. There was a common thought among the pastors that the work to be done was to be done to God's strength and not their own. When they were working in their own strength, forgetting whom they are working for, a humbling fall followed, allowing realignment of their mission with God's will and not their own.

> **P03:** When I'm not successful, there has been times I have had a lot of problems with discipleship. I train people, young people, and they pass away. One got hit by an 18-wheeler, and I was like, Lord, these were good disciples, why? I thought I was successful at that, but they passed away. I taught this one young man that I knew, thinking one day he was going to be a minister. I had him teaching one Sunday morning, and when he started teaching, the Holy Spirit hit me so hard. He was going to be a better teacher than me. He was very teachable. I felt that I had failed in teaching people because they had left me, but then I thought… they made it to heaven.

> **P10:** This story comes with some shame. My wife and I had three children, and 12 years later, we had two more. Our first three children were born throughout the time we were pastoring our church. My wife homeschooled the oldest children, the youngest of the three, was 12 years old. Then the younger two came at a time where, the older were preteens, the older children were more like aunts and uncles. The two youngest ones came when the church was only 7 years old. The last two children were very needy, and I

was resentful towards the last two children. I was not performing, and I was not well and depressed. The staff and congregation were able to recognize that I was not healthy and falling into depression. I had to trust the people around me, my wife, and God. The church gave me a month off to recover from the feeling of failing.

Table 14

Question: Define Effective Leadership

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Fruitful/growth	3	01, 07, 12
Lives are transformed	3	01, 02, 11
Making disciples	4	04, 05, 10, 14
Stimulating spiritual gifts	2	04, 09

The intent of this question was to understand the pastor's definition of effective leadership. It was evident in the various responses that the majority of definitions were that of a spiritual nature and not from a secular perspective. The majority of the pastors expressed that effective leadership empowered their congregation members to become disciples who are working within their own spiritual gifts.

P01: Effective leadership is first having to listen to people. Listen to where they are coming from and hear everything they have to say, then come back and make a final decision with authority. This is where you have to take a stand because God has placed you in this position. If you have a successful ministry, you will know by the fruits. We have a very successful and bless congregation, which means God has been with us.

P04: I focus a lot on teaching in my church. I believe the church is responsible for making disciples, and I do try to disciple the people in the church so that they can be leaders and build up their gifts. I believe as a pastor; my biggest responsibility and my role is to try to make the church fruitful. For people to realize their potential and to give the people the opportunity to serve so their potential can rise up.

Table 15

Question: How do you Define Leadership Success?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Fruitful/growth	3	01, 07, 12
Innovation	1	03
Lives are transformed	4	01, 02, 11,13
Making disciples	5	04, 05, 10, 13, 14
Stimulating spiritual gifts	2	04, 09

The pastor's responses in defining leadership effectiveness and defining leadership success are comparable. Participant 13's response was unique in that he stated that worldly success is not equivalent to kingdom success.

> **P13:** My calling is not to focus on what the world deems successful. The world deems a successful church a megachurch, where the message taught may possibly be a watered-down version of the Word of God. My focus is to preach the Word and make disciples. Doing the work God has called me to do and do it faithfully and be content about it. Success is…. to be in the will of God. It is not church numbers.

> **P02:** Life change is the barometer for me. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the change, but it is my responsibility to give people the opportunity for growth; but it is the Holy Spirit's job to speak into them and then for them to respond to it. You can lead them to the well, but you can't force them to drink.

Table 16

Question: Who is responsible for seeing the purpose come to fruition?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Self	3	01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

This question's results were unique in that all of the pastors had the same response. They feel solely responsible for seeing fruition in the church. Some stated that God gives the vision, but it was up to them to carry the vision out. It is undeniable that the pastors saw that the lead pastor has the full responsibility to see the church and the congregation's purpose come to fruition.

> **P09:** One of the pastors that I worked for that was kind of rough told me that if something doesn't go right in your ministry, it's your fault because you are the leader. It does fall back on me. That personal failure side is frustrating. But ultimately, you can only do what you can do. That's when God comes in. You need to trust God to help you.

Table 17

RQ3. What is the perception, if any, regarding leadership stressors of **AG** *pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?*

Purpose	Frequency	Respondents
Dealing w/ people	9	01, 02, 05, 07, 08, 11, 13, 14, 15
Unteachable people	2	03, 05
Lack of resources	5	04, 08, 09, 11, 12
Lack of time	2	06, 10
Weight of responsibility	1	10

The majority of pastors stated that dealing with people was not taught in bible school, nor is it an easy task. People's expectations and the need to govern creates conflict within the church. This includes the gossip that is often circling throughout congregations. The lack of resources,

whether it be people, funds, or time, puts great weight on leadership, adding further stress to the

church's day-to-day demands.

> **P07:** Spiritual warfare is a huge factor with what you deal with as a leader. I found myself leaving under duress. It was a cloud over my head that I wouldn't have ever made those decisions had I not been under that cloud. It was truly spiritual warfare because when I got out from that, I was like, what in the world? I look back and can see it clearly and what that Lord told me in the mist of it 'I am with you if you go, and I'm with you if you stay. I love you and will be with you if you decide to stay.' I waited it out, and I didn't want to hurt anyone and didn't realize that either way, I was going to hurt people. I had people that felt so betrayed cause I left; they felt I left them behind. I was at a peak in my career, but it was a year from hell. Everything that could happen happened that year. We had death and grief entering in the family, audited by IRS and kids and college with slash income.

> **P12:** The help is limited and being that we are a small church. I find that the congregation expect us to do it all. They expect us to serve instead of coming out and serving. This is something I have been working with the congregation to have a different mindset. This, along with my secular job, is a stress.

> **P01:** My stress is people that don't stay in their lane. They don't stay in within the boundary. They try telling others what to do. You deal with a lot of different personalities. To govern a personality is a big problem. I don't try to turn away people that are active and critical cause sometimes you need people like that, which ask why is it this way? Or what is the purpose for this? But you need to keep them in check. Because they tend to criticize others without seeing their own ways. They are great lawyers themselves but are judges with others. The biggest stress is dealing with different personalities.

Table 18

RQ4. What is the perception, if any, regarding ministry burnout from AG pastors in small

churches in San Antonio, Texas?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Dealing w/ people	8	01, 02, 05, 06, 07, 08, 11, 14
Lack of resources	5	04, 09, 08, 11, 12
Lack of time	2	06, 10
Meeting expectations	3	05, 13, 14
Motivation	1	10

P10: For me, in my position after starting the church. I don't have a boss here other than being accountable to the board. So, self-discipline is the concern is also in keeping going, keeping the sermon fresh. Staying creative with the vision. Leading people and staying motivate is challenging.

P08: A lot of the burnout for me is a lack of resources. Whether that would be people, either not having that or resources with equipment, material, funding. Then again, I think, as a leader, I need to make this great even without XYZ. The burnout that I have experience is going through the motions, and there is no light at the end of the tunnel. It's the same service. It's the same time structure as a creative person that is torture. I've had to mature and realize that this is life, and you can't get burned out on life. God has to be the refresher. I need to do better with my time, and not take on too much cause I'm a Yes person.

Table 19

Question: What are the challenges you have encountered in achieving spiritual health?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Lack of time	15	All respondents

All of the pastors agreed that the challenge in achieving spiritual health is due to a lack of

time. They must be intentional and prioritize to make time to sit in God's presence. Various

pastors responded that they would speak to God throughout their day or first thing in the morning

before starting their day, or else they would not have the time with God that they want.

> **P12:** I have to make time, an hour a day. I make Saturday my preparation day. I work during the week. Wednesday night is Bible study, but because of Covid-19, I have it online. You just have to fight for the time. There will be a lot of activities that want to come and replace that time. You need to have discipline.

> **P06:** I always say you can't take people where you haven't been. I have to be there first. I cannot give what I haven't received. If you are always giving and never receiving, your well is going to run dry. I have this illustration of Mary and Martha. Mary wanted to be with the Lord, and Martha was doing…but before we can do for the Lord, we must be with the Lord. It's simple theology. People want to do, but they don't want to be with Jesus. How can you be in His will if you are not with Him?

Table 20

Question: How does being a leader contribute to your feeling of exhaustion or callousness?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Always	5	02, 03, 05, 06, 11
Sometimes	6	01, 04, 07, 10, 12, 13
Never	4	08, 09, 14, 15

The pastors' reply to this question was enlightening in that many have experienced exhaustion and callousness. Still, they knew that just like Jesus loves us, we must love others and help carry others' burdens. The ministry itself brings physical exhaustion along with mental and emotional exhaustion. For many pastors, this could easily lead to callousness if not refreshing their spirit and remembering to love others as Jesus loves them and do the work unto the Lord.

> **P12:** The problem is with the same people. They are struggling with the same sin and same struggle. I just say I have tried several times, and they are not doing their part. They want you to pray for them, but they are not praying or reading scripture on their own. I care for the people, for they are God's people. God loves them and what he has called me to do is to love them too.

> **P07:** In relationships is where a lot of conflict comes because people get out of order with each other. There are always people that are always looking for power and control. Do you know that many pastors that get discouraged or get burnout they could have according to data from an executive pastor of mine showed that most people leave cause of two or three people because these two or three people resist the leadership, vision and go up against in some way to be a hindrance to leadership? This leads to exhaustion. If I stay, I will have to fight these guys. I don't defend myself, and I let the Lord fight my battles. These people were slandering me, and it was very exhausting, so I sought for help from counsel from the district, but no one would help me.

Table 21

Question: Do you see a link between your experience in leadership and burnout?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Yes	7	01, 02, 08, 09, 10, 11, 13
No	5	03, 07, 12, 14, 15
Maybe	3	04, 05, 06

P12: If you have the call of God on your life, and regardless of what you're facing, you will continue to work for the Lord. But if you just get into the ministry as a means as a career or to get popular, that is not a commitment to the great commission but to grow your own church, ministry, or career/self-oppose to doing it for God.

P07: If you are spirit filled there is no such thing as burnout. Burnout comes when you are dependent on your fleshly efforts and run out of that….then you burnout. When you rely on the holy spirit, and you are full of the holy spirit, you don't burn out in the spirit. You are constantly replenished by the perpetual flow of the spirit. The living tree is providing a perpetual flow of the Pentecostal power we preach.

Evaluation of the Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the lived experiences of small church AG pastors in San Antonio with regards to leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout. The essential research question for this study was: "What are AG pastors' lived experiences regarding leadership and burnout within a small church?" was also asked, "What are the personal experiences, if any, regarding ministry burnout?" In this study, how the clergy understand leadership in the church, including the roles and structures that govern it, and how their lived experiences in leadership are associated with clergy burnout within AG Churches was explored.

Fifteen interviews were conducted with participants that were leaders in the church and had experienced burnout. The WLAB scale was the researcher's tool of choice for addressing the

research questions. Successively, the researcher found that IPA was the best fit for collecting data in the research study. This allowed the participants to respond to the research questions elaborately and without constraints.

The data collected was validated throughout the process of the research study. The researcher carefully analyzed and coded the collected data. By analyzing the participants' experiences, the researcher produced common emerging themes from the collected data implementing a creative examination of common themes and identifying patterns throughout the participants' cases. In conclusion, the researcher completed the research study by explaining the sequence of analysis and documenting the research findings in a narrative form.

The findings are displayed according to the research questions' opening questions and the sub-questions that followed each research question. They are presented in tables, which would also provide the frequency of response by participants. There are a total of 21 tables containing research findings.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a study is not guaranteed; however, Maxwell (2013) claimed that steps could be taken to avoid threats to a study's validity. Flagler (2004) considered the components of trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability or reliability, and confirmability or objectivity.

Credibility

On August 07, 2020, IRB approval was given. The researcher followed the IRB guidelines and recommendations during the data collection process. A dense description, triangulation, code/recode procedures, and an audit trail throughout the research study was provided. Along with an observer's aid, researcher bias through reflexive journaling and

observations throughout the interview process, making notes of personal thoughts, reactions, and reflection throughout the interviewing process was noted. The data analysis process comprised hand-coding and NVivo 12. Credibility is significant to the audience's ability to find a study's results believable and probable (Hays et al., 2016). An observer to the research study to assist in any discrepancies during the participant's interviewing process was added.

Transferability

This study was transferable due to the chosen approach to data collection through interviews and analysis. The data collection procedures were transcribed in detail so that this or a similar study may be conducted with an imitating sample population. This study used established interview instruments and protocols previously established in phenomenological studies (Fee, 2018).

Dependability

Data management, including data collection and data analysis, is critical to creating study dependability (Patton, 2002). The researcher has collected data analyzed solely by the researcher. The researcher also noted the reactions and emotions in response to the interview questions so that it may be incorporated into the secondary analysis phase. This has assisted in parallel data made for comparison. Creating a systematic audit trail in handling and interpreting collected data and triangulation added to the study's dependability.

Confirmability

Yin (2014) suggested that qualitative researchers need to document the steps of the procedures as much possible. He also recommended setting up a detailed case study protocol and database to follow the procedures. The researcher has done this by checking transcripts for inaccuracies and reviewing and cross-checking codes and data for discrepancies.

Chapter Summary

The essential research question for this study was: "What are AG pastors' lived experiences regarding leadership and burnout within a small church?" The subjects were also asked: "What are your personal experiences, if any, regarding ministry burnout?" Ultimately, exploring how the clergy understand leadership in the church, including the roles and structures that govern it, and how their lived experiences in leadership are associated with clergy burnout within AG Churches.

Fifteen pastors from the AG Churches were interviewed to discover their lived experiences regarding leadership and burnout within a small church. The open-ended research questions provided rich data for analysis and interpretation. A qualitative phenomenological study analysis of the data collected was presented. The pastors interviewed relate their lived experience in leadership to feeling burnout. Detailed results were provided for each question used in the interview.

The data collected was validated throughout the process of the research study. The research was carefully analyzed and coded. By analyzing the participants' experiences, the researcher produced common emerging themes from the collected data implementing an informative examination of common themes and identifying patterns throughout the participants' cases. The study identified four dominant themes that emerged from the data: (a) leadership and burnout, (b) leadership as empowering, (c) leadership by example, and (d) servant leadership.

In conclusion, the researcher has completed the research study by explaining the sequence of analysis and documenting the research findings in a narrative form. In Chapter 5, the data collection's interpretations and conclusions will be discussed along with suggested recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the lived experiences of small church AG pastors in San Antonio with regards to leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors and ministry burnout. The study has evaluated data that can potentially benefit clergies and professionals in support of the church. The researcher unearthed responses to the vast challenges for clergymen in ministry and retention.

Given the clergy leadership role, the clergy has a significant impact on society. DeYoung and Gilbert (2011) asserted that the church's mission is to confront injustice and alleviate suffering, doing more to express God's love for the world. Similarly, Howell (2003) stated that biblical leadership is taking the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and passionately promote God's Kingdom's extension in the world. The greatest commandment of a Christian leader is to love God with all their heart and love others as he loves himself. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments" (King James Bible, 1769, Matthew 37-40).

The first two most important commandments can be why those who receive the calling to ministry put everyone ahead of themselves. Adding to their sacrificial calling, there are unrealistic expectations made by others, as well as the pressures they put on themselves as they enter the ministry ill-equipped for much more than servicing people. All of the pastors who attended seminary felt they would have been better equipped to run a church if the ministry's practical aspect were taught in seminary. They lacked training in: conflict resolution, running a business, and the experience in delegating the various duties they were unaware they were taking

on as pastors. Furthermore, pastors were in want of support that would provide relief when instances of crisis and conflict did arise.

Participants established that their lack of training led to unnecessary stress. They were unprepared when entering the ministry. Any strengthening and development of non-theological areas came from the guidance of mentors and other church pastors. Similar to corporate professionals, the clergy are required to juggle a variety of complicated tasks, including the ability to: organize, plan, control, budget, staff, discipline, motivate, and model caring by organizing, controlling, budgeting, staffing, motivating, and caring disciplining to deliver caring services to their others adequately (Little et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, the pastors' primary source of stress, according to the study, is the people in their congregation. Pastors are always dealing with different people that come from different backgrounds and have different views. Therefore, conflicts among people are inevitable and to be expected. Intrapersonal conflict becomes just another stress attribute to the already long list of congregational demands a small church pastor is responsible for. Over half of the pastors interviewed could not define their job description. The common sentiment was that their job description consisted of all that the ministry required, from building to congregational needs. Therefore, congregations may need to consider the burdens of small church pastors and set realistic expectations. Furthermore, small congregations need to consider taking on duties to help relieve the pastor from the church's tedious tasks. All of this exacts a high price among the clergy, including: strained family relationships, poor physical health, emotional stress, and worst of all for pastors, a sense of spiritual failure (Kinnaman, 2017).

There is limited time for spiritual and self-care. There is a need to spend time in solitude with God when doing His work. It is through His guidance and wisdom that the kingdom advances. Through communion with God and reading the Word of God, a clergy receives rest and strength. "For it is not your strength; it is God who is effectively at work in you. Both to will and to work this is strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). The lack of care and feeding of the spirit and soul opens the door to poor choices and straying from God's will. The Holy Spirit works to keep the anointed in peace and joy through working the will of God. Removing the very Spirit that equips and gives power to the anointed sets them up for a spiritual setback.

God's intent was not for the ordained to suffer through doing kingdom work but to refuel and reenergize through His Word in His presence. It is through His power and not of human potential that the healing and kingdom work is achieved (Ephesians 2:10). With proper support, clergies can build a life that promotes their well-being while allowing them to continue to address the community's spiritual well-being and the world. A leader in God's image manifests the fruit of the spirit of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

The ministering and caring of others takes a toll emotionally and physically. To love the unlovely, forgive the unforgivable, embrace the repulsive, including the awkward, accept the weird. In contexts such as these, sinners are transformed into disciples who obey everything King Jesus has commanded (Chester & Timmis, 2008). Yet, without the proper care and feeding of the body and Spirit, it is easy to become tired of ministry. Furthermore, becoming spiritually ill and possibly resent God for such a calling.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the lived experiences of small church AG pastors in San Antonio with regards to leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and ministry burnout. The study evaluated data that can potentially benefit clergies and professionals in support of the church. The researcher hoped to unearth responses to the vast challenges for clergymen in ministry and retention.

Research Questions

RQ1. What is the perception regarding leadership style from the lived experiences of Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ2. What is the perception regarding leadership demands from the lived experiences of Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ3. What is the perception if any, regarding leadership stressors of Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

RQ4. What is the perception, if any, regarding ministry burnout from Assemblies of God pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

Research Conclusion

This study explored AG pastors' lived experiences and understanding regarding leadership style, demands, stressors, and personal experiences with ministry burnout. The discoveries in this research study can potentially benefit small church pastors. The efforts to alert mental health professionals of the clergy's specific challenges and needs were based on study findings. Preventive and treatment recommendations can be implemented through training by denomination and experts in support of the clergy and the church.

This research study produced findings that were similar to the literature review in the study. The exception was the variance in pastors' lived experiences, which had various forms of

stress which ultimately led to burn out. Some more than others expressed that their learning

experiences and difficulties helped mitigate stress, keeping them from leaving the ministry.

> **P02:** When you are not successful, you learn… It's one of the greatest learning
> opportunities. Unfortunately, if we're being honest, we don't learn outside of pain. I
> wished that I learned in the other seasons, but if I'm being honest, it's pain that brings
> growth. I rather fail in taking a risk for what I think its God. Then not taking a risk at all,
> failure comes with the territory. If you are not failing, you are not advancing the kingdom
> of God.

The research study indicated that the role of the clergy was composed of various factors

that may contribute to the buildup of stress. Another collective experience of the clergy was a

profound sense of loneliness and isolation, which was an additional contributor to stress.

Pietkiewicz and Bachryj (2014) argued that ministry and pastoral leadership incorporate many

duties that cause identity confusion, and loneliness, leading to depression. Furthermore, the

unrealistic expectations of perfection from the congregation and community and the clergy, also

expecting perfection from themselves, add to the stressors. This induces frustration and

exhaustion, further adding to a sense of hopelessness.

One of the more significant findings from this study is a common consensus on the part

of pastors from the AG denomination that they feel tasked by God to do what they believe is

God's work. This calling requires total dependence on God, as well as exemplary and servant

leadership to align with scripture. Any form of secular leadership will lead clergy to burn out.

Boers (2015) asserted that a biblical theology of leadership is Jesus's pattern rooted in service

and sacrifice, cautious about power and hierarchies, and prioritizes the vulnerable. In other

words, it often reverses what we expect of leadership. It is different from what we read in secular

leadership literature.

The pastors interviewed stated that the clergy is not a position to be held by a layperson

who does not believe they are identified by God to fill a position in church leadership. Sooner or

later, such a placement will lead to burnout and departure from ministry. Pastors stated repeatedly that they believe it was not intended for the ordained to suffer through doing kingdom work but to refuel and reenergize through His Word in His presence. Some stating that it is through His power and not of human strength that the healing and kingdom work is achieved. With proper support, clergies can build a life that promotes their well-being and allows them to continue to address the community's spiritual well-being and the world.

Furthermore, the pastors expressed that God prepared them along the way by putting such leaders to train them. One must also be teachable, following the example of the apostle Paul taking Timothy under his leadership. Whether the leadership experience was positive or negative, they were molded into God's perfect will. And we know that "in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (King James Bible, 1769, Romans 8:28). The growing and molding prepared them for more significant challenges and greater victories ahead.

Ultimately the data collected advocated that to mitigate burnout, the clergy must work in unison with God and depend on God for revelation, vision, and supply. God equips those He calls to do His will (Carson, 2015, Hebrews 13:21). God's plan is for His children to find rest and wisdom through His counsel (Carson, 2015, Psalm 34:8). In doing so, this refreshes them with His living water so that they can continue His good works (Carson, 2015, John 4:10).

Research shows that all pastors believe that to be successful, there must be a dependence and reliance on God for their physical and spiritual strength.

> **P12:** Doing in your strength is not productive and not lasting. Yet when the Lord does the work, He does it permanently and perfectly. It's the reason why we need to come to God to help in all areas. Dealing with people is not the easiest thing. If you get into the ministry as a career, you will see that it is not a prosperous decision that comes with a lot of dilemmas other than our own.

The majority of pastors agreed that it is an exemplary and servant leadership style that renders fruit to their ministry. Leadership in the image of God is a matter of the heart, not power and authority. Through the shepherd and slave motif in the Bible, one sees that power and authority are given by God and not by man. Leading through leadership in the image of God is shepherding the flock and becoming a slave to the Master. To be a slave to Christ is to give up your will for His (Carson, 2015, Matthew 10:39). Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many (King James Bible, 1769, Matthew 20:28).

Through admiration, followers will have the desire to replicate and imitate a leader's works. Imitation can be tied to moral progress, perfection, blamelessness, and more important than obedience to law (Samra, 2008). Paul revealed that imitating mature examples is a means of becoming like Christ (Samra, 2008). Through empowerment and encouragement, the congregation and ministry leaders can develop a more significant relationship with God and share their spiritual gifts with the body of Christ.

Elm (2012) added that leadership carries a divine image, where leaders are often seen as God's agents. The majority of pastors interviewed came into the ministry due to a calling they received from God. They rely on the Lord as their primary source, stating that doing anything in contrast to that would lead to burnout. "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (King James Bible, 1769, Matthew 11:28-30). "There remains, then, a sabbath rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from His work in completing creation" (Carson, 2015, Exodus 20:8-11).

Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience (Carson, 2015, Hebrews 4:9-11). Similarly, committing to spiritual health is significant to hear God and take courage when difficulties bestow them.

Nevertheless, the church will continue to lose pastors to burnout. This is because the research study themes reflect how susceptible pastors are to burnout. Pastors shared the detrimental expectations pressed upon them by congregants and ministry leaders in the church. Participants also found themselves lonely, wearied, and burned out from the demands and expectations pressed upon them.

Kinnaman (2017) stated that in Barna's (2012) research on *The State of Pastors in America,* researchers posed a series of questions to assess the risk of burnout, relational difficulties, and spiritual setbacks. The assessment stated that nearly half of all pastors (46%) admit having struggled with depression. A similar amount (47%) had difficulty finding time to invest in their spiritual health. After thirty-plus years of research, clergy burnout is an ongoing concern; thus, it is crucial to identify this phenomenon's causes.

All pastors felt responsible for leading the congregation towards the development and use of their spiritual gifts and for the congregation to grow in Christ and carry out the great commission. Likewise, the pastors interviewed conveyed their struggle in motivating congregants and ministry leaders in the church. Through leading by example, through empowerment and encouragement in the hope to motivate congregants and ministry leaders to lead and be involved in serving others just as Christ came to serve, they claim to lead through example and servant leadership.

> **P02:** We have to keep in mind our vision, and it should be the same vision of Jesus. That is the main thing. If we have a different vision, then we are not right. Our vision is to bring people to Christ, and the best way to bring people to Christ and keep people walking in the journey that Jesus wants for us is for us leaders to be the examples.

Research suggests that pastors believe they can find balance and contentment within their calling. For this to happen, the church must work as the body of Christ was intended. Through encouragement, empowerment of congregants, and the diversity of spiritual gifts. Furthermore, to incorporate healthy boundaries to achieve spiritual refueling.

> **P02:** I believe burn out could be real. I also believe it could be a crutch. You need to have healthy boundaries, boundaries in your marriage and children, and in having spiritual discipline. People burn out because they don't have spiritual discipline. The bottom-line people burn out because they are not walking with Jesus anymore. When you are walking with Him, you are doing it onto the Lord. Burnout is a lack of managing time. If you are not careful, you can use it as a crutch. If you have the spiritual discipline to also put your family as your primary ministry, you are not going to burnout.

Finally, this research study validated as literature revealed a link between pastors' lived experiences and clergy burnout. The data collected unearthed a connection between the assumptions and the experience of burnout. The implications of the research findings are telling and per what the literature review had shown.

This research may provide pastors with the understanding that certain leadership assumptions can lead to burnout. Suppose remedies are not put into place for clergy deficiencies, in that case, the results can be devastating not just for the retention of clergy in the church but that of the clergy and congregations' spiritual growth. The development of spiritual disciplines is one critical key to maintaining resilience in clergy work (Meek et al., 2003).

Based on this literature review, it was crucial to examine what leads to stresses causing the clergy to burn out from the ministry from clergy understanding and explore ways to help the clergy maintain good spiritual health and encourage clergy self-care. It was also necessary to explore what services and instruments professionals utilize that may benefit clergy spiritual and physical health. The results of this study may add to the growing amount of literature regarding clergy burnout. This study bridged the gap in the literature in specific, the research revealed

underlying traditional expectations about leadership and system structures that influence pastors' perceptions about their roles that contribute to the experience of burnout. The research study indicates that expectations placed on clergy, based on assumptions about leadership, are detrimental. Also, this research study adds to the literature gap found today in small churches in this denomination.

Implications and Applications

In this research study, implications are limited. Due to this research study being exploratory, it lacked an investigation of applications of assumptions and burnout.

<div align="center">

Research Limitations

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This research study explores how the clergy understand leadership in the church, including the roles and structures that govern it, and how their lived experiences in leadership are associated with clergy burnout within AG churches was examined. This limited the study to the subjective understandings and experiences of the participants.

Likewise, the researcher's experiences or lack thereof also limited this study. The researcher's unintended bias could have introduced interpretive filters that affected how the data was initially entered and understood (Yin, 2014). The researcher's focused on learning the meaning that the participants held about the problem, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research or that writers express in the literature. Furthermore, the researcher reflected on their background, culture, and experiences, which held the potential for shaping their interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

An observer accompanied the researcher to interview participants to ensure the researcher's actions were consistent and in line with IRB guidelines. The data collected could be

subjective with interviews, letting the observer support an accurate interpretation of the participant's response to avoid skewed data.

Additional limitations are that the research study was limited to small churches of the AG denomination. The Pentecostal denomination studied may have different assumptions and delimitations of what constitutes burn out and the effects it may or may not have on the spiritual health of clergy. Lastly, other denominations and different governance in church structure and churches' location would most likely vary in data collection results. This study was limited to one specific denomination of Pentecostal Churches in San Antonio, Texas. The location and selected denomination beliefs may differ in other denominations and geographical regions.

Further Research

As a result of this study, future research in other denominations or regions of the country could address other stresses and concerns not found in this study. Similarly, using different tools other than those used in this research study may yield different results to the research questions. The interview instruments used in this research study were the WLAB scale and the burnout inventory instrument from Iverson et al. (1998).

The majority of the pastors agreed that the AG denomination is flexible and empower their pastors to structure their church according to what is fitting for their congregational needs. Allowing this freedom in the AG denomination as oppose to a stricter denomination in which bylaws must be followed, can possibly render different results in a study. Many of the pastors appreciated the freedom that AG denomination offers and therefore were less restricted and have seen their personal goals and visions for their church come to fruition.

Summary

This research study was conducted with open-ended questions. The selection of the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach was due to the openness it provided in creativity, analysis, and interviewing techniques (Smith et al., 2013). Close-ended questions may yield different results with lesser themes than the four presented in this research study.

Also, the AG has a flexible form of governance over their churches. The leaders are given discretion on how to run their church. Denominations with rigid governance over their churches may also produce a variance in research results, producing potentially more significant stress due to demands from the denomination.

Lastly, this research study was solely in small churches. A future study in larger churches within the same denomination may prove to have different research results and possible solutions to clergy burnout due to greater resources.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Date

Recipient
Title
Company
Address

Dear Recipient:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a degree. The purpose of my research is to discover lived experiences of AG pastors with regard to their understanding of leadership style, leadership demands, leadership stressors, and their personal experience of ministry burnout, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, pastors of an Assembly of God church in San Antonio, and have a minimum of three years of pastoral work in ministry. Participants, if willing, will be asked to respond to a burnout survey to determine eligibility for the research study. If eligible, participants will be invited to take part in an interview. It should take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete the interview. Your name and other identifying information will be collected as part of your participation, but it will be kept confidential.

In order to participate, please complete the attached screening survey and email it back to me to certify your eligibility for this study. Thank you for your time and efforts.

A consent form will be emailed to you if you are eligible for the study. The consent document contains more information about the study. Please sign and return the document to me at the time of your scheduled interview.

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Chavez
Liberty University Graduate Student

APPENDIX B: MEASURING BURNOUT SURVEY

I have served a minimum of 3 years as pastor in Assembly of God small church. Yes   No

I am at least 18 years of age or older. Yes   No

Questions	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.			
2. I've become more callous towards people since taking this job.			
3. I feel that I am positively influencing other people's lives through my work.			
4. I feel used up at the end of the workday.			
5. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.			
6. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.			
7. I really don't care what happens to some members in the church.			
8. I feel burned out from my work.			
9. I feel good after working closely with my church members.			

Note. This interview structure was modeled from Iverson, Olekalns, & Erwin (1998). Burnout Inventory.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

General Opening questions about leadership:

1. What leadership roles exist in your context? (current circumstances)

    a. Is this documented?

2. How would you describe the leadership structure of this church?

    a. Are you following the church structure from an AG Discipline?

    b. If not, could you diagram/explain the organizational structure?

3. What is the description of your role as a leader?

    a. What are the main tasks of leadership?

    b. Who defines that role?

What is the nature of leadership that exists in the AG church contexts?

1. What is the perception regarding leadership style from the lived experiences of AG pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

    a. How did you determine to follow that style?

    b. How did you learn about this style?

    c. What training did you receive in leading?

2. What is the perception regarding leadership demands from the lived experiences of AG pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

    a. What happens when you are not successful?

    b. Define effective leadership.

    c. Who is responsible for seeing the purpose come to fruition?

3. What is the perception if any, regarding leadership stressors of AG pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

4. What is the perception if any, regarding ministry burnout from AG pastors in small churches in San Antonio, Texas?

a. What are the challenges you have encountered in achieving personal spiritual health?

b. How does being a leader contribute to your feeling of exhaustion or callousness?

c. Do you see a link between your experience in leadership and burnout?

Note. This interview structure was modeled from Wielkiewicz (2000). Leadership Attitudes and Beliefs Scale.

APPENDIX D: CONSENT

Title of the Project: Lived Experiences of Assemblies of God Pastors with Regards to Leadership Style,
Demands, Stressors, and Ministry Burnout
Principal Investigator: Barbara Chavez, a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years old or older and an AG pastor with at least three years of ministry experience. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take the time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the challenges that lead to AG pastors' burnout in small churches.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Participate in a 30-minute interview responding to research questions. Allow for the interview to be recorded by the researcher.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include information collected that may potentially help mitigate the challenges and risks concerning burnout to pastors in small churches.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality is the researcher's primary concern.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher via the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Barbara Chavez.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date