

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

SEMINARY-RELATED FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FORCED
TERMINATION AND VOLUNTARY RESIGNATIONS
FROM FULL-TIME CHURCH MINISTERS

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Ralph O. Bray III

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2021

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research was to understand if seminary-related factors are behind 18,000-20,000 pastors experiencing forced termination or walking away from the church ministry each year. This study collected data in the quantitative form regarding the reasons behind the forced termination and voluntary resignations of full-time church ministers. The concerns driving this research are: Why are so many full-time ministers facing forced or voluntary termination? And are today's seminaries preparing ministers to handle today's church? The church is in a world that is continuously changing. These changes bring contemporary issues and ideas into the church, which can cause challenges in ministry. This study focused on Southern Baptist ministers and those with baptistic theology who are currently serving or who have served in a Southern Baptist church or a church with baptistic theology. Utilizing a quantitative survey design, the focus was on those who have experienced forced and voluntary termination, their reasons for termination, and their perceptions of the kind of leadership training received while in seminary. The results showed that there is a desire from ministers to address the need for seminaries to include leadership training. The results showed that seminaries do play a part in ministers experiencing a forced termination or voluntarily resigning because of the lack of leadership education but they are only a part of the challenge. Most ministers coming out of seminary say they wished for classes that would help them with the practical matters of working in a church.

Keywords: forced termination, voluntary termination, minister, pastor, leadership training

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this first to the Lord Jesus Christ. He not only saved me, but He continues to work in my life – “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” Philippians 1:6. Thank you, Lord!

Next, I want to dedicate this to my parents, who believed in me and helped me live out my dream to accomplish this degree. They prayed for me, supported me, and financially enabled me to finish well. Thanks, Mom and Dad (now in glory – hey Dad, I did it)!

Finally, I could not have done this without my wife, Melanie. She was my greatest cheerleader, my proofer, and carried some of my load so that I could spend hours reading, studying, and writing. She is my best friend and truly my helpmate! Thanks, Sweetheart!

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I also want to thank Dr. Ron Long (who is now with the Lord) for piquing my interest in researching this area by asking me to be a part of a committee to investigate the problem concerning why so many pastors and staff were voluntarily resigning or experiencing forced termination. He was my great friend and encourager.

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List of Abbreviations

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Doctor of Ministry (DMin)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Master of Arts (MA)

Master of Divinity (MDiv)

Master of Theology (ThM)

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC)

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)

University of Georgia (UGA)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

Every year between 18,000-20,000 pastors leave the ministry (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams. 2012, p. 1; Fuller, 2020). Every month over 1,500 pastors are walking away or are being terminated from the pastorate. As leaders called by God to lead a church, are ministers adequately trained in seminary and Bible colleges to work with the people they are called to shepherd?

Most ministers believe God has called them to serve Him full-time. He may have received the calling in high school or college or after working at a secular career for a time. No matter when the calling occurs, each individual believes God has a plan for his life. He goes into this calling with trepidation but believing God will lead him to fulfill his calling. Most will go to seminary to receive the training he needs to minister in a church. He learns Greek, Hebrew, Systematic Theology, and Philosophy of Religion. The challenge is that there are few leadership courses required for a pastor or a minister to graduate with his Master of Divinity or Master of Arts degree.

Typically, when a minister receives his first call to a church, reality sets in after a short honeymoon period. Often, he will begin to realize the unreal expectations he cannot meet. He feels called by God to make changes, but those changes are resisted. Conflict may arise, and he begins to find himself alone and unable to handle what is taking place. After a time, the powers and people controlling the church may ask for his resignation. This researcher examined the factors contributing to full-time ministers being forced or voluntarily resigning their position in the church.

Background to the Problem

Today, there is a real challenge when it comes to pastoring and ministering in a church.

Pastoral Care Inc., a website that monitors the needs and health of pastors, has published statistics concerning what is going on in the church today regarding the role and experience of pastors.

- 72% of the pastors report working between 55 to 75 hours per week.
- 84% of pastors feel they are on call 24/7.
- 80% believe pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families.
- 65% of pastors feel their family lives in a “glass house” and fear they are not good enough to meet expectations.
- 23% of pastors report being distant to their families.
- 78% of pastors report having their vacation and personal time interrupted with ministry duties or expectations.
- 65% of pastors feel they have not taken enough vacation time with their families over the last 5 years.
- 28% of pastors report having feelings of guilt for taking personal time off and not telling the church.
- 35% of pastors report the demands of the church denies them from spending time with their family.
- 66% of church members expect a minister and family to live at a higher moral standard than themselves.
- 53% of pastors report that seminary did not prepare them for ministry.
- 90% of pastors report the ministry was completely different than what they thought it would be like before they entered the ministry.
- 45% of pastors spend 10-15 hours a week on sermon preparation.
- 85% of pastors report that use of the internet and other resources have improved their study time compared to when they first started their ministry.
- 50% of pastors state they spend 1 hour in prayer each day.
- 95% of pastors report not praying daily or regularly with their spouse.
- 57% of pastors believe they do not receive a livable wage.
- 57% of pastors being unable to pay their bills.
- 53% of pastors are concerned about their future family financial security.
- 75% of pastors report significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry.
- 80% of pastors and 84% of their spouses have felt unqualified and discouraged as role of pastors at least one or more times in their ministry.
- 52% of pastors feel overworked and cannot meet their church’s unrealistic expectations.
- 54% of pastors find their role of a pastor overwhelming.
- 40% report serious conflict with a parishioner at least once in the last year.

- 80% of pastors expect conflict within their church.
- 75% of pastors report spending 4-5 hours a week in needless meetings.
- 35% of pastors battle depression or fear of inadequacy.
- 26% of pastors report being over fatigued.
- 28% of pastors report they are spiritually undernourished.
- Over 50% of pastors state the biggest challenge is to recruit volunteers and encourage their members to change (living closer to God's Word).
- 70% of pastors report they have a lower self-image now than when they first started.
- 70% of pastors do not have someone they consider to be a close friend.
- 27% of pastors report not having anyone to turn to for help in a crisis situation.
- 81% of pastors have been tempted to have inappropriate sexual thoughts or behavior with someone in the church but have resisted.
- 17% of pastors report inappropriately texting with a church member at sometime in their ministry.
- 34% of pastors wrestle with the temptation of pornography or visits pornographic sites.
- 57% of pastors feel fulfilled but yet discouraged, stressed, and fatigued.
- 84% of pastors desire to have close fellowship with someone they can trust and confide with.
- Over 50% of pastors are unhealthy, overweight and do not exercise.
- 71% of churches have no plan for a pastor to receive a periodic sabbatical.
- 66% of churches have no lay counseling support.
- 30% of churches have no documentation clearly outlining what the church expects of their pastor.
- 1 out of every 10 pastors will actually retire as a pastor.
- 73% of churches are treating their pastors better.
- 77% of pastors, especially millennials are spending 20 or more hours with their families each week.
- 90% of pastors feel they are called and in the place where God has called them. (2020).

Based on the above statistics, there seem to be several areas that create problems for those coming out of seminary and contribute to pastors/ministers being terminated or forced to resign.

Three problems, in particular, stand out.

Conflict

Personality conflicts may include clashes between the pastor and one or more members of the church or occasions when the senior pastor collides with the personality of

a board member or staff member (Barfoot et al., 2007, p. 3). Unresolved conflicts are killing churches and destroying ministries of men and women that God has called to serve Him (Hicks, 2010). Conflict can arise in different areas of the church. Ken Sande (2014) attributes conflict to four causes: the first is a misunderstanding developed by poor communication (Joshua 22:10-34); second, differences in values, goals, gifts, calling, priorities, expectations, interests, or opinions can lead to conflict (Acts 15:39; 1 Corinthians 12:12-312); third, competition is created over limited resources, such as time or money (Genesis 13:1-12); and fourth, aggravated sinful attitudes and habits can lead to sinful words and actions (James 4:1-2) (p. 41).

Conflict arises when the leadership style the pastor or minister practices cause people not to like him or how he is trying to bring about change (Speight & Speight, 2017, p. 150). When a pastor or minister comes across as one who knows it all and is his way only, conflicts will arise. Conflict happens when it is all about a win-lose proposition.

Expectations

“There are often no set criteria for the job function of a minister; it varies both within and among churches and denominations. When the minister stops meeting the perceived demands of the congregation, a forced termination process begins that could last from a few months to a few years” (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams., 2012, p. 2). Out of this comes depression, low self-esteem, health issues, and physical exhaustion (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams., 2012, p. 8). As stated in the above statistics, 30% of churches have no documentation clearly outlining what the church expects of their pastor or minister.

Interpersonal Incompetence

Some ministers are coming out of seminary, or some of those that never attended seminary show signs of incompetence in leading a church. Barfoot, in his research, has shown nine steps that lead to interpersonal incompetence that results in pastoral failure.

First, the pastors failed to listen and observe and therefore, did not understand the situation well enough to provide proper feedback. Second, they failed to accept personal responsibility, blaming others instead. Third, these individuals neglected to properly delegate by either not delegating tasks at all or over-delegating responsibilities inappropriately. Fourth, it was extremely difficult for them to connect with people in such a manner as to form common loyalties. Fifth, they were incapable of maintaining congruency in their words and behavior. Sixth, they needed to have approval from everyone all of the time in order to find emotional support. Seventh, these ministers were not able to interpret the present circumstances in terms of reality. Eighth, those who did not think the same way easily intimidated them. Ninth, these ministers themselves failed to support others emotionally while disagreeing with people on an intellectual level. (Barfoot et al., 2007, p. 3)

The above findings are supported by the research done by Barfoot's Pastors-in-Residence-Confidential Survey submitted by 108 pastors of evangelical churches across denominational lines. The exploratory results generate data on demographic information such as age, education, and marital status of pastors who experience a forced termination from their post. The study examined the antecedents: (a) conflicting visions for the church, (b) personality conflict with others in leadership and/or the congregation, (c) interpersonal incompetence, (d) unrealistic expectations, (e) lack of church discipline, and judicial procedures, and (f) contentious individuals and power groups (Barfoot et al., 2007, p. 1).

Summary of the Reasons for Termination

Termination is a real issue that has not been fully studied. There are several confirmed reasons given by churches or expressed by departing pastors/ministers for the cause of his termination. Powell (2008), in his dissertation, gives five main reasons for forced termination of a minister.

1. The number one issue in forced terminations is “who runs the church.”
2. Resistance to Change in the Church.
3. The Pastor’s Poor People skills.
4. The pastor’s leadership style is too strong.
5. The church was already in conflict when the pastor arrived (pp. 20–25).

As stated above, there are several reasons given for termination. Termination could be the result of one or more of these reasons.

Leadership Training

According to Kiedis, those graduating from seminary have experienced limited leadership training. “Signs of dissatisfaction with the seminary in general and leadership development training models, in particular, have been appearing in educational research for the last twenty-five years” (Kiedis, 2009, p. 3). This raises some questions that seminary administrators should be asking: Are seminaries doing an adequate job of training pastors and ministers in life skills (leadership skills) to experience longevity in ministry successfully? Likewise, can seminaries provide the leadership skills needed for ministers to experience longevity in ministry successfully?

“While a seminary program of studies is still considered by many as the standard for theological education, there is a growing body of critique of the seminary and increasing efforts to consider alternative leadership development training models” (Kiedis, 2009, p. 7). The challenge for seminaries is that there is already a cutback on the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program. Many are reducing the hours needed for graduation for competitive reasons and keeping their accreditation for that program. How do seminaries add more leadership training to an already reduced number of hours in the MDiv program? Are seminaries offering enough leadership classes to other degree programs like the MA to prepare the graduates for church ministry?

Statement of the Problem

Pastors and ministers are experiencing forced termination at an alarming rate. Because of this disturbing trend, it is necessary to examine the reasons behind the terminations and the potential role that seminaries may or may not play in preparing their students for situations that could lead to termination. This research examined forced and voluntarily termination from ministerial leadership positions in the church. Further, it examined the role seminaries may or may not play in adequately preparing graduates to navigate the situations that can lead to termination.

Research Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research was to understand the seminary-related factors that may or may not be perceived as contributing to forced and voluntary termination of full-time ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches by collecting data from full-time ministers who are a part of the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC) and others who are serving in a Southern Baptist Church or have baptistic theology. Further, it looked at how seminary training can serve to prevent some terminations through adequate or enhanced leadership training.

Research Questions

Six research questions gave direction and structure to this study. They were:

RQ1. What are the perceived reasons for termination that are identified by full-time ministers who experienced either forced or voluntary termination from their ministry position?

RQ2. To what degree, if any, do non-terminated full-time ministers perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle the diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

RQ3. To what degree, if any, do terminated full-time ministers perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle the diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

RQ4. To what degree, if any, do full-time ministers who voluntarily resigned from church ministry perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

RQ5. What, if any, is the relationship between termination, non-termination, and voluntary resignation and the seminary leadership training as perceived by ministers?

RQ6. What, if any, is the relationship between termination, non-termination, and voluntary resignation and the seminary degree earned as perceived by ministers?

Assumptions and Delimitations

Research Assumptions

This researcher assumed that:

1. The individuals responding answered all questions honestly and thoroughly.
2. Full-time pastors and ministers face stressors and professional expectations in ministry that can impede and impact their ministry performance.
3. Seminaries seek to prepare students for stressors and professional expectations of full-time ministry.
4. The standard pastoral degree is an MDiv from an accredited seminary.
5. Pastors serve with diverse degrees other than the MDiv degree.
6. Ministers other than the senior pastor may have earned an MA degree.

Delimitations of the Research Design

It is important to note that this study was delimited to those full-time ministers who have received a seminary degree, most often the Master of Divinity (MDiv) or a Master of Arts (MA) degree. This research was delimited to include those who have graduated from an accredited seminary. This study included those who serve or have served in a Southern Baptist of Texas Convention-affiliated church and others serving in Southern Baptist Churches and those with baptistic theology. A minister can be a man or woman who is serving in a local church. The respondents have served or are serving as full-time ministers.

Definition of Terms

1. *Burnout*: A level of “emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (an uncaring or dehumanized attitude), and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment” (Tanner, Wherry, et al., 2013, p. 1282).
2. *Conflict*: Experiences of a pastor or minister that “include clashes between the pastor and one or more members of the church, or there may be occasions when the senior pastor collides with the personality of a board member, or staff member” (Barfoot et al., 2007, p. 3).
3. *Expectations*: A preconceived idea of what is required by a pastor or minister. Sometimes these are expressed, and sometimes they are unknown. “A pastor in contemporary culture has many unrealistic expectations to fulfill in his ministry, and according to Shoff, this is a contributing factor to pastoral exits: He is expected to be chief executive officer, counselor, community leader, preacher, teacher, theologian, arbiter, chaplain, model parent, and husband, to mention the most obvious” (Barfoot et al., 2007, p. 5).
4. *Forced Termination*: The removal of a pastor or minister from his position by firing him or forcing him to resign from his ministry position.
5. *Southern Baptist of Texas Convention*: A Southern Baptist state convention that is made up of cooperating Texas Southern Baptist Churches that work together to fulfill the Great Commission.
6. *Leadership Training*: Developing individuals through a “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2016, p. 6). By educating these individuals, he will be able to help lead a church through the changes and conflicts that arise.
7. *Minister*: One who is serving full-time in the capacity as an Associate Pastor, Youth Minister, Education Minister, Executive Pastor, Music Minister, Children Minister, Preschool Minister. This may be male or female.
8. *Pastor*: An individual serving the church as the primary, appointed shepherding leader, who typically, though not always, is an ordained seminary-trained male.
9. *Southern Baptist Convention*: Christian denomination based in the United States. With more than 15 million members as of 2015, it is the world's largest Baptist denomination, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States (“Southern Baptist Convention -About Us,” 2020.).
10. *Voluntary Termination*: Leaving the ministry position voluntarily so as not to experience being forced to leave.

Significance of the Study

There is great concern about pastors and ministers experiencing forced termination. As stated above, between 18,000 and 20,000 pastors leave the ministry every year. This study looked to see what seminary-related factors were perceived to have contributed to those in full-time ministry being forced or voluntarily leaving their position in a local church. This researcher hoped to gather information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of seminary leadership preparation and to enhance the training of the next generation of pastors and ministers coming out of seminary and assuming their ministry positions in Baptist churches.

Summary of Design

This researcher used a descriptive quantitative survey methodology to determine the perceived seminary-related factors concerning Texas Baptist full-time ministers, other Baptist ministers serving in various states, and those with a baptistic theology who have experienced forced termination or voluntarily leave the ministry. This researcher developed a Likert scale survey (Appendix A) designed to solicit data from study participants to answer the research questions. The survey was validated with the use of an expert panel. The expert panel was made up of one professor, one pastor who had experienced a forced termination and another pastor currently serving in a local church. The survey was then sent through a link via an email to full-time ministers serving in an SBTC church as well as to those serving in different states either in a Baptist church or ones that have baptistic theology. Survey monkey was used to help facilitate the questionnaire.

As described in chapter three, the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, proportions, t-tests, and basic correlation methods. Limited by response rates,

resultant findings are reported in tables and figures dedicated to each research question in chapter four.

The focus of this dissertation was to concentrate on the perceived need for leadership training prior to accepting a leadership role in ministry at the local church, based on the trend of forced termination and voluntary resignation that is occurring in today's church.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The challenges of pastoring and ministering are many. Learning how to shepherd the flock God has given to a man is a daunting task. Unfortunately, many are leaving seminaries and not fully understanding what to expect and how to handle the challenges of working with people. They are taught the Bible but are they being taught how to interact with people? Are they taught how to handle conflict within the church? Are today's seminaries adequately preparing individuals for pastoral ministries? This research determined to seek answers to these questions.

Theological Framework for the Study

First, one must understand the responsibilities of a pastor. This researcher examined the terms pastor, shepherd, and overseer that are found in both the Old and New Testaments.

To understand the office of pastor, one must first define it: Pastor means "feeder of sheep" (Lockyer, 1969, p. 250) or a shepherd or overseer. There are three Hebrew words and two Greek words that one finds in the Bible that are translated "shepherd or pastor." And four Hebrew words and one Greek word translated overseer in Scripture.

Old Testament Terms

Several Hebrew words are associated with the role of the pastor, shepherd, or overseer. These are identified below with examples of the pastor/shepherd/overseer function that follow.

Hebrew meaning of shepherd/pastor/overseer

To understand the meaning of these words, one needs to explore them in their original language.

צֹאֵן – *tso'n* which is translated in Scripture as flock, sheep, cattle, shepherd, lamb, sheep, sheepcotes, sheepfold, sheep shears. Twenty-four times this word is translated shepherd in the

Old Testament (Strong, 1984b, p. 98). An example of this word being used is found in Genesis 4:2, "... And Abel was a keeper of flocks ..." (NASB)

רָעָה – **ra`ah** which is translated in Scripture as feed, shepherd, pastor, herdmen, keep, companion, broken, company, devour, eat, entreateth. Sixty-three times this is translated shepherd and eight times it is translated pastor in the Old Testament (Strong, 1984b, p. 109). An example of this word being translated as a shepherd is found in Psalm 23:1, "The LORD is my Shepherd ..." (NASB). Ra`ah translated as a pastor is found in Jeremiah 3:15, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (KJV).

רֹעֶה – **ro`iy** which is translated in Scripture as a shepherd. Twice one sees this word translated as a shepherd in the Old Testament (Strong, 1984b, p. 109). One of the two places this form is found is in Zechariah 11:17, "Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock!" (NASB).

נָצַח – **natsach** which means overseer, musician, chief singer. This Hebrew word is found translated as overseer three times (Strong, 1984b, p. 80). An example is found in 2 Chronicles 34:13, "Also *they were* over the bearers of burdens, and *were* overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites *there were* scribes, and officers, and porters" (KJV).

פָּקַד – **paqad** which means ruler, overseer, and governor. It is found translated overseer three times in the Old Testament (Strong, 1984b, p. 96). An example is found in Genesis 39:4, "And it came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and the field" (NASB).

פָּקִיד – *paqiyl* translated as overseer, governor, and officer. It is found translated overseer three times in the Old Testament (Strong, 1984b, p. 96). An example is found in Nehemiah 11:14, “And their brothers, valiant warriors, 128. And their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of Hagedolim” (NASB).

שָׁטֵר – *shoter* translated as overseer, officers, and ruler (Strong, 1984b, p. 115). This form is found translated as overseer one time in Proverbs 6:7, “Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler” (KJV).

Summary of Hebrew words translated pastor/shepherd/overseer. The image of the shepherd is prominent throughout scripture with the different Hebrew words to convey its meaning. Each Hebrew word translated gives rich sense to the role that God was calling His leaders. Examining the various uses of these words helps the researcher to determine what God is calling His shepherd to be and the obligation he is called upon to perform.

Old Testament Examples

Joseph. Joseph was the favorite son of his father, Jacob. While his brothers were shepherding sheep, Jacob sent Joseph to check on them. Upon his arrival, his brothers desired to kill him, but instead, they sold him to Ishmaelite caravanners. Twenty years later, Jacob’s sons came to Egypt to purchase grain because of the famine. Joseph, their younger brother, was now second-in-command in all of Egypt and oversaw the food supply. On their second journey to buy more food, Joseph revealed himself to them and told them to move their families to Egypt so he could care for all of them.

The first reference of a shepherd in the Bible is found in Genesis 46:32, where Joseph’s brothers are presented to Pharaoh and are called shepherds (Laniak, 2006, p. 44). The term

throughout the Old Testament indicates one who cares for sheep or in the case of the kings of Israel and/or Judah, ones that either care for or neglect the people they are called to lead.

Moses. God appointed Moses to lead the children of Israel through the wilderness into the Promised Land. Moses was taking care of his father-in-law's sheep in the Sinai wilderness when God called him to lead Israel (Exodus 3). He functioned as God's undershepherd and as an extension of God's rule, provision, and deliverance (Carson, 2004) to lead the people through the challenges of developing a nation.

Moses was a great leader, but he was human and made mistakes while leading the people through the forty years in the wilderness. Because of his failure at Meribah (Numbers 20:10), he was not permitted to lead the people into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 34:4).

David. When one thinks of a shepherd in the Old Testament, he immediately thinks of David. David was called out of the pasture to become a king over the people of God. The many lessons David learned during the time of taking care of sheep, he used to lead Israel (Laniak, 2006, p. 100). The beautiful shepherd's poem, written by David found in Psalm 23, gives the picture of how shepherd ministers to the sheep put in his charge. "Like every Israelite whom he represents, the king is also a dependent subject, in need of the provision, protection, and guidance of his divine Shepherd abundantly supplies" (Laniak, 2006, p. 111).

Continually, throughout the Old Testament, every king was compared to David. Most of the kings did not measure up when it came to being a good shepherd to the people of God.

Prophets. God raised prophets to confront the kings and their lack of being a godly shepherd to His people. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah regularly called the king to look out for the best interest of the people. Unfortunately, the kings did not listen, and Israel was wandering about defenseless and without any direction or protection. The "image of a struck

shepherd and the scattered sheep is the essential background for the Gospel writers as they explained the necessity of Christ's passion" (Laniak, 2006, p. 111).

Summary

God throughout Scripture is seen as the Great Shepherd of His people Israel. "Israel's identity was inextricably tied to the presence of God, first demonstrated to the patriarchs and then to his chosen people in the wilderness sojourn" (Laniak, 2006, p. 79). God exhibited all the attributes of a Shepherd: He is with them always (Exodus 33:15-16); He was a protector (Deuteronomy 23:14); He provided (Psalm 105:40-41); and He gave guidance (Exodus 15:13). God called Moses to display these attributes toward the children of Israel during the wilderness journey.

New Testament Terms

There are three key terms used in the New Testament that further explain or define the role and function of the pastor. These Greek terms are as follows.

Greek meaning of shepherd/pastor/overseer

ἀρχιποίμην – ***archipoimēn*** is translated chief shepherd in the New Testament (Strong, 1984a, p. 16). This word is found one time in the New Testament. First Peter 5:4 says, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

Ποιμήν – ***poimēn*** is translated shepherd or pastor in the New Testament (Strong, 1984a, p. 59). This word appears eighteen times, and it primarily means shepherd. An example of poimēn being translated shepherd is found in John 10:14, "I am the Good Shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me." One finds poimēn translated as pastor in Ephesians 4:11, "And He gave some apostles and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers" (NASB).

ἐπίσκοπος – *episkopos* is translated as bishop or overseer (Strong, 1984a, p. 31). This is found seven times in the New Testament. An example is seen in 1 Timothy 3:2-7,

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (NASB).

Summary of Greek words translated for shepherd/pastor/overseer. As one can see, there are unique uses of these words in their original language, and each carries a special meaning from the biblical writer. The purpose of these words will now be expounded on as this researcher looks at the Old and New Testaments to give the reader’s an awareness of what a pastor is called upon to do.

New Testament Examples

Jesus. As one turns the page to the New Testament, he finds the long-awaited for Messiah coming. God in the flesh, Jesus, came to gather the wandering sheep and establish a covenant community called the Church (Laniak, 2006, p. 170). Jesus provided the ultimate example of shepherd leadership. He described Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). “He called and trained a small group of individuals within a short amount of time and had them qualified to lead his mission to change the world” (Cannon, 2015, p. 19).

Jesus instructed his followers to be servant leaders (Matthew 20:26). They were not to lead people like the world calls leadership, but they were to serve. Jesus gave them the commission to shepherd the flock of God, his church until He returned (Matthew 28:18-20).

Peter. The first example this researcher will look at is found in John 21:15-17. Jesus has been resurrected and has finished preparing a meal on the shores of the Sea of Galilee when He takes a walk with Peter.

Jesus asked Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” Do you love Me more than the fishing boats, nets, and other fishing tools? The word for love Jesus uses is the word *agapaō*, which means an unconditional love (MacArthur, 2008, p. 401). Jesus was questioning Peter’s desire to serve Him. “Peter, you cannot serve two masters” (Luke 16:13).

Peter’s response to Jesus was “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You” (John 21:15). Peter could not bring himself to tell Jesus that he loved Him with unconditional love, so Peter uses another Greek word *phileō*. This Greek word means a tender affection, brotherly kind of love and love between family members (Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 1991, p. 376). Jesus calls on Peter to “Tend My lambs.” “Tend” is a verb that means to pasture and feed the lambs (MacArthur, 2008, p. 402). This is the responsibility of every pastor to tend to the immature, vulnerable, and needs of those he is called to watch over (MacArthur, 2008, p. 402).

Again, Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love (*agapaō*) Me?” (John 21:16). Peter’s response is the same, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love (*phileō*) You” (verse 16). Jesus calls Peter to “Shepherd My sheep” (verse 16). Jesus uses this term shepherd (*poimainō*) here. It gives the full scope of what a pastor’s duties entail. Jesus is calling Peter to understand that being a shepherd was one who was willing to protect, guide, and minister to those he would be called upon to serve.

Jesus, for a third time, asks Peter, “Do you love (*phileō*) Me?” (verse 17). This time Jesus changes His word for love to come down to Peter’s devotion to his willingness to serve. Peter

frustrated that Jesus would ask again, responded, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (phileō) You” (verse 17). Jesus called on Peter once again to “Tend His sheep.”

This seems to be the beginning of Peter’s understanding that he could not follow Jesus in his strength (MacArthur, 2008, p. 402). Jesus had called Peter to follow Him. As part of the calling, Peter was to shepherd the sheep. Peter was called to serve and ultimately sacrificed it all for the cause of Christ. He did this all in Christ’s strength, not his own.

Paul. As one goes through Acts, he sees Paul establishing churches as a response to fulfilling the Great Commission. He started a church and would raise pastors to serve after he moved on to somewhere else. Paul was a “recognized leader of the church instructing other leaders of the church how to develop the next generation of leaders” (Huizing, 2011, p. 334). Two men, in particular, Paul poured his life into were Timothy and Titus, and the letters he wrote to both of them help guide pastoral leaders.

Qualifications for Pastors

First Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9

Paul instructs what to look for in men being called as pastors. In 1 Timothy 3:2-7 Paul writes to Timothy and commends him to look for this kind of man:

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (NASB).

God’s view of church leadership: What a man *is* is the issue, more than what he *does*. Scripture appears to show that God calls the pastor to be concerned about maintaining high standards of purity and integrity in his leadership. If he does, it will begin to fall more in line

with Scripture in every other area as well. The biblical emphasis is not on the organization but the leaders' purity and spiritual depth.

The qualifications for pastor fall into four categories: personal, family, spiritual, and community qualifications. First, Paul discusses the personal qualifications of a pastor. A pastor must be a "man above reproach" (1 Timothy 3:2). This means that his "life has not been marred by some obvious sinful defect in character which would preclude him setting the highest standard for godly conduct. He must be a model for the congregation to follow" (MacArthur, 1995, p. 103). The pastor needs to guard every area of his life to live above reproach.

The next qualification for a pastor is, "the husband of one wife" (verse 2). The Greek means "a one-woman man." A one-woman man is "a man devoted in his heart and mind to the woman who is his wife. He loves, desires, and thinks only of her" (MacArthur, 1995, p. 105). Paul makes it clear that a man that cannot keep his body pure is disqualified from preaching (1 Corinthians 9:27).

A pastor must be "temperate" (verse 2). It means "wineless" (MacArthur, 1995, p. 105). A leader must be one that is clear-headed and has the ability to think clearly. He must keep from anything that would dull his alertness. He is also called upon to be "prudent" (verse 2). He is well-disciplined and has his priorities in order (MacArthur, 1995, p. 106). He does not rush to judgment but is cautious.

He must be "respectable." This carries the idea of being orderly (MacArthur, 1995, p. 107). He has a well-disciplined mind that leads to a well-disciplined life. He is called upon to be "hospitable" (verse 2). This word means that he "loves strangers." Meeting the needs of strangers and showing them hospitality.

He must be “able to teach” (verse 2). He must be a highly skilled teacher who works hard in his studies and proclamation (MacArthur, 1995, p. 108). This also relates to the spiritual gift found in Ephesians 4:11. This is the primary duty of a pastor; he must be able to teach and preach the Word of God. He must be diligent with the Scriptures, able to teach in the context in which they were written.

Another requirement for a pastor is that he is “not addicted to wine” (verse 3). He does not have a reputation as a drinker (MacArthur, 1995, p. 110). A man who is a drinker has no place in the ministry. He must be a man that is radically different from the world and an example to the believers. He must not be “pugnacious” (verse 3). “A leader in the church must not be one who reacts to difficulty with physical violence. He must not settle disputes with blows” (MacArthur, 1995, p. 111).

He is to be “gentle” (verse 3). He does not hold a grudge and keeps no record of those who have wronged him. Basically, as a leader, he must have no thought of retaliation. He must also be “uncontentious” (verse 3). That means that he is not a quarrelsome person or someone that brings disunity or disharmony into the church. He is peaceful (MacArthur, 1995, p. 111). And then he is “free from the love of money” (verse 3). A pastor must not be greedy or stingy. He does not allow money to occupy his time or mind.

Paul now moves into family qualifications. “He must be one who manages his household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his household, how will he take care of the church of God?)” (verses 4-5). A pastor must show that he not only has moral qualifications but also be a leader in his home. He must be a good steward of his home and finances. His children are to be respectful, well-disciplined, and believers (Titus 1:6).

The spiritual qualification of a man who desires to be a pastor begins with; he must not “be a new convert, lest he becomes conceited and falls into the condemnation incurred by the devil” (verse 6). Being in a position of leadership can expose him to the temptation of pride (MacArthur, 1995, p. 118). The pastor is to be spiritually mature and be able to serve with humility.

Finally, a pastor must have a good reputation in the community. Paul tells Timothy that a pastor “must have a good reputation with those outside the church so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (verse 7). He must be a man of moral character, love, kindness, generosity, and goodness (MacArthur, 1995, p. 119). People outside the church are watching the testimony of the one leading the church. He must live in such a way as to give a good testimony to the saving faith of Jesus Christ.

Throughout Church History

“Delegated shepherd leadership outlined in the Bible was evident throughout church history” (Cannon, 2015, p. 21). Before Martin Luther, the church was structured with the Pope-led church in Rome to the local churches. When the Reformation brought about by Luther took place that the existing structure was dismantled, and the role of shepherd leadership became the renewed focus of the local church. This model remains prevalent and continues to be at the forefront of church leadership in the twenty-first century (Witmer, 2007, p. 33).

Today’s church leadership is led by the Scriptures and history. The Reformation helped advance the movement to turn back the biblical role of shepherd leaders (pastors). “Present-day pastors, serving in contemporary Southern Baptist churches in the scriptural office, shepherd the flock of God through similar delegated leadership” (Cannon, 2015, p. 22).

Summary of the New Testament

Concerning the New Testament, as one can see based on the above qualifications found in 1 Timothy, most of these qualifications deal with his ability to lead and his ability to have relationships with people around him. Only one area deals with his teaching ability. All the other areas deal with his character and life.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

This researcher will now turn his attention to what is going on in today's churches and how it is affecting those called by God to the pastor. Every year between 18,000 and 20,000 pastors leave the ministry (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams, 2012, p. 1; Fuller, 2020). This literature review will discuss the causes and the effects of over 1,500 pastors walking away or being terminated from the pastorate every month. As leaders called by God to lead a church, are pastors being adequately trained in seminary and Bible colleges to work with the people they are called to shepherd? The first section will deal with research and primary literature pertaining to the termination of ministers and the causes. The second section will discuss the effects of a forced termination on a pastor and his family. And the third section will look at the limited literature that is available to show how education is preparing or not preparing a pastor for entering the ministry. The fourth section will discuss how a leader can make changes in the church and survive to talk about it. The fifth section will share the biblical context of what a pastor/shepherd is as found in Scripture and the responsibilities of the pastor and how he is called to shepherd a church. Final section will look at the different seminary leadership classes that would make an impact on the minister's life.

Pastors Terminated or Forced to Resign

Statistics show that on average, three pastors leave the ministry every day and go into some other field of vocation (Elkington, 2013, p. 1). Does the question become why are so many ministers leaving behind a “calling” to focus on something outside of ministry? There are several reasons why pastors are being terminated or forced to leave their ministry. Some reasons are that a majority of pastors feel overworked, unappreciated, inadequately prepared, overwhelmed, fatigued, not prepared for ministry (Fuller, 2018). They feel physically, emotionally, and spiritually drained.

Other causes are the effect ministry has on the family. They feel their families live in a “glass house” and cannot meet the expectations the church places on them. Although human, pastors and their wives report that they believe that they are held to a higher moral standard than those in the church (Fuller, 2018).

A majority of pastors do not have someone they would call a close friend or a confidant to help him in the ministry. They do not believe they have anyone they can trust and confide in. This can be a real challenge since 80% of pastors report serious conflict with a parishioner at least once in the past year (Fuller, 2018). These many issues can result in a low self-image of the pastor (Fuller, 2018).

Based on the statistics stated in chapter one and the reasons listed above, this researcher will use this section of the literary review to focus on some of the reasons men are being forced out of their ministries.

Conflict

Personality conflicts may include clashes between the pastor and one or more members of the church, or there may be occasions when the senior pastor collides with the personality of

a board member, or staff member (Barfoot et al., 2007, p. 3). Unresolved conflicts are killing churches and destroying ministries of men that have been called by God to serve Him (Hicks, 2010). Conflict can arise from different areas of the church. Ken Sande (2014) attributes conflict to four causes: the first is a misunderstanding developed by poor communication (Joshua 22:10-34); second, differences in values, goals, gifts, calling, priorities, expectations, interests or opinions can lead to conflict (Acts 15:39; 1 Corinthians 12:12-312); third, competition is created over limited resources, such as time or money (Genesis 13:1-12); and fourth, aggravated sinful attitudes and habits can lead to sinful words and actions (James 4:1-2) (p. 41).

Another area that can cause conflict in the church is when the pastor calls upon the church to make some changes (Works, 2008). When a church has been comfortable for a long period, change does not come quickly. The old saying “We have never done it that way before,” are words that bring frustration to a pastor. Change can take people where they do not want to go, thus causing problems for the one who initiated the change (Works, 2008, p. 29).

Congregational systems embroiled in conflict, distrust, dishonesty, and fractured relationships with a few controlling and mean-spirited persons have been identified as factors that help set the stage for forced termination (Speight & Speight, 2017, p. 150). The result of a handful of people that continue to cause disharmony in the church which in turn force a pastor to resign causes damage to not only the pastor, his family but for the cause of Christ itself. From personal experience, this researcher has found that usually, a handful of people cause the majority of the conflict in a church. Most people in the church want to get along and worship.

Conflict arises when the leadership style the pastor practices cause people not to like him or how he is trying to bring about change (Speight & Speight, 2017, p. 150). When a pastor

comes across as one who knows it all, and it is his way only, conflicts will arise. Conflict happens when it is all about a win-lose proposition.

Expectations

“There are often no set criteria for the job function of a minister; it varies both within and among churches and denominations. When the minister stops meeting the perceived demands of the congregation, a forced termination process begins that could last from a few months to a few years” (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams, 2012, p. 2). Out of this comes depression, low self-esteem, health issues, and physical exhaustion (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams, 2012, p. 8). As stated in the above statistics, 30% of churches have no documentation clearly outlining what the church expects of their pastor.

Fifty-two percent of pastors feel overworked and cannot meet their church’s unrealistic expectations (Fuller, 2018). When there are unspoken expectations, pastors do not know what or how they are to perform. This leads to fatigue, which can lead to burnout.

Interpersonal Incompetence

Some pastors are coming out of seminary, or some of those that never attended seminary show signs of incompetence in leading a church. Barfoot (2007), in his research, has shown nine steps that lead to interpersonal incompetence that results in pastoral failure.

First, the pastors failed to listen and observe and therefore did not understand the situation well enough to provide proper feedback. Second, they failed to accept personal responsibility, blaming others instead. Third, these individuals neglected to properly delegate by either not delegating tasks at all or over-delegating responsibilities inappropriately. Fourth, it was extremely difficult for them to connect with people in such a manner as to form common loyalties. Fifth, they were incapable of maintaining congruency in their words and behavior. Sixth, they needed to have approval from everyone all of the time in order to find emotional support. Seventh, these ministers were not able to interpret the present circumstances in terms of reality. Eighth, those who did not think the same way easily intimidated them. Ninth, these ministers themselves failed to support others emotionally while disagreeing with people on an intellectual level.
(p. 3)

The above findings are supported by the research done by Barfoot's Pastors-in-Residence-Confidential Survey submitted by 108 pastors of evangelical churches across denominational lines. The exploratory findings generate data on demographic information such as age, education, and marital status of pastors who experience a forced termination from their post. The study examined the antecedents: (a) conflicting visions for the church, (b) personality conflict with others in leadership and/or the congregation, (c) interpersonal incompetence, (d) unrealistic expectations, (e) lack of church discipline, and judicial procedures, and (f) contentious individuals and power groups (2007, p. 1).

The above information concerning incompetency is something every pastor can avoid if he will submit to Christ and serve the people as a servant and study to improve in the areas that he finds a weakness. He must be willing to take a step back and see himself as others may be seeing him. If he does not, it will cause problems for him and lead to possible termination.

Summary of the Reasons for Termination

Termination is a real issue that has not been fully studied. There are several confirmed reasons given by churches or expressed by departing pastors for the cause of his termination.

Powell, in his dissertation, gives five main reasons for the forced termination of a minister.

1. The number one issue in forced terminations is "who runs the church."
2. Resistance to Change in the Church.
3. The Pastor's Poor People skills.
4. The pastor's leadership style is too strong.
5. The church was already in conflict when the pastor arrived (2008, pp. 20–25).

For over a decade, the Southern Baptist Convention has monitored the issue of forced terminations. The categories in the research have remained about the same each year. The following issues are reported in rank order:

1. Control Issues – who is going to run the church.
2. Church's resistance to change.

3. Poor people skills on the part of the pastor.
4. Pastor's leadership style is too strong.
5. Church was already conflicted when the pastor arrived.
6. Decline in attendance and/or conditions of decline.
7. Pastor's leadership style is too weak.
8. Administrative incompetence on the part of the pastor.
9. Sexual misconduct.
10. Conflict with other staff.
11. Disagreement over doctrine
12. Ethical misconduct-mismanaged monies, dishonesty.
13. Tenure- Pastor has been at the church too long.
14. Rapid growth (Powell, 2008, p. 16).

As stated above, there are some reasons given for termination. It could be one or more of these reasons.

Related Literature

Forced termination impacts more than just the minister himself. It affects his wife and children deeply. This section will examine the different aspects that the minister, his wife, and children go through when the unexpected happens.

The Effects on the Minister and Family

Forced termination can have several effects on the minister and the minister's family. These include physical, mental, relational, and financial impacts.

Physical and mental health of minister

Forced termination of the clergy is a demeaning and psychologically distressing experience. It brings about different responses in the life of the pastor and his family.

“The work of the ministry is a demanding profession constantly spilling over into the family domain. Ministry demands make it difficult to balance work and family. The chronic stress of working with demanding people takes its toll on ministers and may result in ministry burnout. Ministers who have experienced problems that seem to operate in conjunction with higher stress levels” (Tanner, Wherry, et al., 2013, p. 13).

Additionally, ministers who do not meet the demands of a church may face forced termination which has long-term implications for family well-being and physical health”

(Tanner, Wherry, et al., 2013, p. 1282). Job loss has been cited as having a variety of adverse effects on persons who experience unemployment. Evidence suggests that unemployed persons are at-risk for experiencing a decline in their emotional and physical health as well as an increased incidence of suicide (Speight & Speight, 2017, p. 151).

Tanner revealed clergy (71%) and their family (67%) had a diminished ability to trust people. Sixty-nine percent faced long-term financial instability and had lower self-confidence (59%). This research gives few indications of the effects forced termination has on clergy except to say that two-thirds of children impacted by their parent's forced termination were forced to change schools, and spouses of the clergy were forced to change jobs. Further, 10% experienced a major illness within 12 months of being forced out (2013, p. 1283). These statistics are haunting when it comes to wanting to fulfill the calling God has placed on one's life. There was also a high PTSD among those pastors who experienced termination (Tanner, Wherry, et al., 2013, p. 1291). This PTSD can cause the pastor to withdraw and feel useless in the ministry.

Research has shown that there is a sense of betrayal when a pastor is forced to resign (Pratt, 2011, p. 67). Several of the pastors interviewed for this research felt betrayed by those closest to them. The wife also felt that the ones calling for her husband's termination had called her a friend. The hurt and betrayal ran deep within the couples interviewed for Pratt's research. The significant finding confirmed that "pastoral termination confirmed the participants' belief in the sinful, fallen nature of the human race" (Pratt, 2011, p. 67).

The pastors' interviewed for Pratt's research stated that those involved in his termination were "selfish, shame intolerant, manipulative, and power-hungry" (2011, p. 68). A pastor felt that one of his biggest mistakes was putting an individual on the board. That individual caused trouble from the beginning.

Marriage and Family Impacted

In addition to coping strategies, the health of a pastor's marriage impacts resilience. Since wives are the primary social support, this relationship is vital. The health of marriage affects the wellbeing of the pastor by allowing him effective in the ministry where he serves (McMinn et al. 2008; Morris & Blanton, 1994).

Pratt's research showed the effects of the termination on the pastor and his wife was distressing to the family at the time, but it brought them closer together (Pratt, 2011, p. 72). The pastors and wives interviewed all said that a strong-knit family helped overcome the pain of being forced out. They did feel some isolation by others and loneliness because of the termination (Pratt, 2011, p. 75).

To finish out this research, each pastor and his wife said they felt a sense of grief as if losing a loved one. They felt like a couple without a country, wondering where to go next (Pratt, 2011, p. 76). Pratt's study interviewed four pastoral couples concerning their experience of pastoral termination. The responses to the interview protocol were transcribed, coded, and collapsed into cluster themes. The cluster themes are the significant findings of the study:

1. The experience of pastoral termination finds mental and emotional congruency when the pastor and the spouse embrace the perception that they have embodied the ministry of Jesus as the Paschal Lamb in the experience.
2. Humanity has a sinful/fallen nature which is exhibited in the church. The participants viewed termination as a manifestation of human sinful nature.
3. An extended network of family relationships and friendships gave clergy and their spouses support during pastoral termination (2011, p. 77).

Hall, in his research, gave the account of one Southern Baptist pastor who resigned from a church amid a conflict that threatened to split the congregation. That pastor said, "My wife is a strong Christian, but the experience almost destroyed her. It almost killed my children

emotionally.” That pastor personally experienced bitterness and anger. Several pastor search committees dropped the pastor from consideration when they learned of the pastor’s forced resignation (2004).

Ministry effects the marriage in different ways. According to Powell (2008), “The results were evident through a strained, stressed marriage, medical problems along with fatigue, discouragement and finally a termination” (p. 11). Clergy and spouses will experience pain, disillusionment, depression, and anxiety because of forced termination (Barfoot et al., 2007).

Greenfield’s (2001) research indicated that the clergy were not the only one who experienced damage. It is not uncommon for what was once a stable marriage to falter under the pressures of such an event. Unfortunately, Greenfield observed that the negative effects are not limited to spouses, as children are also caught up in the emotional frenzy. By “watching their father and mother being abused by callous and cruel lay leaders, minister’s children will usually become cynical about the church” (Greenfield, 2001, p. 101).

Employment Status

Job loss is one of the top 10 traumatic life experiences, and in some cases, can be thought of as worse than divorce or separation (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams, 2012, p. 3). The challenge is that once a termination takes place, it is difficult for the pastor to find another church to serve. He is either in no condition physically, mentally, and/or spiritually to lead a church or churches will not consider him because he has been terminated. The pastor’s main relationship is tied to the church, and when he is forced out, it becomes hard to locate another position because most of his contacts are within the church.

The research on job loss and stress misses some important elements that make clergy work unique; primarily the workplace configuration that has already been mentioned. In addition the workplace demands are much more convoluted as each person in a congregation makes demands on the minister's time. Moreover, much of a minister's

social system is inherently tied to the local church body in which he or she serves as minister. A minister may move across the country or even the world to fulfill a higher calling, often leaving behind extended family who could serve as a support system in stressful times. A minister relies on the relationships within the local church body, community, and denomination for a support system. When the system is the cause of job loss, the minister loses not only a job, but also the very support system that would have comforted any other person not working in ministry. (Tanner, Wherry, et al., 2013, p. 3)

When a pastor is terminated or forced to resign, remaining in the community is a real challenge. Finding a job to support his family becomes a priority. The question becomes, where is he going to seek a job in the community he lives in to support his family while looking for another place to serve? The pain and stigma while being in the community (especially if it is a small town) can almost become unbearable.

Financial Instability

“If anyone of these pastors was suddenly forced out of their present positions, 39% could survive financially for no more than a month. An incredible 75% could not survive for longer than four months. About 5 out of 10 of these pastors actually received a severance package from 1 to 6 months” (Barfoot et al., 2007, pp. 10–11). The vast majority of pastors will not ask for or fight for a severance package. The church continues to take advantage of the pastor, knowing that he will not take legal action against the church or cause problems on the way out.

Under tax law, ministers are self-employed and don't qualify for unemployment compensation, which makes a forced termination a financial hardship to a minister and a clergy family (“Wave of ‘Forced Terminations’ Strikes Southern-Baptist Pastors,” 1990). Because of this law, pastors must rely upon either receiving a severance package or the hope to find another pastor position soon. This leads to tremendous stress and problems.

Other Factors that Lead to Termination or Voluntarily Leaving

There are ethical reasons for termination that this researcher will touch on. A small percentage of pastors deserve to be terminated because they have caused great damage to the church and their families. One is when a pastor is carrying on an inappropriate relationship or is engaging in sexual misconduct, he is no longer qualified to serve as a leader of the church. He has broken the covenant of marriage and his effectiveness is lost. This brings great damage to the church and his family (Powell, 2008, p. 16). Specific behaviors associated with clergy sexual misconduct range from masturbation and the use of pornography for sexual gratification to infidelity or romantic behaviors outside of the marriage and even to nonconsensual or manipulated sexual activity involving verbal abuse, physical threats, and rape of another individual (Garland and Argueta 2010; Thoburn and Baker 2011). “Clergy sexual misconduct is more expansive, covering a wide range of sexual behaviors considered to be outside of what is morally acceptable by their religious denomination” (Kurtz et al. 2017, p. 438).

Another area that will cause the rightful termination of a pastor is engaging in financial misconduct. When a pastor misuses the church’s money for personal use and hides it from the church, it will cause a lack of trust for his leadership. One of his qualifications for pastor is that “not fond of sordid gain” (NASB, 2020, Titus 1:7). To use church funds for sordid gain, is cause for termination.

Although these two areas are serious and termination is called for, the focus of this research is on other areas in which ministers experience forced termination or must voluntarily resign.

The Perceptions of Terminated Ministers Scale

The Perceptions of Terminated Ministers Scale-Revised (PTM-R), a 15-item measure of perceptions of termination appropriate to members of the clergy, was developed for use among researchers studying how clergypersons perceive the effects of forced termination events (Tanner, Zvonkovic, et al., 2013, p. 69). To examine the reliability and validity of the measure, three samples of clergy were assessed using the PTM and PTM-R. The three samples used Barfoot et al.'s (2005) working definition of forced pastoral exits (Tanner, Zvonkovic, et al., 2013, p.69).

“The PTM and PTM-R was subjected to principal components analysis and varimax rotation to determine how, if at all, the perceptions of termination might be classified into categories. Four interpretable factors were extracted with eigenvalues greater than 1 and accounted for 75 % of the total variance” (Tanner, Zvonkovic, et al., 2013, p. 72).

Table 1
Perceptions of Terminated Ministers Scale

Item #	Item	Factor			
		1	2	3	4
1	I have feelings of anger towards people at a church I was forced from.	0.743			
3	I have had trouble forgiving the people I believe to be directly responsible for my resignation/termination.	0.804			
4	I rarely think positively about the day I was forced to resign or terminated from a ministry position.	0.649			
8	If I had the opportunity to say how I really felt about the people responsible for my family's sudden move, it would not be pleasant.		0.804		
2	I have found it difficult to speak with anyone at a church I was forced from.		0.826		

5	I could never face the people responsible for my resignation or termination from a ministry position in a positive way.		0.626		
9	I have felt a decrease in my faith.		0.765		
10	I have been embarrassed to talk about my termination experience with anyone.		0.793		
6	I was deeply hurt by the circumstances of my resignation or termination from a ministry position.			0.903	
7	My family was deeply hurt by the circumstances of my resignation or termination from a ministry position.			0.911	
11	I have painful memories of my termination				0.669
12	Reminders of the event are physically distressing				0.813
13	I have disturbing dreams about my forced termination				0.543
14	Negative thoughts about the event occur				0.683
15	Reminders of the event are stressful				0.839

(Tanner, Zvonkovic, et al., 2013, p. 73)

The PTM-R scale was developed to be used as a tool to determine the perceptions clergy hold of their forced termination. Forced termination of the clergy is unique and different from job loss. The assumption that ministers are serving Christians who ought to love one another can influence the perceptions of the terminated, and perhaps their future employment. The scale measures the participants' responses to forced termination, feelings of termination, trauma, and sense of being hurt. The immediate effects of termination may also affect the perception of termination (Tanner, Zvonkovic, et al., 2013, p. 73).

Summary of the Effects of Being Terminated

The effects of being forced to resign or being terminated have lasting repercussions on not only the pastor but also his wife and children. "Forced termination is a devastating event with both short-term and long-term effects" (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams. 2012a, p. 15).

There is limited research on the effects on the children, but when a parent goes through a terrible ordeal and has people being hateful to their dad, one can imagine the bitterness that builds inside these innocent bystanders. The pastor's health (spiritual, mental, and physical) pays the price.

Also, financially, the pastor will struggle to make ends meet until he can find another job.

The chart below shows the results of a poll taken to determine the top sixteen most affected areas by forced termination.

Table 2

Ranking of Most Affective Areas by Forced Exits

Area of Impact	Somewhat Negative Effect	Very Negative Effect	Combined Total	Combined Percent
1. Ability to trust people	46	25	71	71
2. Financial stability	20	49	69	69
3. Family's ability to trust	41	26	67	67
4. Confidence as a pastoral leader	33	26	59	59
5. My emotional health	27	30	57	57
6. Ability to trust denomination	23	33	56	56
7. Commitment to stay in the ministry	27	20	47	47
8. Ability to trust fellow peers	29	14	43	43
9. Spouse's emotional health	29	14	43	43
10. Prayer life	26	14	40	40
11. Children's emotional health	22	12	34	34
12. A growing, vibrant faith	17	16	33	33
13. Sense of call	19	10	29	29
14. Ability to be a loving spouse	15	4	19	19
15. Ability to love people	13	6	19	19
16. Ability to be a caring person	12	4	16	16

(Friese, 2016, p. 9)

Preparation for Ministry

If one is planning to be a doctor, a military officer, or a restaurant manager, they need training, which may include classroom and field experience. Without adequate training, they are

not able to properly treat people, lead people, or feed people. The pastoral ministry also requires preparation (Bryson et al., 2013).

Pastors have stated that seminary did not prepare them for this experience (Bedenbaugh, 2015). When the challenges and difficulties come, the question is being asked, “Why did not seminary teach me what to do in these situations?” The average seminary for a Master of Divinity with Languages will require 78-90 hours. The average student will take eighteen hours in languages (Greek and Hebrew). He will take classes in apologetics, church history, sermon preparation, systematic theology, evangelism, marriage and family counseling, and ethics. Often only one class, introduction to pastoral leadership, is required to receive a master’s degree in divinity with languages. He is allowed some electives to fulfill the degree requirements.

In that typical seminary, there are most often twelve hours of leadership classes that are offered as electives, but none are mandatory. The following are an example of the leadership classes offered: The Life of Leaders; Theology of Pastoral Ministry; Team Leadership and Conflict Resolution; Mission, Vision and Strategic Planning; and The Art of Developing Leaders (2018-19 Example Seminary Degree Completion Plan).

The above seminary requirements for a master’s degree show the lack of mandatory classes dealing with relationships and leadership. Unless one sees the need for these leadership classes, he could miss being properly prepared to deal with the stresses of pastoring. This writer has found that he spends more time with leading, dealing with conflict, shepherding, planning, and encouraging people than he does in any other area of the church. The area of leadership development for pastoral students in seminary needs to be addressed and researched more fully. While ministry leadership programs and courses exist, a more intentional effort to train in leadership skills seems to be needed.

The next challenge is an MDiv in most seminaries has dropped from 90 to 78 hours (ATS Standard) because of the accreditation association revisions. More students are choosing a MA program over an MDiv because of the hours required and the life-long impact of student debt resulting from engagement in the higher hour requirements of the MDiv degree. As this happens, more classes must be removed from the degree thus limiting exposure to practical content courses.

Necessary Leadership Classes

According to Hersey (2013) the essence of leadership is “recognizing the need for action, motivating and inspiring others, and making things happen” (p. 1). Leadership does not happen by accident; it is a skill that is learned, and the more it is put into practice, the stronger a leader becomes. So, when one asks, “Why do those in ministry need leadership classes while in seminary?” there is an answer. The answer is that as a minister, one is called to lead people first of all in a closer relationship with Christ and second to help accomplish the Great Commission. Jesus states this commission given to biblical leaders in these words.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age” (NASB, 2020, Matthew 28:19-20).

The minister is the God-ordained individual to help the church carry out this mandate.

Leadership occurs “whenever one person attempts to influence the behavior of an individual or group, regardless of the reason” (Hersey et al., 2013, p. 4). Leadership “is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (Yukl, 2013, p. 7). In the survey designed by this researcher for this research dissertation, ministers were asked what leadership classes he wished were a part of the

curriculum that would have been helpful in learning to serve as a leader of the church. Following are different leadership areas the minister was asked about.

Organizational leadership. Inside every organization, there must be someone responsible for directing or leading the group. “Organizational leadership is a management approach in which leaders help set strategic goals for the organization while motivating individuals within the group to successfully carry out assignments in service to those goals” (Tokar, 2020). Six assumptions undergird the structural frame of an organization:

1. Organizations exist to achieve goals and objectives and devise strategies to reach those goals.
2. Organizations increase efficiency and enhance performance through specialized and appropriate division of labor.
3. Suitable forms of coordination and control ensure that diverse efforts of individuals and units mesh.
4. Organizations work best when rationality prevails over personal agendas and extraneous pressures.
5. Effective structure fits an organization’s current circumstances (including its strategy, technology, workforce, and environment).
6. When performance suffers from structural flaws, the remedy is problem solving and restructuring (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 48).

Every minister has a desire to be effective in leading those that are a part of that organization. “Effectiveness in service delivery by faith organizations may be determined by their overall philosophical beliefs that are shared by the people and clergy” (Timmons, 2007, p. 52). The leader must understand the people that he is leading and share common beliefs. In today’s organizations, there is,

“A new trend, or a new vision, evolving within organizations due to technological advances. There is increasing integration of social and technical structure in today’s postmodern organization. This has created greater independence, autonomy, and decentralization. Organizations are knowledge centers. They all seek to disperse information” (Timmons, 2007, p. 58).

There are new ministry challenges today that previous generations did not have to deal with. Understanding the church as the organization and the people associated with it would be of great value to the minister as he serves.

Conflict resolution. Conflict in ministry is inevitable, but as Christians, one is called to live at peace with one another. “Management of leadership conflict in a church has not been given much attention despite the fact that leadership conflict is often rampant in a church” (Afolabi, 2019). The minister is called to lead the church through conflict resolution, but as stated above, not much attention has been given to training the next generation of ministers. “Leading involves the reactions of individual personalities to one another, and it is rooted in the feeling and attitudes that have developed over the time people have worked together” (Afolabi, 2019). Since people all have different personalities, thoughts, desires, goals, dreams, and ambitions, bringing them together to accomplish the primary goal, the minister must wind his way through the conflict that will eventually arise.

Harmony is essential to the unity of an organization, religious or non-religious. “Harmony enhances the ability of the Church to live out its cherished ideals and accomplish its mission to the community and the world, whereas destructive conflict destroys accord, hinders growth and the flourishing of relationships” (Dewar, 2016, p. 1). But one must not get the idea that there must be harmony, even if that means looking the other way and not discussing what everyone knows is going on. Actual conflict resolution is working through the conflict to bring about the greater good for the cause of Christ. Conflict does grave damage to the unity, growth, and health of a church. Christians must take into account other’s viewpoints or thoughts.

Halverstate (1991) discusses conflict by stating,

“When Christians differ over beliefs or commitments, they may question or even condemn one another's spirituality or character. Their self-esteem is on the line. That is

why parties slip so easily into taking differences personally, even launching personal attacks. When church folk feels that their worldview or personal integrity is being questioned or condemned, they often become emotionally violent and violating. Any means are used to justify their goal of emotional self-protection” (p. 2).

This leads to arguments and church conflict, causing the minister to step in and bring about a positive resolution to the conflict. There is a way to bring about a productive church fight creating a positive change without damaging the unity of the believers in that church community.

One must remember that “Conflicts are power struggles over differences: differing information or differing beliefs; differing interests, desires, or values; differing abilities to secure needed resources” (Halverstadt, 1991, p. 4). Church organizational conflict can cause several undesirable outcomes, including diversion from mission and goals, members’ withdrawal from activities and friendship networks, diminished positive support, and heightened levels of negative interactions (Clarke, 2017, p. 3). These challenges have led to a decline in church membership and stress for the minister.

Bringing the sides together in an attitude of Shalom is challenging but necessary for the church to move forward and maintain a testimony to the world that even in individual differences, peace and unity can happen. “Managing conflicts is a ministry of reconciliation. We do not do the reconciling. God does. We do the preparatory work for God's reconciling activity among parties to church conflicts” (Halverstadt, 1991, p. 89). Paul speaks to this fact in two passages.

“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to

Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (NASB, 2020, 2 Cor. 5:14-19).

“For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity” (NASB 2020, Eph. 2:14-16).

God has called all believers to be ambassadors for reconciliation (resolving conflict). He has called the minister to lead the church, thus using the minister to help the people resolve conflict. Emotion plays a significant role in causing church conflict based more on preferences than non-negotiables. Halverstadt (1991) concludes, “When we do our part to manage conflicts, God does far more than we can ask or think” (p. 199).

There is a constructive manner to handle conflict in today’s church. “Church leaders play a critical role in the viability of the organization because they make key decisions and have a strong influence among the members such as performing marriages, baptisms, and other life-altering ceremonies” (Clarke, 2017, p. 6). They are either in the midst of the conflict or are a third party trying to find out what is happening.

Team development. Eguizabal & Lawson (2009a) address the role of team development in a ministry setting.

“Scriptures clearly depict teamwork through the practice of loving each other and living in the unity of the Spirit to the building up of the body of Christ. Therefore, a ministry team approach structured upon biblical and theological foundations should help the church to work together harmoniously and corporately as intended by Jesus Christ, the founder and head of the Christian church” (p. 250).

Again, one finds the use of teams going back to the days of Moses when Aaron, Joshua, and Miriam helped Moses lead the people. Moses received advice from his father-in-law, Jethro, to put together men to help Moses with the daily challenges of ministering to the people (Exodus 18:1-27). This allowed Moses to be freed up to lead the people more effectively.

When God instructed Moses on the tabernacle worship, He had a team concept in mind. The High Priest, priests, and Levites would be instrumental in leading worship during the wilderness wanderings and continuing into the Promised Land. One person can't do everything.

When He called the disciples, Jesus had a team approach: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). For the next three-plus years, He trained, led, and encouraged these men so when He was gone; they would be able to take the gospel to the world. Eguizabal & Lawson (2009a) state that Mark 3:13-17 "describes the institution of His team, first of all to intimate discipleship with Him and to share His authority with them in the service of His kingdom" (p. 255).

Paul's team approach included Barnabas and John Mark (Acts 13) and Silas and Timothy (Acts 15:36-40; 16). In addition, Paul writes about the need for team ministry in 1 Corinthians 12.

"For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ... For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ... But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired" (NASB, 2020, 1 Cor. 12:12, 14-15, 18).

Teamwork in Scripture views teaching as cooperative work (Eguizabal & Lawson, 2009). It is shown in Scripture by shared leadership (Acts 1:12-26; 15:1-35). God placed within the body of Christ individuals that make up a ministry team. Part of the minister's job is to help develop this team to accomplish the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-34). Like Moses, David, Jesus, and the disciples, it is impossible to accomplish the goals without a team approach. Teams bring about a diversity of thought, perspective, and skills integrated into "a unified fashion that enables teams to outperform individuals" (Hartwig & Bird, 2015, p. 46).

Larson and LaFasto (1989) define a team as follows: “A team has two or more people; it has a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for the attainment of the team goal or objective” (p. 19). They go on to share eight characteristics of an effective functioning team.

1. A Clear and Elevating Goal
2. A Results Driven Structure
3. Competent Members
4. Unified Commitment
5. A Collaborative Climate
6. Standards of Excellence
7. External Support and Recognition
8. Principled Leadership (p. 637).

The three most important of the eight principles are a clear and elevating goal, competent members, and having standards of excellence. They indicate a successful team must meet these standards. Katzenbach & Smith (2001) address team dynamics.

The actual team discipline in comparison to a single leader discipline shows itself by:

1. In the team discipline, decisions are made by the appropriate people, not always the designated team leader. This may be the entire group or it may be one or more persons who have the appropriate knowledge and skills to address that particular issue. Team leaders do not step in unless the group members cannot reach a decision, but consensus is not expected or desired. Group members recognize each other's areas of expertise and defer accordingly.
2. Goals of groups using the team discipline are set and affirmed individually and collectively by the group. The leader may have strong opinions and share them, but the group members must wrestle together with the issues and implications and develop a shared understanding and commitment.
3. The pace and working approach are set by the group, making the approach a matter of shared commitment. These may shift as the group encounters different situations, unlike the "Single-Leader Discipline," which tends to stay more fixed.
4. The group rigorously and consistently evaluates its own results. Because they share their commitment to the task, they assess progress together in an open way. Their sense of accountability is strong, at times making them harder on themselves than a "single-leader" might be.

5. Members of the group set high standards. Because of their shared commitment they set high standards, often higher than any other group in their organization. Group goals may exceed goals mandated by their organizations, and the group takes pride in the accomplishment.

6. Group members hold themselves individually and mutually accountable. Real teams tend not to have individual members who fail. If there is failure, it will be the group that fails. Team members adapt and help each other so they can accomplish their goal” (pp. 8–10).

Teams see themselves working together to accomplish a common goal. “Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (NASB, 2020, Prov. 27:17). Working together helps everyone achieve more. A well-working team “can renew vision and commitment, build mutual support, and help team members weather the stresses and strains of ministry” (Lawson & Eguizabal, 2009, p. 332).

Hartwig and Bird (2015) list ten practical benefits of team leadership:

1. Greater productivity
2. Less stress and pressure on the lead pastor
3. Greater leadership development
4. More creativity and innovation
5. Better decision making
6. More safety and accountability
7. Less loneliness
8. Greater joy and satisfaction among team members
9. Greater trust among the congregation
10. Provide better organizational leadership (pp. 57–60)

These benefits show the importance of building teams to accomplish the task. The most effective ministries are seen to have put team leadership into place (Hartwig & Bird, 2015, p. 60). God designed the church to function as a team. As mentioned above, the body of Christ is made up of many parts, all working together to accomplish what God has directed (1 Cor. 12).

Strategic planning. Spiritual management is required for spiritual organization, and yet a ministry’s master plan should be the Master’s plan for that church (Winston et al., 1994). This is especially true for the Church, although little research has been done on the relationship of

planning to successful church ministry” (Winston et al., 1994b, p. 2). The importance of planning in the church helps keep the church focused on what is ahead. “A relevant strategy takes into account changes in the external environment, and it is realistic in terms of the organization’s strengths and weakness. The strategy should reflect the core mission and high-priority objectives of the organization” (Yukl, 2013, p. 298). Developing a strategy allows the leadership to put before the church where they believe God is calling them.

Yukl (2013) lays out guidelines for a leadership team to develop a competitive strategy to help lead the ministry. He states that these steps overlap each other and should not be rigid first, second, and third. ... These guidelines are as follows:

1. Determine long-term objectives and priorities.
2. Learn what clients and customers need and want.
3. Learn about the products and activities of competitors.
4. Assess current strengths and weaknesses.
5. Identify core competencies.
6. Evaluate the need for a major change in strategy.
7. Identify promising strategies.
8. Evaluate the likely outcomes of a strategy.
9. Involve other executives in selecting a strategy (pp. 299-302).

The responsibility of ministers and laypeople that help lay out the strategy for the church will improve the church and its ministries.

Planning has many advantages. It allows the church to see the changes that are taking place in society. It will enable the church to take advantage of the changing world and what is happening around her. It also helps the staff know the direction the church is going so that ministries and outreach can be planned and enacted to help disciple the believer and reach a world for Christ (Winston et al., 1994b, p. 6).

“Most pastors have minimal management education and experience before entering active ministry and want to spend their time performing pastoral functions for which they are

trained” (Winston et al., 1994, p. 9). Most churches in America have less than 200 members, yet there is still a need for planning. The importance of seminaries training their students on how to plan and help a church to plan is vital to lead even small congregations.

The planning of a strategy is just the beginning. One must know how to implement the plan. Ministers may know how to make a plan, but the challenge comes with communicating and implementing it (Malphurs, 2013, p. 285). Turning a plan into action takes a skill. Often, the leader will procrastinate, waiting for the right time to take action (Malphurs, 2013, p. 286). The planning is only as good as the ability to communicate it and implement it. Malphurs (2013) states that implementing the strategic plan is important for seven reasons.

1. Accomplishes the strategic plan.
2. Maintains ministry momentum.
3. Wards off complacency.
4. Addresses the problem of time.
5. Keeps the team on track.
6. Nourishes faith in the process.
7. Heightens optimism (pp. 286-288).

The pastor, the shepherd, and the church leader need to be the ones to implement the plan. He should surround himself with a great team, but the people want to hear from the leader (Malphurs, 2013, p. 288). “Available evidence show that most public and private organizations can be significantly improved, at an acceptable cost, but that we often make terrible mistakes when we try because history has simply not prepared us for transformational challenges” (Kotter, 2012, p. 19). If ministers are not taught how to plan, they will fail in leading.

Coaching and mentoring. Studies have found coaching/mentoring to be valuable, useful and practical, benefiting both the recipients and the organization; however, one questioned the effectiveness of such interventions, while others identified that effectiveness related differently to different characteristics and qualities of the Coach/Mentor (Hammond, 2016, p. 186). “It has

been said that evaluating coaching/mentoring interventions is notoriously difficult” (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002). “Mentoring is a relationship in which a more experienced manager helps a less experienced protégé” (Yukl, 2013, p. 391). Mentoring is the process of bringing someone along and training, encouraging, counseling, and challenging him to accomplish a task.

Mentoring is not always successful (Yukl, 2013, p. 391). “Research on conditions likely to increase the effectiveness of mentoring suggests that informal mentoring is usually more successful than a formal mentoring program” (Noe et al., 2002). The idea is that when mentoring is voluntary, it is more effective (Yukl, 2013, p. 392). Mentoring helps bring along the newbie to understand the organization and adjust to what is going on. “Arguably the most useful outcomes in the pastoral ministry are the minister’s own sense of efficacy, arising out of learning, improved performance, increase of resilience and resourcefulness, and most poignantly development and maturity” (Hammond, 2016, p. 199).

Coaching is slightly different than mentoring. “An executive coach is not a permanent mentor, and the coach is usually employed for a limited period of time ranging from a few months to a few years” (Yukl, 2013, p. 392). Instead, coaches provide advice about how to handle certain situations or challenges. A coach may be helpful when one is about to enact significant changes. A coach is usually someone older with experience that is useful to help the minister with current challenges.

“Leaders need to provide coaching, because no one ever got to be the best without the constructive feedback, probing questions, and active teaching by respecting coaches” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 240). Leaders need to come alongside and make themselves available to younger leaders. Without the passing on of knowledge, younger leaders are doomed to make mistakes that could be avoided if a coach helped him through the process. Coaching stretches

“people to grow and develop their capabilities, and it provides them with opportunities to both hone and enhance their skills in challenging assignments” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 242).

Organizational communication. Nicotera (2019) discusses organizational communication and culture.

“An organization is a culturally suffused, living system of interconnected communicative relationships among a conglomerate of interdependent coalitions, composed themselves of interconnected communicative relationships and bound together by their homage to a common mission and dependence on a common resource base, with multiple and often incompatible instrumental and interactive goals and objectives” (p. 10).

Nicotera continues “At its simplest core, communication can be defined as a symbolic process of creating and sharing meaning” (p. 3). Nicotera further states, “As a set of human phenomena, communication is contextual and transactional, the parties simultaneously and continually influencing one another as their interaction constitutes meaning” (p. 4). Therefore, learning how to communicate with others is vital in presenting the strategy and how one is planning on carrying it out.

Rogala & Bialowas (2016) recognize that communication in ministry or a company needs to take into consideration three areas. First,

“systems in which communicative interactions should help achieve better cooperation between individuals, in line with the interests of the company. ... They also represent a social structure in which roles are defined and a hierarchy is established. ... The final aspect which should be considered, according to these authors, refers to contemporary economic conditions” (p. 36).

Ministers that are good communicators can inspire people at all levels. Northouse (2016) states that, “Possessing impressive theatrical skills and great presence, communicators are very effective in building alliances and enlisting the support of other people” (p. 322). According to Mohler (2012), the leader’s most essential skill is the ability to communicate. He states, “Leadership does not happen until communication happens” (p. 91). Ministers will spend most

of their time communicating; communicating the gospel, communicating the vision God has placed on his heart, communicating truth. Those that are watching the leader will know if that leader really believes what he is talking about (Mohler, 2012, p. 94).

Paul communicates his purpose and what he wanted to communicate:

“And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.” (NASB, 2020, 1 Cor. 2:1-5).

“The effective leader understands that the message has to be communicated again and again” (Mohler, 2012, p. 96). Jesus, the Master communicator, used parables to share spiritual truths in different ways to communicate the profound truths that transform lives. Peter communicated multiple times the reality of the resurrection in Acts. Paul, as stated above, was a great communicator of spiritual truths.

Teaching future ministers the ability to communicate in the church's organization is essential to convey to the membership all important issues. Understanding the local church's organization and how to communicate to the people that make up that church will help the minister be successful and keep the congregation from having any misunderstandings.

God has called the minister to be prepared for the battle of ministry. Ministers are told to “put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (NASB, 2020, Eph. 6:11). The training of seminary in the above areas will help the minister stand firm and withstand the many “flaming missiles of the evil one” (vs. 16).

Rationale for Study and Gap in Literature

There seems to be a gap in the literature when it comes to determining if pastors coming out of seminary are adequately prepared to take on the role of a leader in a church. There are

reasons pastors are leaving the ministry – burnout, family issues, conflict, financial, and marital problems (Barfoot et al., 2007; Powell, 2008; Hessel, 2015; Shupe et al., 2000; Hall, 2004; Elkington, 2013). There is little said about seminary training and if pastors feel they were prepared for the job.

Statistics show that on average, three pastors leave the ministry every day and go into some other field of vocation (Elkington, 2013, p. 1). Many of them are being forced to resign or are terminated. This researcher is examining if there is a correlation of these men coming out of seminary unprepared and being forced to resign or being terminated.

Profile of the Current Study

Pastors are being forced out of churches at an alarming rate. “Churches expect seminary graduates immediately upon graduation to lead churches in an effective way” (Cannon, 2015, p. 60). When this does not happen, pastors are being forced out of the church, and many are leaving the ministry altogether. This study will seek to better understand this phenomenon.

Granted there are other reasons pastors are leaving churches – burnout (Mazzarella, 2006), stress and coping (Placido Jr., 2002), financial (Barfoot et al., 2007), and family issues (Koenig et al., 2012) but the sad commentary is that many are not leaving voluntarily but are being forced out (Hicks, 2010; Hollins, 2018).

God has called these leaders to serve Him and to lead or shepherd the flock under his care. They leave seminary with great hopes and anticipation as they enter what they believe to be a life’s calling. They have been taught the truths of the Scriptures. They have their theology, for the most part, down. They understand there will be challenges and difficulties. Many of them have never dealt with control issues and conflict in the local church. Now that they are in it, how are they going to handle it?

As a note, seminaries can train but they cannot control the personality type, decisions made by those who graduate, or the communication skills needed. This study is not to say that all forced terminations or voluntary resignations are the fault of the seminary but are there contributing factors that need to be addressed?

When God called Moses, Joshua, David, and the disciples there was a training period to help them accomplish what they were called to do. Moses spent forty years in Egypt being educated in organizational structure, military strategy, and how to lead a large country. He then spent forty years in the wilderness learning the places in the desert to find water and lead sheep. Finally, he was ready for his final forty years of leading two million Israelites from Egypt to the edge of the Promised Land. One finds that during those last forty years, Moses continued to learn valuable leadership lessons from others (Jethro, his father-in-law, Exodus 18:13-27).

Joshua spent forty years under the mentorship of Moses to learn how to run a military and lead people so when he took over for Moses, he was able to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land and begin to conquer it. God reminded him that He would constantly be by his side as he led the people.

David spent time in the king's house. He was able to watch how a king conducted business both positively and negatively. Later while he was on the run from Saul, God taught him how to trust Him as he began to lead a band of men. David learned to wait for God's timing and received advice throughout his life.

The disciples spent three years with the greatest leader ever, Jesus. They were trained and mentored and taught how to communicate God's truth to the people. They experienced love in action as Jesus ministered to the needs of the people.

So, the question this research begs to ask and to answer is “Are the seminaries today preparing the pastors of tomorrow for handling the future challenges of the church?”

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Every year between 18,000 and 20,000 pastors leave the ministry (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams, 2012, p. 1; Tanner, 2000). Every month over 1,500 pastors are walking away or are being terminated from the pastorate. As leaders called by God to lead a church, are pastors and ministers being adequately trained in seminary and Bible colleges to work with the people they are called to shepherd? This research sought to determine what seminary-related factors are perceived to be either positively or negatively correlated with this problem and if seminaries are and can address those factors to help the next generation of full-time ministers lead successful ministries.

Research Design Synopsis

The Problem

Because so many pastors and ministers are experiencing either being forced out of the ministry or voluntarily leaving, seminary leadership must examine the reasons behind the terminations to better support the preparation of pastors. Based on the findings of Kiedis (2009) and others, it appears seminarians are graduating with limited leadership training, especially on how to appropriately handle the challenges they face in pastoring today's church. "Signs of dissatisfaction with the seminary in general and leadership development training models, in particular, have been appearing in educational research for the last twenty-five years" (Kiedis, 2009, p. 3). Given this situation, seminary leaders should be asking these two questions: Are there any contributing factors in the leadership training of full-time ministers with a seminary degree, the MDiv or MA, who have been either forced to resign, resigned voluntarily, or were forced out of the ministry? And, if so, in response, can seminaries better prepare and assist prospective ministry leaders for survival in the real-world of ministry?

Fifty percent of the ministers starting out will not last five years. One out of every ten ministers will actually retire as a minister in some form. And 4,000 new churches begin each year while 7,000 churches close (Lane, 2014). In the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), there is, on average, over 1,000 forced terminations annually (Blosch, 2006). These numbers help identify the problem at hand, the indication seems to be there is a sign of short or interrupted ministry tenure for seminary-trained pastors.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research was to understand the seminary-related factors that may or may not be perceived as contributing to forced and voluntary termination of full-time ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches by collecting data from full-time ministers who are a part of the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC) and others who are serving in a Southern Baptist Church or have baptistic theology. Further, it looked at how seminary training can serve to prevent some terminations through adequate or enhanced leadership training.

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the perceived reasons for termination that are identified by full-time ministers who experienced either forced or voluntary termination from their ministry position?

RQ2. To what degree, if any, do non-terminated full-time ministers perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle the diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

RQ3. To what degree, if any, do terminated full-time ministers perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle the diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

RQ4. To what degree, if any, do full-time ministers who voluntarily resigned from church ministry perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

RQ5. What, if any, is the relationship between termination, non-termination, and voluntary resignation and the seminary leadership training as perceived by ministers?

RQ6. What, if any, is the relationship between termination, non-termination, and voluntary resignation and the seminary degree earned as perceived by ministers?

Research Design and Methodology

This researcher used a quantitative descriptive research method approach to determine the factors leading to forced termination or voluntarily leaving a full-time ministry position. This researcher used a survey format sent to those serving in a Texas Baptist church, others from various states, and those holding to baptistic theology that had earned a seminary degree, most often the MDiv or MA degree, from an accredited institution. This researcher developed questions for the survey based on the research questions. The survey can be found in Appendix A. Face validity of the survey was determined by a panel of experts with minor modifications cleared through the dissertation supervisor. Any substantive modifications were resubmitted to the IRB for approval prior to circulation. The survey was sent via email to full-time ministers serving or having served in an SBTC church, other ministers from various states, and those with baptistic theological backgrounds.

A statistic testing method (Analysis of variance and t-tests) was used to determine significant differences in demographic sub-samples and identify correlations between participant responses and the degree earned. The researcher broke down the statistics and report on the findings using charts to answer all the research questions. Charts and graphs were developed to interpret the data, and the outcome reported, and explanations were given.

Population

The population for this study was full-time ministers that have served or are currently serving in a Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC) church affiliated with the Southern

Baptist Convention and have graduated from an accredited seminary. There are 3,586 churches and missions that make up the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention. The positions studied were that of the senior pastor, executive pastor, education minister, youth minister, or any other staff member who has obtained a seminary degree, most often though not exclusively the MDiv degree, from an accredited institution. The approximate size of the full-time ministerial population in the SBTC is five thousand.

Because of the lack of responses through the SBTC, the survey with the approval of the IRB was sent to ministers that are serving or have served in various states. This included Baptist ministers and those with baptistic theology that may not be serving in a Baptist church.

Sampling Procedures

The sample of this current research was made up of full-time and former ministers in the SBTC in the SBC who have graduated with a degree program from an accredited seminary and who have served or are serving in an SBC church. The survey was also sent out to various ministers that are currently serving in multiple states. All those surveyed held to a baptistic theology.

The Southern Baptist of Texas Convention was contacted and asked for a list of ministers who have or are serving in the church. It was then determined which full-time ministers are currently serving and if they have ever been asked to leave a church, forced to leave a church, or left the church voluntarily. The full-time ministers who are currently serving full-time and those who have been terminated, forced to resign or left the ministry were surveyed concerning their situation and asked to identify the reasons for their termination if he had experienced the challenge of being forced out of the ministry. The respondents were also asked about his perception of leadership training he received in seminary. Additionally, participants in the survey

were asked for names and emails of ministers known by current staff members of churches serving and have experienced being forced out of a place of ministry or who were no longer serving in full-time ministry because of forced termination or voluntary resignation. Based on those responses, surveys were then sent to those individuals.

Limitations of Generalization

This study was delimited to ministers who hold a seminary level degree, generally the MDiv degree or the MA degree, and are serving in Texas Baptist churches and various states that either is SBC ministers or hold to a baptistic ministry. This research applies to these groups specifically.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants following the IRB requirements and using the IRB informed consent template (see Appendix B and Appendix E).

This study demanded the highest level of confidentiality and voluntary participation due to the sensitive nature of the surveyed topic. In an effort to maintain confidentiality, each participant was assigned an identification number. Once assigned a number, the participant was unknown to the researcher for data collection purposes. Anonymity was maintained in collecting all data, and no names or identifying information was used in the dissertation. Where email addresses or other identifying information is utilized for contact purposes, complete confidentiality was maintained. The identification number was associated with data related to the participant's academic institution, degree earned, years served as a senior pastor or minister, current status as a pastor, and survey response.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used to gather information for this quantitative descriptive research was a survey designed to answer the research questions stated above. The questions that comprise the survey were designed by this researcher (Appendix A) and reviewed by IRB. Each question in the survey was formatted according to a Likert Scale (Stephanie, 2015).

The instrument was evaluated for face validity through the use of an expert panel. This panel was comprised of experienced pastoral leaders who served or are serving in full-time ministry. The panel consisted of five ministers who obtained, at a minimum, an MDiv degree and who have at least fifteen years of ministry experience in a church. The panel included two ministers who have not experienced forced termination, two who have experienced forced termination and one who has experienced forced termination but now holds a PhD in Organizational Leadership and teaches in a Christian college.

Once the panel had validated the survey, this researcher took the additional step of pilot testing the survey with five pastors in order to receive additional feedback before the survey was sent out to those serving in a church in the SBTC. It was later sent out to those serving in an SBC church in various states and those who hold a baptistic theology. This would further validate the survey by gaining input on the clarity of the questions and instructions. Minor revisions not impacting the content were cleared through the student's dissertation supervisor. Any significant changes or revisions to the survey were resubmitted to the IRB for approval.

Validity

Validity "is the extent to which the scores from a measure represent the variable they are intended to" (Price et al., 2015, p. 90). "Current descriptions of research validity identify four types that can be used to evaluate interpretations of research findings—measurement, statistical

conclusion, internal, and external” (Cor, 2016, p. 391). With respect to measurement validity, it “involves judging the extent to which measures employed in a study are valid for their intended use” (Cor, 2016 p. 393). Evaluating statistical conclusion validity “refers to judging the extent to which statistical inference about the presence of a relationship or difference between two variables is ‘real’ or attributable to chance alone” (Cor, 2016, p. 393). Internal

“involves judging the extent to which causal interpretations are possible based on study design characteristics such as how interventions were administered, how comparison groups, if present, were formed (random assignment vs. pre-existing), or whether or not pre-tests are used, among other reasons” (Cor, 2016, p. 393).

External validity is “about judging the extent to which study interpretations are expected to generalize to other participants, settings, etc.” (Cor, 2016, p. 393).

Validity in this study was achieved by using an expert panel and a pilot study. Because the findings were simple descriptive statistics drawn from self-reported Likert-scale items, there was little concern regarding the validity of the data and findings. Causation is not being determined in this study; thus, face validity was to be an adequate internal validation procedure for this self-reported questionnaire. The use of an expert panel and pilot testing was to lend external validity to this study.

This researcher utilized the answers provided by the survey sent to ministers serving in the SBTC. They are currently serving or have experienced forced termination or have voluntarily left their ministry position. The answers to the survey were used to build a statistical report using statisticians from the University of Georgia (UGA). This report allowed this researcher to systematically examine the information and present it in an understandable way.

Reliability

Reliability “refers to the consistency of a measure. Psychologists consider three types of consistency: over time (test-retest reliability), across items (internal consistency), and across

different researchers (inter-rater reliability)” (Price et al., 2015, p. 87). This researcher will lean heavily on internal consistency reliability because it “measures how consistently participants respond to one set of items” (Sauro, 2015a). Reliability was measured by calculating the Cronbach Alpha $\alpha \geq 0.85$ (Sauro, 2015a; The Open University, 2019.).

Research Procedures

Liberty University’s IRB guidelines for conducting research with human subjects were strictly followed, and IRB approval was obtained before any data collection. The researcher ensured that all categories of ethical issues in the research were addressed, which include protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues.

As part of the process, the student requested permission from the SBTC to survey its ministers. That request letter is included in Appendix C. Once obtained, the approval letter was included in Appendix D. As part of the IRB application process, all materials were submitted to the IRB for review. Once permission was granted by the IRB of Liberty University, this researcher requested from the SBTC an email list of all ministers serving in churches that are a part of the SBTC. Since an email list was declined to this researcher. A request was then made and accepted to send out the survey to the membership from the SBTC. As part of the survey, informed consent was requested from the participants. Upon gained approval, the survey was open, and a list of questions provided. The participants had four weeks to respond to the survey. Using a snowball sampling method, a final question was asked requesting information concerning someone who the minister knows who has experienced forced termination or voluntarily left the ministry. Once this researcher received the information, an email with the link to the survey was sent to those individuals.

Once four weeks were completed, the answers to the survey were compiled, and the responses were analyzed statistically. Demographic questions were included to help determine certain aspects of the minister's experience and education. Specific questions related to the seminary experience and training helped determine a seminary's ability to prepare the pastor/minister for ministry. The participants in the survey were given the option to receive the results of the research. All answers given in the survey were confidential and represented by a case number.

Because of the lack of responses, the second round of emails was sent out to those serving in an SBC church in various states or others with like viewpoints. After five weeks of waiting for more responses, the researcher took the results and passed all the information to UGA statisticians.

As the results were tabulated, each answer was cataloged and laid out on a spreadsheet. These survey answers included tables. In some cases, figures showed visually how the participants viewed their seminary leadership training and how well their seminary was perceived to have prepared ministers for a termination situation in ministry. Seminary names and identifying information were not included in the study. Pseudonyms were used in reporting any differences between individual seminary findings.

While the participants' responses indicated which seminary was attended and their current ministry context where they are serving, that data was not reported in any manner in which any organization, individual, or institution was identified. This researcher used this data to determine how respondents perceive their education and context factored in their termination experience.

Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

Data Analysis

The sample of participants came from a list of ministers provided by the SBTC. Participants self-select by voluntarily downloading and completing the survey from the Survey Monkey platform. This researcher expected a response rate of fifteen percent. A lack of responses caused this researcher to take additional measures to try and get more responses to the survey. COVID-19 produced many challenges while trying to accomplish the goal of getting responses to the survey. Upon receiving permission from the IRB to expand this researcher's list, the survey was sent to other ministers (both Southern Baptist and others) in different states, all holding to a baptistic theology. Each participant was emailed a link to the survey that contained the survey for the participant to answer. The participants' responses were examined and analyzed. The survey was divided into three major groups through a demographic question, those participants who have experienced forced termination, those who voluntarily resigned and those who have not experienced either. For each of these three groups, the entire survey was analyzed to determine the Mean and Standard Deviation of the data.

Once these tests were completed, the data between the three groups was analyzed using the same tests in order to measure any difference between the three groups. Additionally, for each of the three groups, each set of questions representing the research questions underwent similar analysis in order to obtain answers to each research question. These sets of data were compared between the terminated, voluntarily resigned and non-terminated group of participants.

Once the data had been analyzed, the findings regarding specific course offerings and degree programs represented by the participants in the survey were tabulated. Conclusions were drawn as to whether or not the participants believe their seminary adequately prepared them with

the leadership knowledge and skills necessary to minister within a church organization. Charts and figures were produced to illustrate these findings further.

In the case of those who left the pastoral ministry, data was presented as to the reasons for leaving the pastorate. Data was presented on the role of forced or voluntary resignation and other reasons identified by the participants. Data appeared in tables and figures appropriate to the findings gathered.

Statistical Procedures

According to Elliott and Woodward (2007), when dealing with information that is received from the descriptive survey, “the myriad of data values and fact to a few explanatory measures that will give you an idea of what’s going on and what conclusions are warranted” (p. 4). This descriptive information will give one the needed idea about the average level of “satisfaction and something of the variability of scores” (p. 4).

Upon completion of the survey, all responses were analyzed. The responses were divided into two groups: those who have been forcefully terminated or voluntarily terminated and those who have not been terminated. The research determined the mean and standard deviation of the data. The analysis was performed in the R (version 4.0.5) environment, and packages tidyverse, ggplot2 was used to help with summarizing the information from the data collected. The statistical method used was the Fisher’s exact test of independence and ANOVA. Data for all six research questions were tabulated with responses presented for both the non-terminated and terminated minister.

Chapter Summary

This research was to help this writer understand what seminary-related factors may or may not contribute to termination, resignation, or non-termination from ministry positions. The

strain and stress of ministry can be a challenge, and speaking from twenty-eight years of experience, many of the practical lessons were not learned from seminary but the hard knocks and painful learning experiences of ministry. This study sought to determine if seminaries can do more to prepare seminarians for those realities.

The feedback gathered by the quantitative research allowed this researcher to develop a statistical analysis of how these ministers and former ministers view their seminary education as it pertains to preparing them for ministry.

Based on the responses given, the research showed if the pastors/ministers felt adequately prepared for the ministry and provided reasons for those who are no longer serving in the ministry. These responses produced quantitative responses that will enhance a seminary's approach to educating the next generation of pastors/ministers. The responses to the survey indicated how individuals perceived their level of preparation based on their seminary education.

This chapter provided the methodology design that was followed for this study. The plan was established to understand the factors influencing full-time ministers currently or those no longer serving in a church. The findings of this research were recorded in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The current research study sought to investigate whether seminary-related factors contribute to forced termination and voluntary resignations from full-time church ministers. To test this theory properly, the researcher examined the responses to the questionnaire (Appendix A). One challenge that needed to be overcome during this research was the mitigation of the global impact of COVID-19 including its impact on churches and church leaders. Significant delays and challenges were experienced while seeking to conduct this research. The original pool of candidates required appropriate expansion in order to include a large enough sample for consideration within this research.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

Initially, the researcher sent an email request (see Appendix C) to Dr. Kenneth Priest, Director of Convention Strategies of the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention, requesting access to those serving in ministry with connections with the SBTC. The request was to send a questionnaire out to all those serving to elicit their responses. The request for access to the email list was denied, but SBTC agreed to send out the questionnaire for the researcher.

An online service, www.surveymonkey.com, was employed to host and administrate the questionnaire and gather the responses for the current study. May 2020, a total of 5,353 emails were sent out by the SBTC to those serving in the ministry as part of the SBTC. Following the expiration date, June 8, 2020, a total of 21 questionnaires were completed online, which were far less than the desired responses needed to compile accurate research data. The total that opened the email was 2,398 individuals. According to Dr. Priest, the limited number of responses goes to the pandemic and the massive number of emails ministers received during this time.

The researcher requested from the IRB permission to expand the survey in the spring of 2021 with the desire to add to the responses received a year earlier. Permission was granted, and additional surveys were sent. After an extended time, an additional twenty-seven responded, giving the researcher a total of forty-eight subjects to examine. While not enough surveys were gathered to provide sound statistical analysis, the analysis of what was submitted was conducted in the hopes of offering some initial evidence as to the underlying issues causing so many forced terminations and/or voluntary departures. This researcher decided to take what he had and determine if there was beginning evidence of the type of leadership training one received in seminary.

Finally, the data was exported directly into the SPSS software program through Survey Monkey's own database management tool. Using a service from the University of Georgia, the information was sent to a statistician who performed the statistical analysis on the survey. Four weeks after UGA received the data, the results came in. The results are discussed below.

Demographic and Sample Data

In this section, the demographic data was given to all those who serve as ministers in the SBTC and ministers serving in various states, all holding to a baptistic theology. Among all 48 subjects with seminary degrees, 26 have master-level degrees, and 22 have higher-level degrees.

Data Analysis and Findings

Forty-seven ministers out of 48 have been in a full-time ministry position, among which eight are no longer in such positions. For the following research questions, this researcher was interested in those 48 ministers who have experience in a full-time ministry position.

Among all 48 ministers in full-time positions, 28 never experienced any type of termination. In contrast, six experienced forced and voluntary termination, five only experienced forced termination, and eight only experienced voluntary termination.

Table 3

Forced termination, voluntary resignation, and no termination

	No resignation	Voluntary resignation
No termination	28	8
Forced termination	5	6

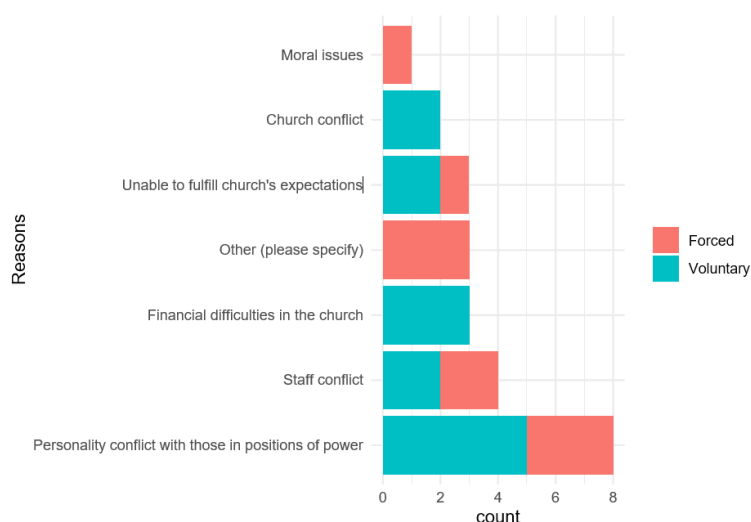
Taking the above data, this researcher began to look at the research questions and determine how those responses would show the statistical data on the importance of leadership training in seminary.

RQ 1: What are the perceived reasons for termination that are identified by full-time ministers who experienced either forced or voluntary termination from their ministry position?

Among all the 25 termination events experienced by 19 different (11 forced termination and 14 voluntary terminations), below are the survey results. These tables reveal the perceived reasons these ministers put forth that either experienced forced termination or voluntarily resigned from full-time ministry.

Figure 1

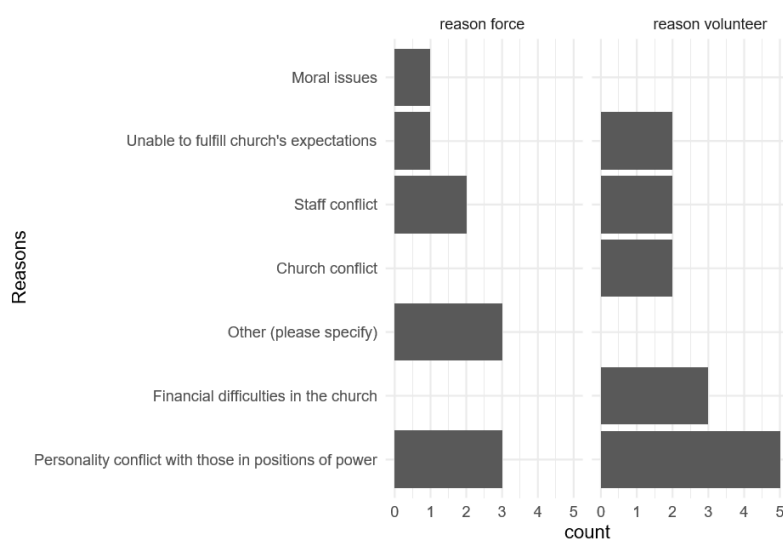
Perceived reasons for forced termination and voluntary resignation.



Upon further examination, the breakdown between forced termination and voluntary resignation is found in the following chart.

Figure 2

Reason for forced termination and reason for the voluntary resignation.



The three other reasons given in the survey for the minister being forced to resign were a combination of power play and church expectations; the minister found out the church had a

secret bank account and only the deacons were aware of it – when the minister informed the church, the deacons fired him; and finally, a church in Virginia did not like the youth minister leading black students to the Lord and then attending the church, so the church fired him.

Given the above information, one can see that the majority of those forced to leave or to voluntarily resign found it challenging to deal with those in power at the church.

RQ 2: To what degree, if any, do non-terminated full-time ministers perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle the diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

There were five questions from the survey that related to this research topic (Question 14 asked about education preparation in general; Question 15 asked about leadership training for handling conflicts; Question 16 asked about leadership training for making changes, and Question 17 asked about leadership training for handling power struggles). Twenty-eight ministers with seminary degrees were never terminated. To qualify the degree of preparation, this researcher assigned scores to each level of preparation, with High = 3, Adequate = 2, Somewhat = 1, and Not Sufficient = 0. Below he shows the sample mean scores and their 95% confidence level.

Tables 4

Count of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for non-terminated or resigned ministers

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
Q14	4	14	8	2
Q15	1	7	13	7
Q16	2	8	14	4
Q17	1	8	10	9

Table 5

Proportions of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for non-terminated or resigned ministers

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
Q14	0.1429	0.5000	0.2857	0.0714
Q15	0.0357	0.2500	0.4643	0.2500
Q16	0.0714	0.2857	0.5000	0.1429
Q17	0.0357	0.2857	0.3571	0.3214

A confidence interval shows a range of possible population mean score based on the sample at hand. If the confidence interval does not contain zero, then it means the population mean score is probably non-zero.

Table 6

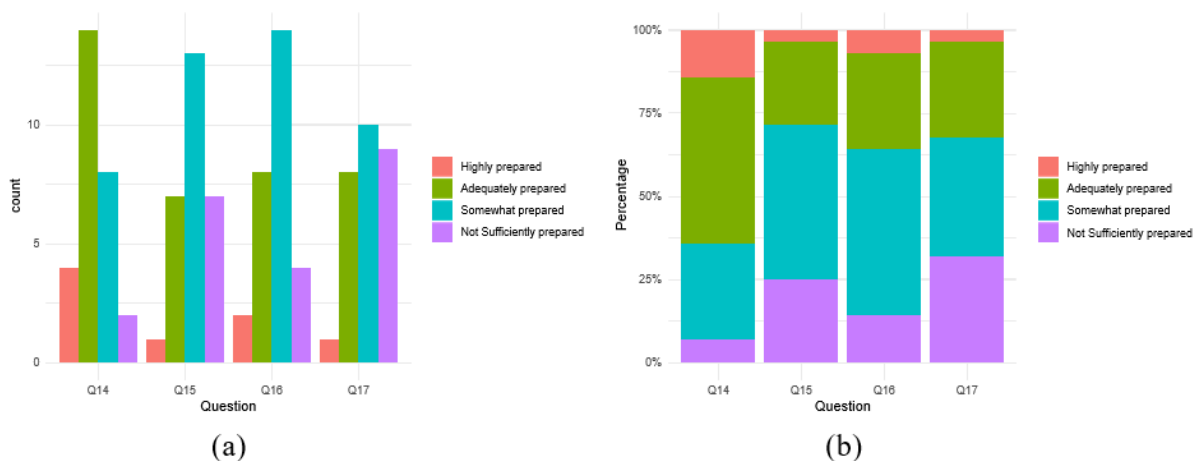
Perceived Preparation scores toward Q14 and Q17 for non-terminated or resigned ministers

Question	Sample Mean score	Lower Boundary	Upper Boundary
1 Q14	1.7143	1.4002	2.0284
2 Q15	1.0714	0.7561	1.3868
3 Q16	1.2857	0.9716	1.5998
4 Q17	1.0357	0.6940	1.3774

The following figure will help visualize the above results of RQ2 to help one look at the information in a different way.

Figure 3

Count and proportions of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for non-terminated or resigned ministers.



From the proportional plot, one can see that for Question 14, more than half of the ministers perceive their education as adequate or highly prepared, while for Questions 15, 16, and 17, less than half of them perceived their education as adequate or highly prepared. From the scores, one can also see that Question 14 received the highest score, while Questions 15 and 17 received the lowest scores.

RQ 3: To what degree, if any, do terminated full-time ministers perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle the diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

Eleven ministers experienced forced termination. Again, this researcher shows Questions 14, 15, 16, 17 deal with ministers' perceived preparation in the form of count and proportional tables and visualization of the tables.

Tables 7

Count of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for terminated ministers

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
Q14	3	4	4	0
Q15	0	3	4	4
Q16	0	4	4	3
Q17	0	1	5	5

Table 8

Proportions of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for terminated ministers

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
Q14	0.2727	0.3636	0.3636	0.0000
Q15	0.0000	0.2727	0.3636	0.3636
Q16	0.0000	0.3636	0.3636	0.2727
Q17	0.0000	0.0909	0.4545	0.4545

Similarly, to quantify the degree of preparation, values were assigned to each level of preparation.

Table 9

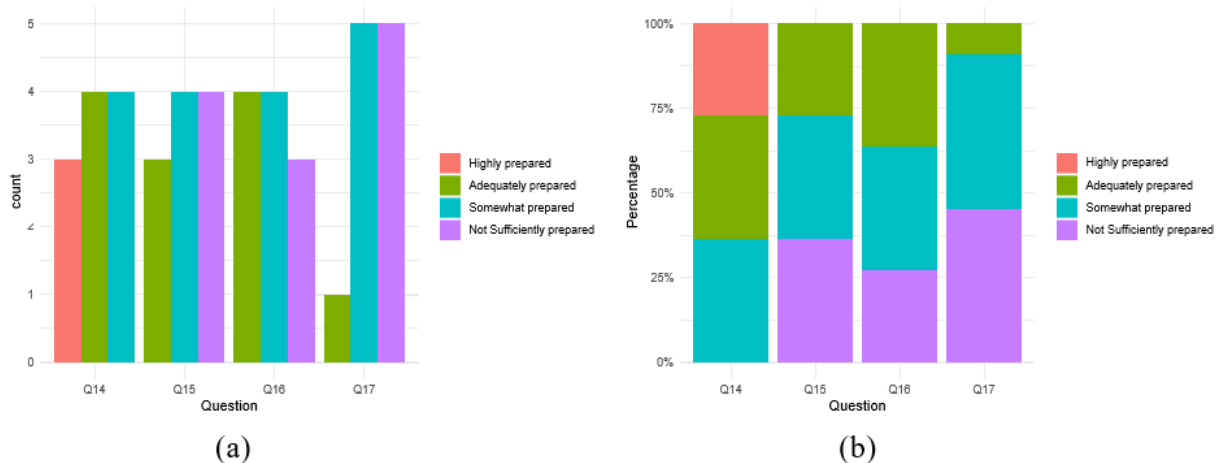
Perceived preparation scores toward Q14 & Q17 for terminated ministers

Question	Sample Mean score	Lower Boundary	Upper Boundary
Q14	1.9091	3507	2.4675
Q15	0.9091	3507	1.4675
Q16	1.0909	5325	1.6493
Q17	0.6364	1834	1.0893

For those ministers who experienced termination, the percentages of “not sufficiently prepared” are slightly higher in Questions 15, 16, and 17 (greater than 25%). None of them felt highly prepared in those questions. This sample suggests that terminated ministers, in general, perceive that they were not especially well prepared for the power struggles that they experienced in the church (Question 17).

Figure 4

Count and proportions of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for terminated ministers.



RQ 4: To what degree, if any, do full-time ministers who voluntarily resigned from church ministry perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

Fourteen ministers of the forty-eight experienced a voluntary resignation. Below are their perceptions of how well they felt prepared by their seminary education based on the survey questions.

Tables 10

Count of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for resignation ministers

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
Q14	4	4	5	1
Q15	1	3	4	6
Q16	1	3	5	5
Q17	1	1	3	9

Table 11

Proportions of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for resignation ministers

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
Q14	0.2857	0.2857	0.3571	0.0714
Q15	0.0714	0.2143	0.2857	0.4286
Q16	0.0714	0.2143	0.3571	0.3571
Q17	0.0714	0.0714	0.2143	0.6429

Table 12

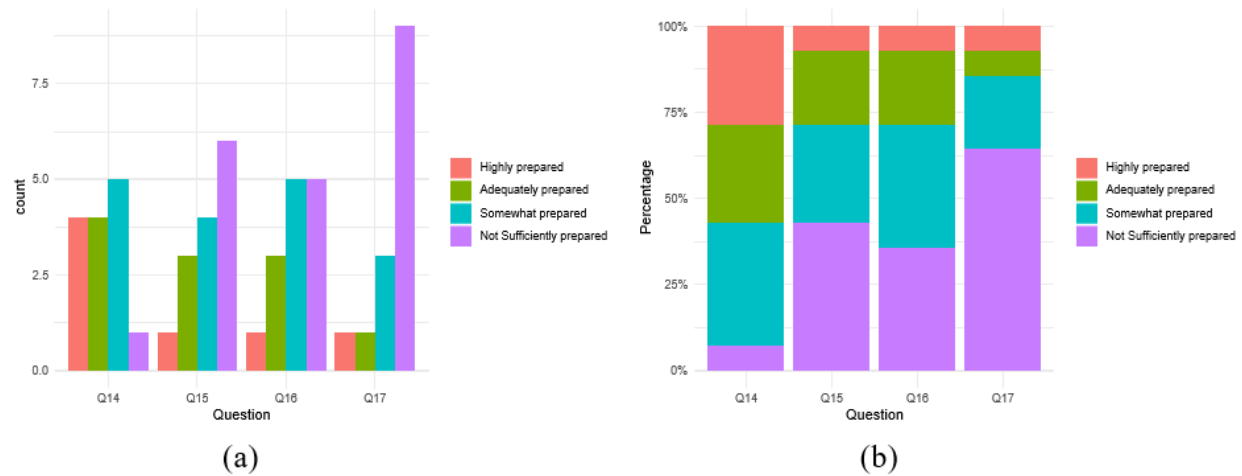
Perceived Preparation scores toward Q14 & Q17 for resigned ministers

Question	Sample Mean score	Lower Boundary	Upper Boundary
Q14	1.7857	1.2228	2.3486
Q15	0.9286	0.3528	1.5044
Q16	1.0000	0.4453	1.5547
Q17	0.5714	0.0301	1.1128

It is indicated that for ministers who voluntarily resigned, an even higher percentage is “not sufficiently prepared.” This sample suggests that voluntarily terminated ministers, in general, perceive that they are not well prepared for power struggles in the church, according to Question 17.

Figure 5

Count and proportions of choices toward Q14 & Q17 for voluntarily resign ministers.



RQ 5: What, if any, is the relationship between termination, non-termination, and voluntary resignation, and seminary leadership training as perceived by ministers?

As mentioned earlier, six ministers have experienced both forced termination and voluntary resignation. To compare the seminary leadership training, this researcher will only assign “forced termination” to those six subjects, which means he splits the subjects into three groups: non-terminated (26), terminated (11), and voluntarily resigned (8). Next, the researcher compared the group-wise responses for Questions 14-17. For each question, he presents the count contingency table, proportional table, table of mean preparation scores, and proportional plot for visualization.

To see if there is any relation between status and preparation perceived, he used Fisher's Exact Test (a version of Chi-square test of independence for small sample sizes) on the contingency count table above and ANOVA test on the scores.

What follows is a more detailed analysis of question 14: To what degree did your seminary education prepare you for full-time ministry?

Tables 13

Count of choices toward Q14

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
resignation	2	2	3	1
termination	3	4	4	0
non-termination	4	14	8	2

Table 14

Proportions of Choices toward Q14

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
resignation	0.2500	0.2500	0.3750	0.1250
termination	0.2727	0.3636	0.3636	0.0000
non-termination	0.1429	0.5000	0.2857	0.0714

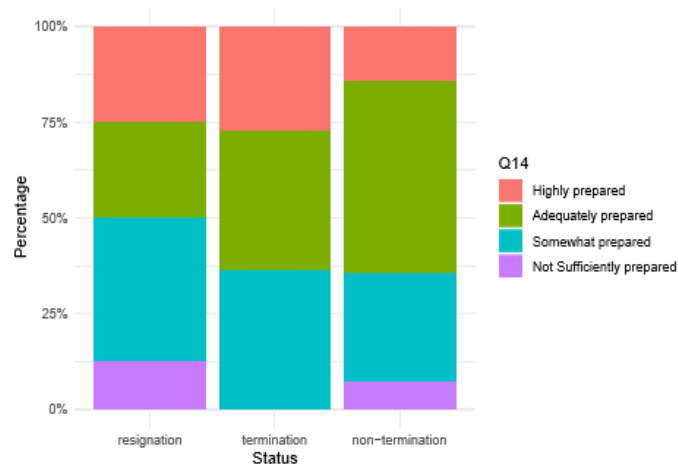
Table 15

Mean scores toward Q14

Status	Sample Mean Score	Lower Boundary	Upper Boundary
1 Resignation	1.6250	0.7383	2.5117
2 Termination	1.9091	1.3507	2.4675
3 Non-termination	1.7143	1.4002	0.0714

Figure 6

Count and proportions of choices and mean scores toward Q14.

**Table 16**

Independence test and ANOVA results

Fisher's Exact Test for Count Data

data: table (Q14\$status, Q14\$prep)

p-value = 0.7245

alternative hypothesis: two.sided

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
Status	2	0.44	0.2189	0.296	0.745
Residuals	44	32.50	0.7386		

Based on both tests' results, the sample difference of perceived preparation among the three groups was not significant enough to show any trend. That is to say; the three groups have similar perceived general preparation.

Question 15: To what degree do you believe that you received adequate leadership training while in seminary to help you handle various conflicts experienced in the church?

Tables 17*Count and proportions of choices and mean scores toward Q15*

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
resignation	1	1	2	4
termination	0	3	4	4
non-termination	1	7	13	7

Table 18*Proportions of choices toward Q15*

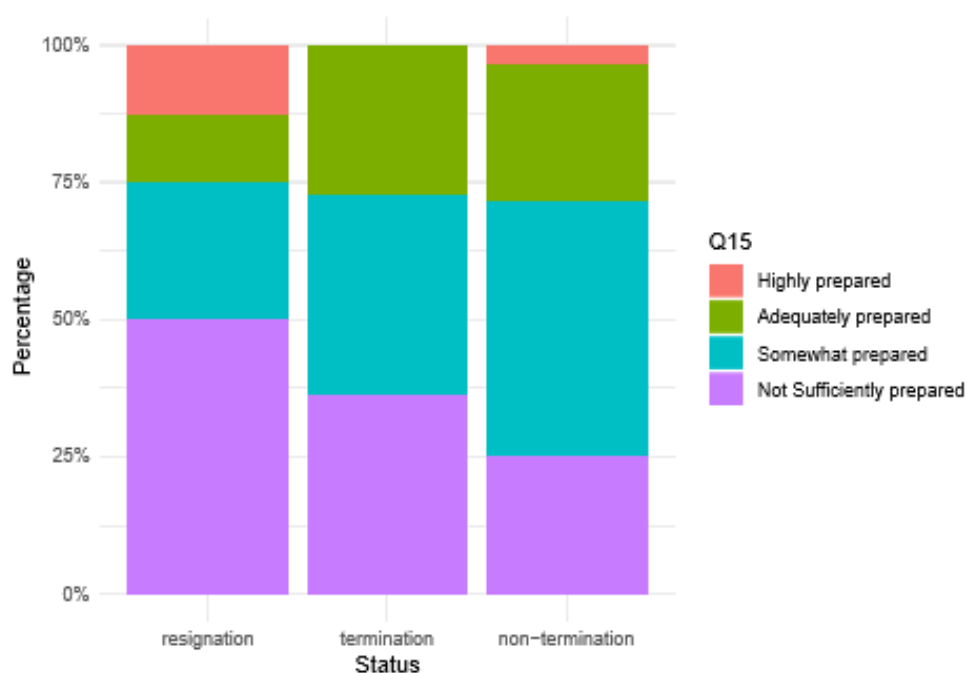
	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
resignation	0.1250	0.1250	0.2500	0.5000
termination	0.0000	0.2727	0.3636	0.3636
non-termination	0.0357	0.2500	0.4643	0.2500

Table 19*Mean scores toward Q15*

Status	Sample Mean Score	Lower Boundary	Upper Boundary
1 Resignation	0.8750	-0.0664	1.8164
2 Termination	0.9091	0.3507	1.4675
3 Non-terminations	1.0714	0.7561	1.3868

Figure 7

Count and proportions of choices and mean scores toward Q15.



In the sample, one sees that half of the resigned ministers felt unprepared. However, statistical tests showed that one does not have enough evidence that the three groups had different perceived training.

Table 20

Fishers Exact Test for Count Data

data: table (Q15\$status, Q15\$prep)

p-value = 0.6347

alternative hypothesis: two.sided

	Df	Sum	Sq Mean	F value	Pr(>F)
Status	2	0.36	0.1794	0.235	0.792
Residuals	44	33.64	0.7646		

Question 16: To what degree do you believe that you received adequate leadership training in seminary to help you lead a church to make necessary changes?

Tables 21*Count choices toward Question 16*

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
resignation	1	1	3	3
termination	0	4	4	3
non-termination	2	8	14	4

Table 22*Proportions of choices toward Q16*

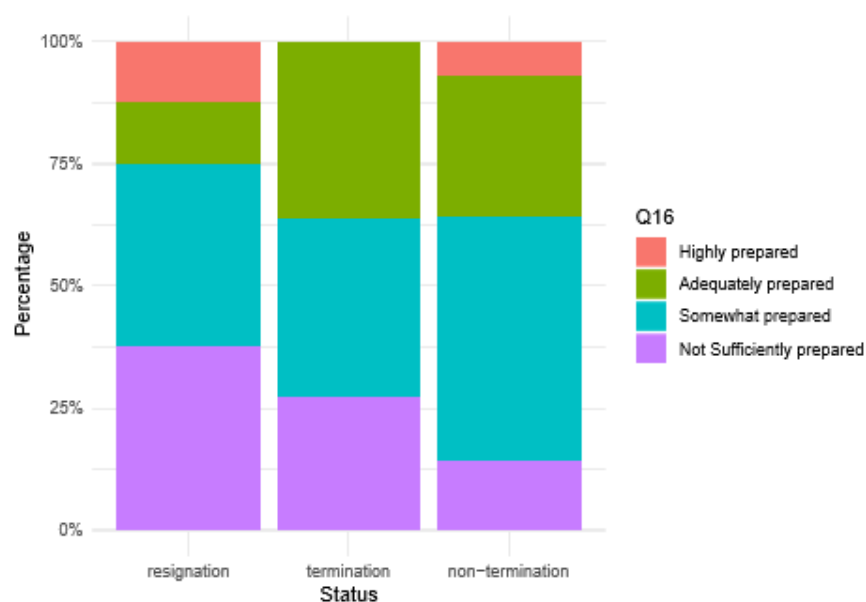
	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
resignation	0.1250	0.1250	0.3750	0.3750
termination	0.0000	0.3636	0.3636	0.2727
non-termination	0.0714	0.2857	0.5000	0.1429

Table 23*Mean scores toward Q16*

Status	Sample Mean Score	Lower Boundary	Upper Boundary
1 Resignation	1.0000	0.1063	1.8937
2 Termination	1.0909	0.5325	1.6493
3 Non-termination	1.2857	0.9716	1.5998

Figure 8

Count and proportions of choices and mean scores toward Q16.



The result for Question 16 is similar to that of Question 15. And again, the statistical tests showed the sample does not have enough evidence that the three groups have different perceived preparation. But there are some preliminary evidence that show that those who resigned voluntarily view their seminary leadership education as not sufficiently (37.5%) or somewhat prepared (37.5%) for being prepared to lead a church through necessary change or handling conflict in the church. That is 75% of those who resigned indicate that they did not perceive they were well prepared to lead a church to change or handle conflict situations in the church.

For those who have experienced forced termination the preliminary results here show that 27% felt that they were not adequately prepared and 36% felt they were somewhat adequately prepared to help usher in needed change for the church. That is a 63% statement of not adequately to somewhat adequately prepared to lead the church to change. Seventy-three percent of those who answered question 15 concerning their ability to handle conflict said that they were not adequately to somewhat adequately prepared to deal with conflict in the church.

The indication seems to begin to point to a somewhat interesting note. Those who voluntarily resigned so as not to face a forced termination view their lack of seminary preparedness higher than those who experienced a forced termination. And those who have never experienced forced termination indicate with a 78.5% to being somewhat to adequately prepared to lead a church to bring about necessary change and 71% said they were somewhat to adequately prepared to handle conflict in the church. There seems to be a trend to indicate from those who voluntarily resign to experience a forced termination to those who have never been terminated as to how well they perceive being prepared by leadership courses in seminary.

Table 24

Fisher's Exact Test for Count Data

data: table (Q16\$status, Q16\$prep)

p-value = 0.589

alternative hypothesis: two.sided

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
Status	2	0.65	0.3266	0.441	0.647
Residuals	44	32.62	0.7414		

Question 17: To what degree do you believe that you received adequate leadership training while in seminary to enable you to handle power struggles within the church?

Tables 25

Count of choices toward Q17

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
resignation	1	1	1	5
termination	0	1	5	5
non-termination	1	8	10	9

Table 26
Proportions toward Q17

	Highly prepared	Adequately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not Sufficiently prepared
resignation	0.1250	0.1250	0.1250	0.6250
termination	0.0000	0.0909	0.4545	0.4545
non-termination	0.0357	0.2857	0.3571	0.3214

Table 27
Mean scores toward Q17

Status	Sample Mean Score	Lower Boundary	Upper Boundary
1 Resignation	0.7500	-0.2239	1.7239
2 Termination	0.6364	0.1834	1.0893
3 Non-termination	1.0357	0.6940	1.3774

Figure 9
Count and proportions of choices and mean scores toward Q17.

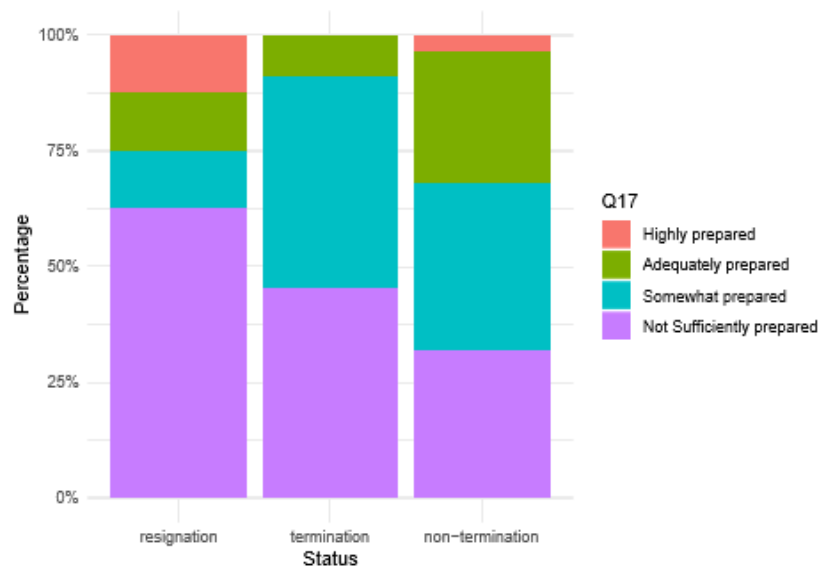


Table 28*Fisher's Exact Test for Count Data*

data: table(Q17\$status, Q17\$prep)

p-value = 0.3695

alternative hypothesis: two.sided

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
Status	2	1.46	0.7292	0.916	0.407
Residuals	44	35.01	0.7957		

The preliminary results with this question seems to indicate that when it comes to dealing with power struggles and one's ability to handle it there is a problem with the leadership training they received while in seminary. These results, while limited, indicate that those who have not experienced a forced termination struggled with being prepared. Sixty-eight percent said that they did not feel sufficiently to somewhat prepared to handle the power struggles that come with leading a church. Seventy-five percent of those who voluntarily resigned said that they felt not sufficiently to somewhat prepared to handle those same power struggles. Those who experienced a force termination (91%) said that they were not sufficiently to somewhat prepared to handle power struggles in the church. Once again, the preliminary results show that there is an upward shift from those experiencing termination to those who have never being terminated as to being prepared to handle power struggles in the church.

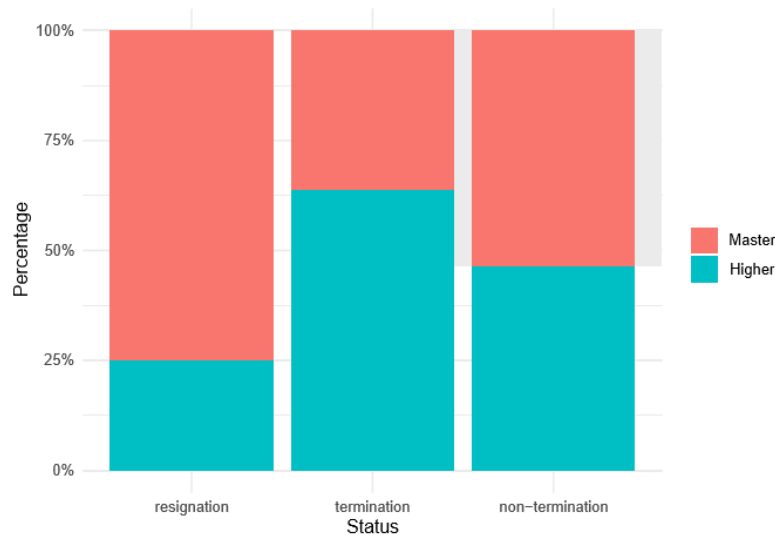
RQ 6: What, if any, is the relationship between termination, non-termination, voluntary resignation, and the seminary degree earned as perceived by the ministers?

Tables 29*Count of status vs degrees earned*

	Resignation	Termination	Non-termination
Master	6	4	15
Higher	2	7	13

Table 30*Proportion of status vs degree earned*

	Resignation	Termination	Non-termination
Master	0.75	0.3636	0.5357
Higher	0.25	0.6364	0.4643

Figure 10*Status vs Degree Earned.*

In the proportional plot above, terminated ministers have the highest proportion of higher degrees earned, and resigned ministers have the lowest proportion. With these initial results, the question must be asked, “Why do those (64%) who hold a higher degree than a masters, experience a greater termination rate?” One would assume that with more education, he would be more apt to handle the adversity that comes with ministering.

Table 31*Fisher’s Exact Test for Count Data*

```
data: table(RQ6$degrees_fac, RQ6$status)
p-value = 0.2774
alternative hypothesis: two.sided
```

The fisher’s exact test of independence suggests that this sample did not show any significant correlation between the degree earned and termination status.

Evaluation of the Research Design

This researcher concludes that first, most ministers do not think the leadership training made them well-prepared to handle the various conflicts and change situations experienced in the church, especially in handling power struggles. Second, a seminary degree earned is not associated with whether they experience any termination. Third, the mean scores of leadership training are generally the lowest for those who resigned and highest for those never experiencing termination. However, this researcher did not find any statistical correlation between training and status. Finally, the sample size was too small to achieve any statistical significance. More data needs to be collected to investigate the relationship between degree and termination status and leadership training and termination status.

The plan for this chapter was to detail statistically what was discussed in chapter three. Because of COVID-19 and the pandemic that resulted from it, the research results did not come to pass because of a lack of response to the survey that was sent out. May 2020, 5,353 emails were sent out by the SBTC to those serving in the ministry as part of the SBTC. Following the expiration date, June 8, 2020, completion deadline, the survey data was compiled using the appropriate tools available through Survey Monkey. A total of 21 questionnaires were completed online, which were far less than the desired responses needed to collect accurate research data. The total that opened the email was 2,398 individuals. When the researcher requested that the survey be resent, it was denied because SBTC would only send it out once.

Upon the advice of this researcher's dissertation supervisor, he needed to submit a change of venue to the IRB requesting that the survey be sent out to ministers in different states that either are serving in a Southern Baptist church or have a baptistic theology. Upon receiving permission to do so, more surveys were sent out. After two more months of sending out the

survey and receiving responses, this writer received twenty-seven more. This provided a total of forty-eight individuals that responded to the survey. The hope had been that he would have over one hundred responses to receive enough data to get enough feedback to answer the question – “Are there seminary-related contributing factors contributing to forced termination and voluntary resignations from full-time church ministers.”

Because of the pandemic and the lack of responses, this researcher took what information was available and, with the help of statisticians, built the tables and figures above to indicate what is happening with today’s ministers. These charts indicate the limited responses to the survey and the importance of following up with more research.

This researcher believes there is beginning evidence showing the need for seminaries to make changes by including leadership training to better prepares their students for full-time ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic that occurred in March 2020, the research to determine if there was a correlation between those who have experienced forced termination or voluntarily resignation and the seminary's ability to prepare ministers for today's church took longer than anticipated. This research experienced significant challenges, but the preliminary results begin to show some correlation with the perception of being fully prepared by the seminary and leading a church. During the pandemic, the church went through a significant transformation while many stopped attending in person and turned to watching the service online. Many churches had to quickly determine ways to produce the service and put it online for the church members to stay somewhat connected. Ministers were stretched to the limit trying to figure out how to minister to their people while navigating all challenges associated with COVID-19, which resulted in limited responses to the survey according to Dr. Priest of the SBTC.

This chapter will discuss the preliminary results of the research received from the 48 individuals who responded to the survey. This researcher encourages further research to take what was shown in chapter four and continue researching the leadership education requirements in today's seminary. Research in this area on preparing ministers for the work they are called to do and to determine if the lack of leadership training is a factor contributing in the increase of voluntary and/or forced termination.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research was to understand the seminary-related factors that may or may not be perceived as contributing to forced and voluntary termination of full-time ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches by

collecting data from full-time ministers who are a part of the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC) and others who are serving in a Southern Baptist Church or have baptistic theology. Further, it looked at how seminary training can serve to prevent some terminations through adequate or enhanced leadership training.

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the perceived reasons for termination identified by full-time ministers who experienced either forced or voluntary termination from their ministry position?

Because of the limited responses given, one cannot come to an accurate conclusion as to determine what the perceived reasons for termination are. The limited breakdown provided showed that the main reason for forced termination was a conflict with those in power positions in the church. The problem seems to indicate that working with those in positions of power and the different personalities that go with power roles can create challenges for the minister as he works to lead the church in his area of ministry.

Those who experienced forced termination or voluntarily resigned indicated that they felt somewhat prepared (5) and not sufficiently prepared (5) by the seminary leadership training. Those who left voluntarily because of dealing with those in positions of power indicated that the majority – three of the fourteen felt somewhat prepared. In contrast, nine of the fourteen suggested that the seminary did not sufficiently prepare them to handle individuals that were the power behind the scenes at a church. A required course dealing with power dynamics in the church might serve to address this need.

RQ2. To what degree, if any, do non-terminated full-time ministers perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle the diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

Question 15 asked how the minister viewed his ability to managed conflict and did he feel that the seminary education prepared him for this area. Based on the limited responses, one can see there is a pattern developing. The majority felt that they were somewhat prepared to not sufficiently prepared to handle conflict in a church. Because of the limited responses, it is a challenge to determine if this pattern is reliable. The initial results seem to point toward the lack of adequate leadership training in handling conflict in the church. Again, a required course addressing power and change dynamics could serve to better prepare seminarians for realities of ministry in the church.

RQ3. To what degree, if any, do terminated full-time ministers perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle the diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

One cannot come to an accurate conclusion as to determine how those who have been terminated perceive the leadership training and the ability to handle conflict and change situations experienced in the church, however, based on this researcher's limited response concerning those who had been terminated, the majority stated that they felt either somewhat or not sufficiently prepared. Most stated that there were challenges in their leadership ability to deal with conflict and change in the church. Is there a problem here? Only more research will tell, but there seems to be the beginning of a pattern.

RQ4. To what degree, if any, do full-time ministers who voluntarily resigned from church ministry perceive that leadership training in seminary had a positive or negative influence on their ability to handle diverse conflict and change situations experienced in the church?

The responses indicate that those who resigned voluntarily felt that they were not sufficiently prepared to handle conflict and change situations in a church. Fourteen individuals of

the 48 experienced voluntary resignation from a ministry position. Once again, there is not a large enough sample to determine if there is a problem but there is a distinct pattern that is being shown here. The initial data collected indicates further development is needed in this area of seminary leadership training.

RQ5. What, if any, is the relationship between termination, non-termination, and voluntary resignation and the seminary leadership training as perceived by ministers?

As mentioned earlier, six ministers experienced both forced termination and voluntary resignation. To compare the seminary leadership training, this researcher only assigned “forced termination” to those six ministers, which means he splits the subjects into three groups: non-terminated (26), terminated (11), and voluntary resignation (8). Questions 14-17 were the questions that brought about the answer to this research question. Based on the tests’ results, the population was not big enough to indicate any trend however, it is interesting to note that out of the 48 individuals that took the survey 19 experienced the challenge of either being forced out or voluntarily walking away to keep from being terminated. That is almost 40% of those surveyed.

RQ6. What, if any, is the relationship between termination, non-termination, and voluntary resignation and the seminary degree earned as perceived by ministers?

There is not enough information available to adequately answer this research question. The answer to this question from the survey did not show any significant correlation between the degree earned and termination status. This would be interesting to follow up by obtaining more information in future research.

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was challenging to come up with conclusions about this vital issue facing those serving in today’s church and experiencing either voluntarily

or forced termination. The limited number of individuals that responded to the request of answering the questionnaire does not allow for adequate information to decide on whether there is or is not a great need for seminaries to address the leadership education for those who will graduate and serve in the church. The primary responses found in this research begin to indicate that the seminary leadership education lacks the ability to prepare ministers for leadership in the local church.

This researcher believes that there is a need for seminaries to address a potential lack of or an insufficient focus on leadership education in the curriculum to help those serving to navigate the challenging waters of the church world. Out of the 48 responses, five have experienced forced termination, eight have experienced a voluntary resignation, and six have experienced both.

As part of the survey, the ministers were asked what leadership class they wished was offered while attending seminary. Following is a chart that shows the desire of those who completed the survey and the classes they wished were taught in seminary to help prepare them for ministry.

Table 32

Desired seminary classes in leadership training

Classes	# of Responses
Organizational Leadership	3
Team Development	5
Strategic Planning	5
Coaching and Mentoring	5
Organizational Communication	5
Conflict Resolution	21
All the Above	4

Another interesting side note was 88.68% of those surveyed knew of someone who either experienced a forced termination or a voluntary resignation. This shows that this subject is something that many in ministry are dealing with either personally or with someone they know.

Research Limitations

The limitation that showed in this process was the COVID-19 pandemic. Over five thousand emails were sent out to those serving in the SBTC during the middle of the pandemic, and only twenty-one responded. When the researcher asked the SBTC about the lack of response, the reply was because of COVID-19, many ministers serving in the church were overwhelmed and did not want to take the time to respond to the survey. Many long hours and the stresses that those serving in ministry experienced during the pandemic while trying to serve the membership and following the guidelines of social distancing and not meeting publicly for several months became overwhelming at times.

When the survey was allowed to be sent out to others serving in places outside the SBTC, there continued to be a lack of responses to get more information about whether there were seminary-related factors between those who experienced either a force termination or voluntary resignation in ministry.

This researcher believes there are other reasons for the lack of responses to the survey. One is that ministers are busy and do not take the time to look at mass emails they are receiving. Another reason may be they did not have a desire to take the time to fill out a survey. Ministers are being pulled in different directions and may not find the time to take a survey. One other reason for the lack of responses is that the subject matter may be a painful subject and there is no desire to discuss it. Another reason may be a lack of awareness as to what is available to the minister to help him in ministry to further his education or knowledge.

Further Research

This researcher believes that there is an indication of a need for further research in seminary leadership education and the effectiveness of those who serve in the local church. The limited responses begin to indicate that there may be a correlation between the lack of leadership training and ministers who have experienced either voluntary or forced termination or that required leadership coursework could have at least helped those most likely to encounter power and conflict issues in their early ministry.

Seminary leadership training through this research is only one of many other factors that play into the challenge of experiencing a forced termination or voluntarily leaving a ministry position to keep from being forced out. This research began to show the need to examine the different issues that should be looked at alongside the seminary leadership training. This research has shown that seminary may be a contributing factor in a minister experiencing a voluntary resignation or experiencing a forced termination, but there are other factors that may go into why so many ministers are leaving the calling behind. Following are some of the issues this researcher believes would provide valuable information to help not only the minister but also the local church.

Individual Factors

Continued research to determine what individual factors may also contribute to experiencing a forced or voluntary termination should be examined. The challenge today is that many churches are single staffed and there is not a support group or staff to help carry the load. What research could be done to help the single staff person develop and deal with conflict and power struggles in a small church?

What can denominations do to help those who are struggling with the challenges in today's church? What resources are they making available to the minister, especially the single staff pastor? Are denominations concerned about the increased number of individuals leaving the ministry? If so, what are they doing to help stem the tide?

Another area to be researched could be, are there different personality types that experience termination more often than other personality types? The background of the individual and how he was raised can play into how he views ministry and church.

Social/cultural factors

Another interesting area to investigate would be to observe the ministers serving in different denominations other than Southern Baptist. Do they experience many of the same issues? What about the different regions of the country? Is there a significant area that is more prone to termination or resignation than other areas? Is this a problem with Southern Baptist ministers that are experiencing challenges in the church or are those serving in non-denominational churches along with other denomination perceive the same challenges? When one examines different cultures, does he see a difference with those ministers that are serving in churches that have a different ethnic group? Are there more challenges for ministers in experiencing termination, forced or voluntarily, in working in a rural or a city church? Does the church in a small town have more challenges than a larger church in a big city?

Does one's background or culture play into the experience of being terminated more often? When one leaves a cultural background he is used to or brought up in and goes to serve in a completely different place, state, or place, does that play a factor in termination?

Economic Factors

What economic factors may be contributing to those that experience forced termination or voluntary resignation? In the challenges of the church being able to support ministers, does the church know how to get through the financial difficulties without forcing the minister out or asking him to resign?

Professional Development Factors

Does the individual minister continue to improve himself with learning once he has completed his seminary degree? Is he learning how to deal with challenges in the church by reading and having experienced individuals to help him? Does age and experience play a factor into those being either forced terminated or voluntarily resigning? Once one graduates from seminary, are those seminaries providing continuing education to help the minister? Does the seminary have a strong alumnus to help those in ministry avoid problems or help them when problems are encountered?

Other Confounding Variables

There may be a few different variables that do not fit in the above groups. First, do different degrees show any sign of significance in calling for forced resignation or voluntarily resigning? This should be examined in all the different degree plans since other individuals that are serving carry different degrees.

Research should be conducted to determine how those that have been hurt through either voluntary resignation or forced termination can be ministered to and helped to continue in ministry. The pain that one and his family goes through can leave lasting scars and affect future ministry positions. If one experiences a termination, either forced or voluntary, is there a pattern of future terminations?

Finally, research should be conducted to determine if there is a correlation between the lack of leadership education and tenure in ministry. Does the one who is serving in a ministry position move often, and why? What plays into the short stay of some ministers?

This researcher would welcome an organization or ministry to continue to investigate this issue. The well-being of today's minister is being stretched like never before. The hope is that someone would continue to research this area, and the research would encourage seminaries to do their part, making any necessary changes to prepare the next generation of ministers to be healthy and successful in the ministry.

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APPENDIX A - SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What is your gender?
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
2. Do you consider yourself to be either a Baptist or baptistic in your theological commitments?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
3. Have you ever served in a full-time ministry position in a Baptist church?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
4. Are you currently serving in a full-time ministry position?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
5. How many years have you been serving in full-time ministry? _____
6. Do you have a seminary degree?
 - A. Yes, please answer questions 7 and 8
 - B. No, please move to answer question 9
7. What is your highest seminary degree?
 - A. MA
 - B. MDiv
 - C. ThM
 - D. DMin
 - E. EdD
 - F. PhD
 - G. Other: _____

8. Where did you earn your highest seminary degree?

9. What position are you currently serving in the church?

A. Senior Pastor

B. Associate/Executive Pastor

C. Worship Pastor

D. Education Minister

E. Youth Minister

F. Children/Preschool Minister

G. Other: _____

10. Have you ever experienced a forced termination from a ministry position?

A. Yes, please answer question 11

B. No, please answer question 12

11. If you experienced a forced termination, what do you perceive as the reason for it?

A. Church conflict

B. Personal conflict

C. Personality conflict with those in position of power

D. Staff conflict

E. Moral issues

F. Financial difficulties in the church

G. Unable to fulfill church's expectations

H. Other: _____

12. Have you ever voluntarily resigned from a ministry position rather than experiencing a forced termination?

A. Yes, please answer question 13

B. No, please answer question 14

13. If you voluntarily resigned to keep from experiencing a forced termination, what do you perceive as the reason for leaving?
- A. Church conflict
 - B. Personal conflict
 - C. Personality conflict with those in position of power
 - D. Staff conflict
 - E. Moral issues
 - F. Financial difficulties in the church
 - G. Unable to fulfill church's expectations
 - H. Other: _____
14. To what degree did your seminary education prepare you for full-time ministry?
- A. Highly prepared
 - B. Adequately prepared
 - C. Somewhat prepared
 - D. Not Sufficiently prepared
15. To what degree do you believe that you received adequate leadership training while in seminary to help you handle various conflicts experienced in the church?
- A. Highly Adequate leadership training to handle various conflicts in the church
 - B. Adequate leadership training to handle various conflicts in the church
 - C. Somewhat Adequate leadership training to handle various conflicts in the church
 - D. Not Sufficient leadership training to handle various conflicts in the church
16. To what degree do you believe that you received adequate leadership training while in seminary to help you lead a church to make necessary changes?
- A. Highly Adequate leadership training to lead a church to make necessary changes
 - B. Adequate leadership training to lead a church to make necessary changes
 - C. Somewhat Adequate leadership training to lead a church to make necessary changes
 - D. Not Sufficient leadership training to lead a church to make necessary changes

17. To what degree do you believe that you received adequate leadership training while in seminary to enable you to handle power struggles within the church?
- A. Highly Adequate leadership training to handle power struggles within the church
 - B. Adequate leadership training to handle power struggles within the church
 - C. Somewhat Adequate leadership training to handle power struggles within the church
 - D. Not Sufficient leadership training to handle power struggles within the church
18. Do you wish that there were more leadership classes included in your seminary education without adding more credit hours to your degree?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
19. What leadership classes would have been beneficial for you in today's ministry that you did not receive in seminary?
- A. Organizational Leadership
 - B. Conflict Resolution
 - C. Team Development
 - D. Strategic Planning
 - E. Coaching and Mentoring
 - F. Organizational Communication
 - G. Other – _____
20. Do you know someone who has experienced either forced or voluntary termination from full-time ministry?
- A. Yes, please answer question 21
 - B. No
21. All information given will remain strictly confidential. Would you be willing to provide this researcher his name and email address to receive this survey to receive his perspective for this research?
- Name: _____ Email: _____
22. Would you like to receive the results of this research?
- Yes, please give this researcher your email address: _____

APPENDIX B – IRB Approval

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 2/13/2020 to --
Protocol # 3970.021320

CONSENT FORM SEMINARY-RELATED FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FORCED TERMINATION AND VOLUNTARY RESIGNATIONS FROM FULL-TIME CHURCH MINISTERS Ralph O. Bray III Liberty University School of Divinity You are invited to be in a research study to understand why pastors and ministers are experiencing forced termination at an alarming rate. Because of this disturbing trend, it is necessary to examine the reasons behind the terminations and the potential role that seminaries may or may not play in preparing their students for situations that could lead to termination. This research will examine forced and voluntarily termination from ministerial leadership positions in the church. It will examine those who are currently serving in full-time ministry and those who are not currently serving in a SBTC church. The individual must have graduated from an accredited seminary within the past fifteen years. Please, read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Rob Bray, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: Because so many pastors and ministers are experiencing either being forced out of the ministry or voluntarily leaving, seminary leadership must examine the reasons behind the terminations. This research will compare the responses of those who have not experienced forced or voluntary termination with those who have. The research will be able to examine the seminary-related factors that may or may not be perceived as contributing to forced and voluntary termination of full-time ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches. This will be achieved by collecting data from full-time ministers who are a part of the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC). Further, it will look at how seminary training can serve to prevent termination through adequate leadership training.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Click on the link below to take you to the survey. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes.
2. Answer the survey questions and submit.

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

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society may include better understanding why pastors/ministers are experiencing forced or voluntary termination and if seminaries need to make changes to prepare their graduates better.

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 2/13/2020 to --
Protocol # 3970.021320

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and statistician will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or the SBTC. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Rob Bray. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Gary Bredfeldt, at [REDACTED].

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.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study by opening the link and answering the survey questions.

APPENDIX C – Request Letter to SBTC

BETHABARA BAPTIST CHURCH

*“Church at
the
Crossroads”*

January 23, 2020

ROB BRAY
PASTOR

DAN BLANKENSHIP
MUSIC MINISTER

SHAWN MURNAHAN
YOUTH MINISTER

Dr. Kenneth Priest
Director of Convention Strategies
Southern Baptist of Texas
PO Box 1988
Grapevine, TX 76099-1988

Dear Dr. Priest,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an EdD degree. The title of my research project is Seminary-Related Factors Contributing To Forced Termination And Voluntary Resignations From Full-Time Church Ministers and the purpose of my research is to understand the seminary-related factors that may or may not be perceived as contributing to forced and voluntary termination of full-time ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches by collecting data from full-time ministers who are a part of the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC). Further, it will look at how seminary training can serve to prevent termination through adequate leadership training.

I am writing to request your permission to utilize your membership email list to recruit participants for my research.

Participants will be asked to click on a link to complete the attached survey. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Rob Bray, Pastor
DMin

4651 MONROE HIGHWAY ~ STATHAM, GA 30666
TELEPHONE (770) 725-7703 ~ FAX (770) 725-7506 ~ BETHABARABAPTIST.ORG

APPENDIX D: Approval Letter from SBTC



PO Box 1588
Grapevine, TX 76039

office
4500 State Hwy 380
Grapevine, TX 76031

local
817.552.2500

toll free
877.953.7222

email
sbtc@sbtc.org

website
sbtc.org

February 12, 2020

Rob Bray
Pastor
Bethlehem Baptist Church
4651 Monroe Highway
Statham, Georgia 306


Dear Dr. Rob Bray:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled **Seminary-Related Factors Contributing To Forced Termination And Voluntary Resignations From Full-Time Church Ministers**, the SBTC is granting permission and agrees to email affiliated churches to assist in the data collection, inviting them to participate in your study.

As part of the agreement:

- ☒ SBTC will send out the survey for Dr. Rob Bray because of the privacy policy the email list from the SBTC cannot be provided to you.
- ☒ SBTC is requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,


Kenneth Priest, DEdMin
Director of Convention Strategies
Southern Baptist of Texas Convention

APPENDIX E: Updated IRB Approval Request

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
2/13/2020 to --
Protocol # 3970.021320

CONSENT FORM

SEMINARY-RELATED FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FORCED TERMINATION AND VOLUNTARY RESIGNATIONS FROM FULL-TIME CHURCH MINISTERS

Ralph O. Bray III
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study to understand why pastors and ministers are experiencing forced termination at an alarming rate. Because of this disturbing trend, it is necessary to examine the reasons behind the terminations and the potential role that seminaries may or may not play in preparing their students for situations that could lead to termination. This research will examine forced and voluntary termination from ministerial leadership positions in the church. It will examine those currently serving in full-time ministry and those who are not currently serving in a Baptist church. The individual must have graduated from an accredited seminary. Please, read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Rob Bray, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: Because so many pastors and ministers are experiencing either being forced out of the ministry or voluntarily leaving, seminary leadership must examine the reasons behind the terminations. This research will compare the responses of those who have not experienced forced or voluntary termination with those who have. The research will be able to examine the seminary-related factors that may or may not be perceived as contributing to forced and voluntary termination of full-time ministers in a Baptist or baptistic theological church. This will be achieved by collecting data from full-time ministers in a Baptist or baptistic theological church. Further, it will look at how seminary training can serve to prevent termination through adequate leadership training.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Click on the link below to take you to the survey. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes.
2. Answer the survey questions and submit.

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

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

Benefits to society may include a better understanding of why pastors/ministers are experiencing forced or voluntary termination and if seminaries need to make changes to prepare their graduates better.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and statistician will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Rob Bray. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Gary Bredfeldt, at [REDACTED].

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.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study by opening the link and answering the survey questions.