LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

# DISCOVERING PERCEPTIONS OF ADEQUACY FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MINISTRY AMONG SEMINARY EDUCATED EVANGELICAL PASTORS IN SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Paula K. Millsaps

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2022

# DISCOVERING PERCEPTIONS OF ADEQUACY FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MINISTRY AMONG SEMINARY EDUCATED EVANGELICAL PASTORS IN SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

by Paula K. Millsaps

A Prospectus Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2022

APPROVED BY:

Allen England, EdD., Ph.D.

Gary Bredfeldt, Ph.D.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of adequacy experienced when ministering to domestic violence impacted congregants for evangelical pastors in southwestern Pennsylvania. Perceptions of adequacy when ministering to congregants experiencing domestic violence have been generally defined as a perception of adequate preparedness through education for ministering to the intricate needs of the family crisis of domestic violence. The theory that guided this study was van Manen's (1997, 2014) interpretive phenomenological method of qualitative study as it was the method used by Zuet et al (2017) in a study of the feelings of adequacy for domestic violence ministry experienced by seminary educated evangelical pastors in the midwestern United States. This method was used because it has been used in similar studies, Zust et al (2017) and Spencer-Sandolph (2020), and because it allowed the researcher to explore the perceptions of pastors while analyzing data for underlying themes that also contributed to these perceptions. Qualitative study was chosen because it was words that were collected, meanings that were discovered, and thoughts and feelings that were underlying that were expressed and analyzed. Answering the questions of pastoral experience in seminary education, its impact on pastoral preparedness for ministering to domestic violence survivors, policies and procedures implemented, and what belief systems emerged as underpinning pastoral views on family violence were best done through open-ended, lengthy interviews that gave the pastors time to answer. The conversational method of the interview process allowed the interviewer to follow trails of thought and feelings as they emerged and yielded various themes and subthemes. Underlying meanings and beliefs systems were also identified.


*Keywords:* Domestic violence; evangelical; seminary; ministry leadership; continuing education

## Dedication

To my children, Baizia and Luke Millsaps. Next to Jesus you are the greatest loves of my life. The sacrifices you made will never be forgotten and only our Father in heaven will be able to reward you as richly as you deserve. I love you both dearly.

**Acknowledgments**

I would like to acknowledge all those that have prayed me through this journey. This would not have been possible without your tireless support. I would also like to acknowledge Melissa Sylvis for sitting in as second coder for this study. Thank you, Melissa, for the excellent work and astounding effort. Pastors Mark and Shari Prichard and Pastor Nathan Epley, thank you all for serving as field tesers for this study. Your input was implemented and helpful. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my wonderful dissertation committee. Dr. William England, thank you for serving as my dissertation chair. Thank you, sir, for your prayers, guidance, and encouragement. I greatly appreciate you. Dr. Bredfeldt, thank you, sir, for serving as my second reader. Your faithful wisdom and challenging guidance helped make this study what it is today, but most importantly helped transform me into a more faithful researcher. You are both greatly appreciated.

# Table of Contents

## List of Tables

## List of Figures

## List of Abbreviations

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Domestic Violence (DV)

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH)

Pennsylvania (PA)

Southwestern (SW)

# CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

## Introduction

Since the Fall of humanity into sin, there has been an ever-increasing amount of violence on the earth. Violence takes many forms and can be found in many contexts, including violence that occurs in the confines of intimate partner relationships. This violence is better known as domestic violence (DV) and has become so pervasive that the Centers for Disease Control (2019) has labeled its occurrence as "pandemic" (n. p.). According to Last (2001), pandemic means, "an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people" (n. p.). What exactly constitutes "a large number of people" could be considered subjective. However, current statistics listed by the National Domestic Violence Hotline (2021), state that "more than 1 in 3 women (35.6%)" (n. p.) have or will experience some form of physical violence at the hand of an intimate partner in their lifetime. Unfortunately, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005) claims that less than 50% of all DV assaults are reported (Durose et al). According to these statistics, one could draw a reasonable conclusion that approximately 71.2% of women have or will experience DV at some point.

Recent developments in society such as the #MeToo movement and exposures of sexually abusive misconduct in various denominations have sparked interest in this matter from religious leaders, but current literature suggests that these leaders often believe that DV is not an issue within the walls of the church (Ware et al, 2004). Multiple studies even suggest that the tenets of faith are often used by abusers and victims alike to justify and conceal this type of violence (Francis et al, 2017; Mahoney et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2009; Schamp, 2010). One study found that either the occurrence or the reporting is higher among church members (Aune &

Barnes, 2018). Another found that churchgoers are more likely to confide in pastors and religious leaders before anyone else, especially social groups designed to assist in DV affairs (Barna, 2017).

## Background to the Problem

With all this in mind, it concerned this researcher that evangelical pastors in the Midwest United States admitted that when congregants confess to experiencing violence of this type, feelings of inadequacy because of perceived lack of preparedness to deal with this issue have surfaced (Zust et al, 2017). Although a substantial amount of literature exists to define the problem of DV, share examples of abuse and the stories of the people impacted, encourage collaboration between faith groups and social service programs, and help faith-based communities develop programs and policies within the congregations being served, a gap in the literature has existed where seminary preparedness and its impact on perceptions of inadequacy among evangelical pastors in southwest (SW) Pennsylvania (PA) has been concerned. Utilizing the van Manen (1997, 2014) method of phenomenological interviewing as seen in the Zust et al (2017) study, this researcher has contributed to the filling of this gap by using a qualitative approach. Through this approach, the researcher discovered which evangelical pastors in SW PA have completed seminary, what these pastors learned in seminary about this topic, and how that training has impacted perceptions of adequacy experienced in ministering to congregants experiencing DV.

Scripture references such as "[w]ives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands" (New King James Version, 1982, Ephesians 5:22-24) have often

been cited by researchers as misused and misappropriated throughout history (Aune & Barnes, 2018; Barnett, 2017; Bent-Goodley, 2005; Buikema, 2017; Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017; Clark Kroeger, 2001; Danielson et al, 2009; Francis et al, 2017; Houston-Kolnik & Todd, 2016; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; Nason-Clark, 1997; Nason-Clark, 2004; Schamp, 2010; Shei, 2004; Smith-Clark, 2016; Spencer-Sandolph, 2020; Weaver et al, 1997; Whitaker et al, 2007; Yoishoka & Choi, 2005; Zust et al, 2017). Husbands, leaders, and others in society have approached this Scripture, and others like it in ways that have perverted the male-female relationship to such an extent that abusers have often felt justified in actions that have brought subjugation instead of liberation "to the weaker vessel" (NKJV, 1982, 1 Peter 3:7). These misapplications have so permeated society that whole denominations, cultures, and geographic regions have believed that the abused should simply stay, keep silent about the abuse, pray harder, and believe God for a change in the situation (Mahoney et al, 2015).

Ideologies that supported those misapplications were the subject of literature from Mahoney et al (2015) which not only examined the misappropriation of these Scriptures but suggested that some religious systems have worked to keep women in abusive situations by equating the choice of fleeing for safety with dishonoring God and the faith. This work has gone on to build a case against the church as being culpable in the abuse by discouraging outcry and separation and encouraging silent compliance (Mahoney et al, 2015). Buzawa & Buzawa (2017), Buikema (2001), and Francis et al (2017) showed that these ideologies have kept women and leaders from being able to discern what abuse is, the proper way to address it, and have worked culturally to stigmatize those that choose to leave abusive situations, particularly in the church.

It has also been found that many religious leaders have believed that this kind of violence does not happen within the walls of the church. These leaders site Scripture that discourages

violence of all kinds and have maintained that through consistent attendance to services issues that might exist within the marriage can be overcome (Ware et al, 2004). This denial borders on delusion when research-based statistics are in view. Schamp's (2010) exploratory dissertation looked at the issue from the perspective of Christian counselors currently working with DV clients. Findings in this study have suggested that pastors and leaders have often counseled congregants to pray and fast, be more compliant, and try harder to not provoke the abuser. Counsel such as this could only have come from a basis of a misunderstanding of the entire issue, not to mention biblical truths about the ways in which a wife is to submit, what that means, and how the husband should respond "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (NKJV, 1982, Ephesians 5:25). This type of counsel has echoed throughout the annals of literature related to DV and the church, most heart-breaking are the testimonies of survivors that felt further violated by counsel given by religious leaders when seeking help (Nason-Clark, 2009).

Aune & Barnes (2018) further demonstrated the theme of DV in the church by examining the occurrence of DV in churches in Cumbria, Coventry. While this study was performed in another country, statistics have shown that the DV rates quoted by these researchers are compatible with those noted by the National Domestic Violence Hotline (2021), the Centers for Disease Control (2021), and the Durose et al (2005) report for the United States Bureau of Justice. Other studies already cited also have contributed to the overall theme of lack of preparedness and understanding among church leaders that could have contributed to healthy ministry to those impacted by DV (Mahoney et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2009; Schamp, 2010; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017). Francis et al (2017) has contributed to the thematic overview of the cultural ideologies about the roles of men and women that has contributed to the continued

subjugation and abuse of women. This article speaks to how these misogynistic undercurrents that have existed for centuries has created atmospheres in which women in all sectors of life have experienced some form of oppression to the extreme of physical and sexual abuse that has been sometimes perpetrated, encouraged, and dismissed by church leaders. Ideologies such as these have created climates in which the victim has questioned whether abuse was happening or not and refused to leave for fear of further subjugation and stigma (Francis et al, 2017; Houston-Kolnik & Todd, 2016; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005).

Theological concerns have included the misinterpretation of male-female relationships, how that misinterpretation has worked to justify and even sometimes promote abuse, and what that has meant for suffering congregants that would have been most likely to seek help from some leader in the church (Barna, 2017). Another concern has been the call of God to every pastor to "feed [His] sheep" (NKJV, 1982, John 21:15) which has implied the teaching of the Word of God through proper exegesis so that it could be rightly applied and practiced. The shepherding imagery also has implied a protective nature that must be present in the pastor-congregant relationship but has seemed to be lacking due to a lack of preparation through education in how to handle these extreme issues. Nason-Clark (2009) posited this argument claiming that support and help from pastors could mean that a DV victim survives and eventually thrives. However, this support and help cannot lead to thriving if pastors have not been prepared and do not feel adequate to help.

## Statement of the Problem

The church has been ill-equipped to handle the issues dealt with among this population of congregants (Nason-Clark, 2009; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017). Because women that have been attending a church are most likely to report these occurrences to pastors and other church

leaders, it is imperative that training and equipping take place to best serve those in need (Barna, 2017). Evangelical pastors in Midwest America reported an overall feeling of inadequacy and lack of preparedness for ministering to these types of needs (Zust et al, 2017) and leaders from all major faiths reported denial of the occurrence of this type of violence within the congregation of faith. Tenets of faith were often cited as precluding families within the church from such abuse (Ware et al, 2004). However, research has shown that DV has happened within the walls of the church at what appears to be a greater rate than that of regular society. While national statistics from the Centers for Disease Control (2019) have reported overall DV at 25% of women have experienced violence at least once in their lifetimes, Aune and Barnes (2018) found that 42% of women within the churches surveyed had experienced violence at some time and 25% were still currently experiencing the violence despite regular church attendance.

While there has been research available on many aspects of the DV issue, including the exploration of feelings of adequacy in pastors in other areas of the world (Nason-Clark, 1997; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 2016; Ware et al, 2004), a gap has existed in the literature where SW PA evangelical pastors' perceptions of adequacy are involved. To fill this gap, this researcher was able to explore perceptions of adequacy in pastors in SW PA when doing domestic violence ministry. This discovery has been accomplished by following the guideposts of the research questions which were based on the working definition of adequacy.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of adequacy experienced by seminary educated evangelical pastors in the SW region of PA when ministering to those impacted by domestic violence (DV). Feelings of adequacy were generally defined as a pastoral perception of preparedness for ministering to those affected by domestic violence. The

theory guiding this study was put forth by Zust et al (2017) as it found that the seven evangelical pastors interviewed in the urban Midwest reported feelings of inadequacy in ministering to congregants affected by DV. This study utilized van Manen's (1997, 2014) method of phenomenological narrative interpretation used by Zust et al (2017) and explored perceptions of adequacy when ministering to congregants experiencing DV among evangelical pastors in SW PA and how these pastors perceived the impact of seminary training on adequacy for this ministry.

## Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

The following questions guided this study:

**RQ1:** How do pastors define adequacy for ministering to DV impacted congregants?

**RQ2:** How do perceptions of adequacy impact the ability to effectively perform pastoral care for survivors of DV?

**RQ3:** Was there an opportunity for personal learning and growth in DV ministry while in seminary?

**RQ4:** Were there measurable learning outcomes and/or evaluation in areas relatable to DV care and ministry?

**RQ5:** Do pastors believe continuing education in DV training is needed?

### Rationale for RQ Inclusion

RQ1 was imperative to this study as definitions and understandings of words and concepts are the foundations of all other perceptions where that topic is concerned. What one person has maintained was adequacy may not have been the same as the next person. In fact, in researching a definition of adequacy there was not one common meaning found, but congruent themes that ran through multiple definitions that were extracted to build the working definition of adequacy that will be discussed later (Commission, 2020; Mijares & Liedtke, 2008).

Discovering how these pastors define adequacy yielded emerging themes of thoughts and feelings that contributed to personal perceptions of adequacy. This has given the researcher insight into how these pastors have measured their adequacy which also sheds some light on perceptions of adequacy that have existed for them under the surface.

RQ2 sprang from reviewing literature that showed that perceptions of inadequacy often have caused church leaders to steer clear of domestic violence programs and policies within the church (Houston-Kolnik & Todd, 2016). Perceptions of inadequacy were also cited as reasons why many have stayed silent on the subject (Pyles, 2007). These same studies showed a link between the education of the church leaders about domestic violence and an increase in sermons, policies, and procedures that have been implemented in those churches (Berry, 1998; Danielson, 2009; Gallet, 2017; Green, 2015; Miller, 1994). Again, because the church has most likely been the first line of safety sought by survivors, it is imperative that church leaders have plans in place for helping these beloveds. This researcher explored the experiences of this set of pastors to discover if a similar theme would emerge.

RQ3 was an attempt to discover these pastors' perceptions of opportunity for growth and learning. This question came directly from the working definition of adequacy built from the Association of Theological Schools Commission on Accreditation's (2020) standards for accreditation. Because these theological schools have taught in line with denominational and doctrinal beliefs, exploration of personal growth during seminary was expected to have yielded emerging themes of Scriptural understandings and mindsets. This is important because researchers have maintained that Scriptural, cultural, and historical meanings have been underlying in pastors' abilities to effectively minister to survivors of domestic violence (Francis et al, 2017; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2004; Nason-Clark, 2017; Pyles, 2007; Verhey

& Harvard, 2011). These deeper meanings have formed a platform of understanding that either has lent itself to the proper biblical treatment of people who have experienced this type of trauma or has lent itself to mistreatment and further victimization (Gerger et al, 2007; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015). Another possibility was that these underlying belief systems may have caused paralysis of the leader who just could not fathom something like this happening in their church congregation (Ware et al, 2004). While education could help to correct mindsets that might be detrimental, a lack of education might serve to exacerbate the problem (McMullin et al, 2015; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). Identifying "common meanings" (Zust et al, 2017) and also any themes that emerged through the process of interviewing helped the researcher discover what such mindsets have existed within this group of pastors. As the theme of mindsets emerged, the researcher also discovered how education, or lack thereof, contributed.

RQ4 was important because researchers have suggested that a lack of seminary preparedness has contributed directly to pastors feeling inadequate when they have ministered to this population of people (Green, 2015; Houston & Todd, 2016; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Nason-Clark, 2009). Lack of training that requires evaluation and measurable learning outcomes to be met in this type of crisis has been cited by many as the reasons why seminary graduates have often been fully aware that what they have learned has not prepared them for the everyday work of pastoring (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). Professors of seminaries have agreed that the amount of core training needed to prepare pastors in Bible knowledge, interpretation of Scripture, church history, and so on has left little to no time for concentrating on direct ministry training in specialized areas such as domestic violence (Buikema, 2001; Gustafson, 2005; McMullin et al, 2015; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). What has resulted, according to researchers, is that pastors have not felt adequately

prepared for ministering in this area (Buikema, 2001; Green, 2015; Gustafson, 2005; Houston & Todd, 2016; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Nason-Clark, 2009). This researcher explored the experiences of these pastors to see if that held true for this group.

RQ5 was vital to the definition of adequacy. In Standards of Accreditation, the Commission (2020) maintained that instilling a desire to be a lifelong learner has been one tenet of theological schools that are accreditable. This same sentiment was highlighted in the Mijares & Liedtke (2008) study that found training adequacy benched on the willingness of instructors and students alike to continue learning throughout life. Continuing education, or the inspiration to do so, was then seen by both reports as a by-product of adequate education (Commission, 2020; Mijares & Liedtke, 2008). This sentiment was echoed in the literature found on DV which maintained that seminaries were not capable of doing all the necessary training that has been needed for pastors to be effective in this arena of ministry (McMullin et al, 2015). Collaboration with secular agencies and ministries focused on DV care, along with several written sources, could provide the continuing education that could lead to improved perceptions of adequacy among evangelical pastors.

## Assumptions and Delimitations

### Research Assumptions

The researcher assumed that there would be evangelical pastors within the SW region of PA that have completed seminary training and would be willing to answer an initial survey that would yield the potential respondent pool for the interpretive phenomenological interviews and that those within that pool would be willing to submit to the interview method utilized in the Zust et al (2017) study, van Manen's (1997, 2014) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, or

IPA. This willingness to submit to the interview methods meant that respondents were willing to be video recorded, converse deeply about the issues, and relate personal experiences.

Also being assumed was that these pastors would be able to express personal perceptions of adequacy that surfaced when ministering to congregants experiencing DV. Also being assumed in the research was that current domestic violence statistics hold true within the confines of the church. That said, the researcher was assuming that every pastor would have had congregants, family, or friends affected by DV and would desire to have administered proper care to these individuals. The researched found that some were also currently dealing with these situations personally. That assumption was an ugly one, but one that has held true statistically and throughout current literary sources. One major assumption was that participants would have a personal understanding of adequacy and would be able and willing to communicate those perceptions of the meaning of adequacy.

**Delimitations of the Research Design**

This study included:

1. Pastors serving churches in the SW PA region of the United States.
2. Pastors that belong to the evangelical tradition.
3. Pastors of similar age, race, and gender.
4. Demographic information was used to identify homogenous sample.

This study did not:

1. Include Pastors that attended Bible College, Ministry School, or some other form of education outside of accredited seminary training.
2. Generalize among a larger population of evangelical pastors but instead was limited to discovering the perceptions of only those pastors interviewed.

## Definition of Terms

1. *Adequacy*: the working definition for this study was in having had sufficient opportunity to experience personal growth through instruction that used measurable learning outcomes in evaluating retention of knowledge that yielded professional preparedness and dedication to lifelong learning (Commission, 2020; Mijares & Liedtke, 2008).

2. *Domestic Violence (DV)*: defined by FindLaw.com (2019) as "a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain control over another intimate partner" (n. p.).

3. *Evangelical*: defined by Noll (2019) as a four-part belief system that maintains the utmost importance of conversion, or "the belief that lives need to be changed"; the Bible, or "the belief that all spiritual truth is to be found in its pages"; activism, or the dedication of all believers, especially the laity, to lives of service for God, especially in sharing the Christian message and taking that message far and near; and crucicentrism, or the conviction that Christ's death on the cross provided atonement for sin and reconciliation between sinful humanity and a holy God (p. 6).

4. *Pastor*: for the purposes of this research, the term pastor was limited to the scope of one that has felt called of God and works in service to God and the body as the senior leader of a church congregation (Siew, 2013).

5. *Pennsylvania (PA)*: the state of the United States of America from which respondents were chosen.

6. *Southwestern (SW):* refers to the specific geographical region made up of ten counties as posited by the Pennsylvania Gaming Commission (2021) within the state of Pennsylvania in which the researcher polled respondents.

## Significance of the Study

While literature points to the fact that leaders are both made and born (Bennis, 1989), it has been impossible to grow in skills if the need to grow has not been perceived (Bennis, 2010). This researcher intended to highlight the need for evangelical pastors in SW PA to evaluate what has been learned in seminary that provided equipping for ministry to congregants experiencing DV and how that learning, or lack thereof, had contributed to perceptions of adequacy in this type of service. Pastors could then objectively determine whether the need for continuing education existed and if so, what steps should be taken to receive such training. This continual

self-examination and willingness to participate in continued learning would determine directly what type of success would be yielded in leadership (Clinton, 2012; Malphurs, 2003; Sampson, 2011) and would explore, according to the definition of adequacy, whether these pastors felt adequate for service to this population.

Bringing awareness to the prevalence of DV through the questions asked of each pastor, the study has served to generate understanding of the need for more dedicated learning in each congregation's leadership team and also provided evidence for the need for more teaching in seminary that would better prepare evangelical pastors for serving congregants. It hopefully also has triggered a move to action among pastors who were surveyed, interviewed, and those that might read this work in the future to seek out, implement, and provide effective policies and procedures within individual congregations. Authors such as Berry (1998), Danielsen (2009), Gallet (2017), Green (2015), and Miller (1994) have provided excellent literature that aids pastors and leaders in learning about DV, the signs to look for, how to approach the topic in view of the whole congregation, ways to set forward a communal mindset and plan for dealing with DV in the congregation, and ways to help those that are experiencing this violence in practical ways that lead to safety and healing. Learning of this type is imperative as lives literally weigh in the balance of adequacy and preparedness. Producing more evidence of the feelings of inadequacy due to perceptions of seminary preparedness might eventually lead to studies that evaluate exactly what is taught, how it can be improved upon, and eventually lead to action and implementation at the seminary level (Berry, 1998; Danielson, 2009; Gallet, 2017; Green, 2015; Miller, 1994).

Awareness of the existence of the problem, evaluation of personal perceptions of adequacy in relation to seminary preparedness, and questions about current policies and

procedures, or lack thereof, has hopefully sparked an urgent desire within the hearts of the evangelical pastors of SW PA that participated in this study. It has the potential to impact the services being received by congregants currently dealing with DV-related issues in this region. The climate in which outcry is encouraged, with safety as the priority, and healing as the goal could mean that more women within those congregations are empowered to move towards freedom from the torment and more pastors are equipped to help with that process (Barnett, 2000; Berry 1998; Danielson et al, 2009; Francis et al, 2017; Green 2015; Miller, 1994).

## Summary of the Design

Qualitative research has sought answers that come in the form of words, art, or expression. The data collected in these types of studies are not numeric because it has sought to explore phenomenon in ways that could not always be quantified through numeric expression and statistics (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). This type of study design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore the phenomenon of feelings experienced by pastors when faced with the challenge of domestic violence pastoral care. Van Manen's (1997, 2014) Interpretive Phenomenological Approach, IPA, was chosen because it allowed the researcher to look for the meanings that were buried within respondents' answers to semi-structured questions. It left room for "the understanding that the meaning of human experiences cannot be embraced by observable, concrete data. Instead, the meaning or implicit truths about human experiences are hidden within the narrative accounts of an experience as told by those who have had the experience" (Zust et al, 2017, pp. 678-679). It is the belief of this researcher that the outcome of the Zust et al (2017) study is seen in this study as well, i. e. evangelical pastors in SW PA have expressed similar perceptions of inadequacy expressed by evangelical pastors in Midwest USA and that they have attributed that inadequacy to lack of preparedness through formal education.

This researcher interviewed pastors that emerged as filling all three criteria; evangelical, seminary educated and serving within SW PA. This method involved an interview that was video recorded and was made up of lengthy, open-ended, semi-structured questions. Those interviewed were chosen through purposive sampling and invited to make a face-to-face appointment with the researcher. During these interviews, questions were asked that delved into how these pastors defined adequacy, the perceptions of adequacy these pastors have experienced when faced with DV within the church, past exposure to learning and practical application during seminary training, and personal thoughts on the seeking of continuing education in domestic violence ministry and care.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## Overview

This literature review provided a synopsis of the information gathered, categorized, and assembled during the research of the topic of seminary preparedness and resulting feelings of adequacy in ministering to the needs of congregants experiencing domestic violence (DV). The theological underpinnings of Christianity were examined as some of the tenets of faith and ideologies about male-female roles, power and control within those relationships, and what the Bible says about family have been cited as perpetrators of abuse. Scriptures associated with each were discussed and exegeted to show how the Bible speaks against DV and offers solace to survivors. Theoretical underpinnings were also discussed as seminary, what constitutes evangelical seminary specifically, common issues found when discussing DV and evangelical pastor responses, what courses are offered at seminaries currently, and the resulting perceptions of adequacy found in pastors when dealing with matters related to DV. Also discussed in the theoretical section of this review was the literature available on different theories that was utilized in evaluating the preparedness and resulting perceptions of adequacy in evangelical pastors. Thematic and related literature review addressed the need for continuing education, programs and resources that are available for such education, encouragement to network with agencies outside of the church and for outside agencies to work with religious leaders, and the impact all this has on those impacted by this trauma.

## Theological Framework of the Study

Jesus explained to the disciples that the way to show love for Him was to “feed [His] sheep” (NKJV, 1982, John 21:15). This feeding of His sheep implied teaching the Word of God through proper exegesis so that it could be rightly applied and practiced. The shepherding

imagery also implied a protective nature that must be present in the pastor-congregant relationship. A protective nature found in shepherds has been one of constant watching and tending to be aware of threats from either inside or outside of the fold. Laniak (2006) said, “True love must be expressed by the comprehensive care of Jesus’ flock” (p. 222). Researchers have found that this protective piece has seemed to be lacking due to perceptions of inadequacy reported among pastors in ministering to the needs of domestic violence (DV) impacted populations (Firmin & Tedford, 2007; Nason-Clark, 2009; Shei, 2004; Smith-Clark, 2016; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017).

The Bible does not require those that shepherd Jesus’ flock to go to formal educational training, but proponents of the seminary would say that it has helped to develop ministers through discipline, accountability, and devoted ongoing study. One definition of a seminary is “a graduate school that offers Christians a distinctly theological education…. [that] marries understanding of God and His Word with real-life skills so that students minister with excellence in the church community and the world” (Western Seminary, 2020). However, researchers have found that quite the opposite might be occurring in seminary educated evangelical pastors. Rather than leaving seminary feeling prepared to minister to societal needs, many have reported feelings of inadequacy when facing certain issues, including DV (Firmin & Tedford, 2007; Nason-Clark, 2009; Shei, 2004; Smith-Clark, 2016; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017).

According to researchers, seminary educated evangelical pastors’ feelings of inadequate preparedness to minister to DV-affected congregants could be linked to theological concerns including 1-the misappropriation of Scripture to justify and sometimes promote abuse; 2-unbiblical ideas about power and control (Francis et al, 2017; Kim, 2014; Mahoney et al, 2015); and 3-denial of the problem’s existence in the church (Schamp, 2010; Ware et al, 2004). Each of

these was exposed throughout the literature examined. Also exposed was what the Bible says about the family and how the family should function relationally.

**What the Bible Says About Family**

God adores the family. His plan for creation has always been for humanity to be His family, united as the larger family of the Body of Christ and made up of smaller units of families that exemplify His nature of love, nurture, and mutual submission. In the Garden of Eden, He created man to steward the earth and all creation. Man realized in all that had been created, there was none created that was a worthy companion. God then created woman from the rib of man to be man's companion and mate. The Lord then blessed the man and woman to "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (NKJV, 1982, Genesis 1:28). The first blessing God spoke over the man was to bear fruit and produce children. Families were instituted by God in the beginning. With Adam and Eve's disobedience to God, the family took a turn as sin entered the hearts of mankind and was passed down from generation to generation.

An emphasis on family was again noted in the covenant between Abraham and God. This covenant established a promise from God based on Abraham's obedience to His word and direction.

> When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I *am* Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also, I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (NKJV, 1982, Genesis 17:1-8).

From these passages, one can deduce that God equates blessing with the multiplication of mankind through childbirth and resulting family. Twice God made this covenant with Abram, but it was only the second time when Abram responded by making a covenant with God through obedience to God's requirement of circumcision as defined in the following passages (v. 9-14). In these passages, God linked this covenant to obedience and to walking in the ways of Yah that must be upheld by Abraham and the descendants being promised. Circumcision, while not an uncommon practice for medical or social reasons, was now an "obligation [that] applied to Hebrews, their servants, and slaves, and signified that they were marked off from other people as God's peculiar possession (Vos, 2019, p. 68).

The Lord then goes on to specify that this lineage of set-apart people of El Shaddai, God Almighty, this blessing of multiplied descendants will come through Abram's wife Sarai, whose name God changed to Sarah, rather than through Hagar and the child Ishmael that had already been born (v. 19-21). Although Ishmael was also blessed by God (v. 20), it is made clear that Ishmael and Hagar are to remain outside of the set-apart chosen people of God. One possible reason for this is that God is demonstrating the importance of the patriarchal lineage through marriage (Bergant, 2013). Another is that God knew David would come from this bloodline and that the covenant being made with Abraham would foreshadow the covenant made later with David, from whose lineage the Lord Jesus Himself, the ultimate blessing of all time, would come (Vos, 2019).

God's desire to bless through marriage, procreation and the family is further solidified when reading the Law of Moses. The Ten Commandments hold specific commandments relating to families and the importance of the relationships within the family. While the first five commandments deal with mankind's relationship with God, the second five deal with mankind's

relationships with others. Commandment five is the first one in the group concerning the human-to-human relationship. It reads, "[h]onor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (NKJV, 1982, Exodus 20:12) and speaks to the blessing that comes when children honor parents. Commandment seven is "you shall not commit adultery" (NKJV, 1982, Exodus 20:14). This, along with many other Scriptures, express the disgust God has for the sin of adultery, which is sexual interaction with a person that is married to someone else.

The Bible also identifies adultery as spiritually being the same as idolatry, covetousness, and apostasy (Jeremiah 3:6-9; Ezekiel 16:32; Hosea 1:2:3; Revelation 2:22). Apostasy, as defined by Fink (1991), is "the act of rebelling against, forsaking, abandoning, or falling away from what one has believed" (n. p.). Covetousness is the desperate desire for what another man or woman possesses and is akin to idolatry and at the root of adultery (Woodruff, 1997). Idolatry is "divine honor paid to any created object" (Easton, n.d.) and is linked with covetousness in the New Testament (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13; Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5).

Adultery can be seen then as a spiritual falling away from practicing obedience to God and the ways of the Bible, a coveting of something someone else possesses, and a paying of divine honor to something that has been created by the Creator. Adultery is such a grievous sin that it is listed as the main reason for allowing divorce (Matthew 19:8-9; Mark 10:5-9) but He equates adultery with the New Testament definition of rebellion against God's prescribed methods in saying that the law was only given and allowed "Because of the hardness of your [mans'] hearts" (Matthew 19:8; Mark 10:5), but stresses that this was never the intention of God when He instituted the family model in the earth (Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9). What must be understood is that DV is biblically equitable to adultery under the New Testament explanation.

DV involves one person exerting dominant control over the will and personhood of another, which is in direct rebellion to the mandates God has placed on relationship roles and responsibilities for the Believer (Woodruff, 1997).

There are many Scriptures that speak to the way relationships, particularly families, are supposed to operate and relate to one another. For this discussion, two sections of Scripture were examined. One section which speaks directly to the manner of love that should be evident in all relationships for Christians. The other gives directions about how relationships within the family unit should exist.

The first, written by Paul, the Apostle, explains in beautiful detail the type of love that Christians are supposed to demonstrate.

> Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (NKJV, 1982, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

This type of love is against basic human nature that seeks self and can only be accomplished through faithful devotion to God. It is a fruit of the Spirit of God being active in the life of the Believer (Galatians 5:22-23) and is one of the outward signs that prove whether a person is a Believer in Christ or not. Jesus said, “By this, all will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another” (NKJV, 1982, John 13:35). One can deduce then, that showing the love of Christ one to another is one of the most basic tenants of the Christian faith. Anything that operates contrary to the showing of love is in direct rebellion to the ways God has directed His children to relate to one another.

The second section of Scripture is found in Ephesians, chapter five. In this section of Scripture, the Apostle Paul writes to the Ephesian church directions for how marriage should function and how husbands and wives should relate to each other.

> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. "For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband. (v. 22-33).

Here marriage between a man and a woman is equated to the marriage between Christ and the priesthood of Believers known as the Church. The union of man and woman is like the union between Christ and the Church in that the two are made one legally, spiritually, and vitally, illustrating a covenant relationship between two that is sealed by the Holy Spirit (Erickson, 2015). Therefore, mutual submission between husband and wife demonstrates a right relationship with Christ, Who submitted Himself to Father God and to the Church that He was sent to save through His death, burial, and resurrection (Ephesians 5:21).

Wives are directed to submit to the leadership of husbands in all honor and respect. This submission is to be met by the husbands with the same sacrificial love Christ showed for the Church. Love that is expressed through gentleness, kindness, patience, and other godly attributes awarded to mankind by the Spirit of God (Merkle, 2016; Roberts, 2016). The Apostle continues to exhort husbands to nurture and cherish wives. More instruction is given to husbands about how to lead wives gently and lovingly into paths of righteousness than are given to wives about submitting to husbands (Merkle, 2016). This highlights the role of the husband as spiritual leader of the household and illustrates how the husband's treatment of the wife should lead toward closer communion with Christ and an outward expression of that relationship. The fact that Paul

had to give these instructions to Ephesus demonstrates a silent acknowledgment that this mutual submission is not the normal code of the times in household situations (Roberts, 2016). Verhey and Harvard (2011) maintain that many of the "household codes" (p. 191) of the early church arose out of existing traditions that were extremely male-dominant. When Christ came, however, He taught a different kind of code, one that leveled the playing field between people groups through Baptism and belief in Him.

In Galatians 3:26-29, the Apostle Paul explains it this way,

> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (NKJV, 1982).

Of course, Paul is not saying that being in Christ physically changes one's gender, but what the New Testament writer is saying is that in Christ all have access to the same inheritance from God. This would be a wild claim in the ancient near eastern times in which this was written. It would certainly put any community that ascribed to this type of egalitarian lifestyle on the fringes of society while also creating difficulties within the households in making such a drastic switch from the customs and traditions the people were akin to. "In this household code, Ephesians nudged conventional morality toward something a little more fitting to God's good future" (Verhey & Harvard, 2011, p. 192).

**Misappropriation of Scripture to Perpetuate Abuse**

For Christians, particularly evangelicals, the Bible is foundational (Petit, 2005; Richards & Bredfeldt, 1998). Evangelicals believe that the teachings within it were intended by God to be utilized by His followers to grow spiritually and better reflect the image of God (Pazmino, 1997; Petit, 2005; Smith, 2009). Christian educators and pastors have been called by God to take on the

awesome responsibility of caring for the Father's sheep here in the earth (Laniak, 2006). While there have been examples of those in these positions that have operated out of impure motives or malice, most pastors and Christian educators are devoted to teaching individuals how to "show forth the glory of God" (Pazmino, 1997, p. 70). Richards and Bredfeldt (1998) explained that, according to Scripture (John 14:22-24), Christian living that glorified God was that lived in obedience to God and His Word. These authors maintained that "[t]eaching, for evangelicals, is Bible teaching" (p. 249). Knowing the Word, what it said, and how it looked in practice, then, should be of utmost importance to the Christ follower (Petit, 2008). Pastors and teachers of the Word are trusted with the task of not only teaching what the Word said, but also with helping the student realize how that Scripture should be applied in practical daily life. Richards and Bredfeldt (1998) stated that "the most difficult task of the Bible teacher is to help students see truth in terms of their own lives. This is particularly difficult because the teacher himself may not know the implications of a passage for his students" (p. 168). Literature suggested that the lens through which the student received the information and read the Scriptures, determined the way in which that student understood and applied the Scripture (Heibert, 2008; Malphurs, 2003; Petit, 2008; Towns, 2007).

The same would apply to seminarians learning to be pastors. Knowledge gained during seminary and personal learning would be filtered through the lenses of the mind and, possibly, sin (Binford-Weaver, 1998; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011). As knowledge of the Word of God was touted by researchers as the foundation upon which Christian understanding and life are built, research suggested that truly biblical understandings of Scripture would be vital to the student, the teacher, and the pastor (Melik et al, 2010; Richards & Bredfeldt, 1998; Wilhoit & Dettoni, 1995). Melick et al (2010) explained it this way,

> Christian educators, therefore, have a significant role to play in the growth of their students. The time spent in presenting the Word of God and applying it to life is crucial to the change God intends. It is imperative that teachers know and teach in accord with accurate knowledge that comes from knowing God's Word.

Research found that while most pastors are good, godly people, some, due to lenses marred by ignorance, malice, or personal bias missed the mark on knowing and teaching Scripture related to abuse and marriage in a way that was accurate and in accordance with God's character and the totality of Scripture (Clark-Kroeger & Nason-Clark, 2001; Nason-Clark, 1997; Nason-Clark, 2004; Nason-Clark, 2009; Nason-Clark, 2017; Smith-Clark, 2016; Ware et al, 2004).

Some research showed that Scripture references such as

> [w]ives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands" (NKJV, 1982, Ephesians 5:22-24)

have been misused and misappropriated throughout history (Kim, 2014; Mahoney et al, 2015; Smith-Clark, 2016). Other research suggested that interpretations of this sort were returning them to the traditional understandings that the NT church was attempting to adapt to a more Christ-glorifying approach (Verhey & Harvard, 2011). There was also research found that suggested that a broad range of interpretations existed within evangelical populations. That research maintained that some evangelicals strictly took a complementarian approach to Scripture and still others were strictly egalitarian in approach (Stephens & Walker, 2015).

The common threads that were found to run through all approaches to interpretation were the human condition of sin and the need to remove marred lenses that taint the perspective through which Scripture interpretation occurred (Heibert, 2008). Moreover, through those marred lenses of sinful worldviews, husbands, leaders, and others in society have approached these Scriptures and others like them in ways that have perverted the male-female relationship to

such an extent that abusers often feel justified in actions that bring subjugation instead of liberation “to the weaker vessel” (NKJV, 1982, 1 Peter 3:7). Research suggested this occurred in the abused, abusers, and sometimes, unwitting, or not, through pastoral leadership (Drumm et al, 2009; Knickmeyer et al, 2010; Stephens & Walker, 2015). Knickmeyer, Levitt, and Horne (2010) conducted a study in which abuse survivors were interviewed. The researchers found that

> Nine of the 10 participants indicated that they attempted to conform to a Biblical standard of submission and that they believed this conformity contributed to the occurrence of domestic violence. Partners enforced conformity through a variety of means ranging from invoking religious standards to threat of violence and outright physical abuse (Knickmeyer et al, 2010, p. 103).

In yet another study, Levitt, Swanger, and Butler (2008) interviewed abuse perpetrators about the views held on scriptural texts relating to marriage, family, and divorce. These researchers found that “many of the men (5 of 12) thought that ending the relationship was the only way to stop violence from recurring” (Levitt et al, 2008, p. 440), but that nine out of twelve challenged the idea of leaving the marriage based on personal understandings about divorce that they reported came from Scripture (Levitt et al, 2008).

While that most pastors desire to carefully and properly exegete the Scriptures and teach in a way that glorifies God and demonstrates His character, some have missed the mark. Studies suggested that pastors and leaders in evangelical traditions were at times contributing to this misunderstanding and misapplication by not teaching and preaching on domestic violence as sin that offers biblical permission for divorce (Houston-Kolnik & Todd, 2016; Houston-Kolnik et al, 2019). Yet another study that interviewed faith leaders found that 19 out of 22 of them would not recommend divorce until after repeated abuse and attempts at reconciliation and nine of them cited scripture for their reasoning (Levitt & Ware, 2006). A quote from the Levitt and Ware (2006) study demonstrated this position,

> Humanely speaking, I don't want a man hurting a woman in any way. ...But biblically, the two arguable grounds for divorce are sexual immorality and desertion. You can build a [case] but I am not sure that I can as a ministry of the Gospel. I can say to a person as a human being and someone that cares about women, "I can understand why you are going to Marriage, Divorce, and IPV 219 divorce that way, but I really can't say that that is God's best [way]." ...I have prayed for people to die who are abusing women and that doesn't mean that somebody should kill them. ...I pray for God to save him. ...I have to say what the scripture is saying. ... Does it seem [more] reasonable to divorce a man who was hitting her than if he just one time in his life slept with his secretary? Yes. Of course, I am a human being ... but do I have a biblical mandate to promote that strategy? No, I don't. I am ... just the mailman (p. 218-219).

This type of misunderstanding of the scriptural texts has led to misapplication. That misapplication has permeated society. Whole denominations, cultures, and geographic regions have believed that the abused should simply stay, keep silent about the abuse, pray harder, and believe God for a change in the situation (Smith-Clark, 2016; Stephens & Walker, 2015). Such flawed ideologies were the subject of literature from Mahoney et al (2015) which not only examined the misappropriation of these Scriptures but suggested that some religious systems have worked to keep women in abusive situations by equating the choice of fleeing for safety with dishonoring God and the faith. This work has gone on to build a case against the church as being culpable in the abuse by discouraging outcry and separation and encouraging silent compliance (Mahoney et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2009). Other literature supported Mahoney et al (2015) and maintained that survivors of DV cited the use of these tenets by abusers to keep them in shame and in the marriage (Knickermeyer et al, 2010; Popescu et al, 2009). And still other research found that perpetrators admitted to using such tactics (Levitt et al, 2008). Literature from Francis et al (2017) suggested that these ideologies have prohibited women and leaders from being able to discern what abuse is, the proper way to address it, and work culturally to stigmatize those that choose to leave abusive situations, particularly in the church.

Research suggested that Scriptures discussed previously that are meant to define what godly love should look like have been perverted through the lens of sin to convince the abused that staying in the marriage is what God would prescribe (Barnett, 2000; Clark, 2009; Smith-Clark, 2016). Further research showed that leaders, sometimes unaware of the fullness of dysfunction and sometimes impacted by their own marred lenses, have encouraged abused women that being obedient to God means that people stay and endure the abuse citing that "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (NKJV, 1982, 1 Corinthians 13:7; Aune & Barnes, 2018; Clark, 2005; Clark, 2009; Clato-Day, 2020) while seeming to completely ignore the mandate that love "does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth" (NKJV, 1982, 1 Corinthians 13:5-6; Clark-Kroeger & Nason-Clark, 2001). Research also showed that misapplication of Scripture in this way has led to more abuse by further condemning the abused and perpetuating unbiblical ideas about power and control within the male-female relationship (Nason-Clark, 2009). It must be noted that these foundational beliefs are not only found in evangelicalism, but also permeate other faith systems such as Judaism and Islam (Ware et al, 2004). Because the researcher chose to focus on evangelicalism to narrow the research field, the other faith systems that espouse such beliefs were not discussed.

***Staying***

Research indicated that some evangelical Christians have placed extreme importance on maintaining the family unit at all costs (Braken, 2008; Popescu et al, 2009; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 2016; Stanton, 2002). Divorce has been seen by victims, perpetrators, and others in the community as something that is not an option for faithful worshippers of God in evangelical circles (Drumm et al, 2009; Knickermeyer et al, 2006; Levitt et al, 2006; Levitt et al, 2008;

Smith-Clark, 2016). Fulfilling traditional roles of homemaker and servant to husband has been important to women in typically evangelical homes where the husband is seen as the head and authority over the wife (Popescu et al, 2009). Evangelical abused, abusers and pastors alike have, at times, equated the abuse with the sufferings of Christ (Aune & Barnes, 2018; Drumm et al, 2009; Knickermeyer et al, 2010; Levitt et al, 2006; Levitt et al, 2008; Smith-Clark, 2016). McMullin et al (2015) says,

> For victims of domestic violence, acceptance of violence as their 'lot in life' may prove harmful or even fatal. While repentance and reconciliation can be important elements in the healing journey of both women victims and male perpetrators, they are not enough to change behavior and thinking and to keep women safe (p. 114).

Research found that counsel from pastors to forgive, pray, and "bear all things" (NKJV, 1982, 1 Corinthians 13:7) as directed by the Apostle Paul has been ineffective in changing the abuser and in helping the abused (Holtmann & Nason-Clark, 2018). While this might not be the experience of every evangelical, this type of misapplication of Scripture has been cited as one of the main reasons believing Christians give for not leaving abusive situations (Jankowski et al, 2018; Knickermeyer et al, 2010; Popescu et al, 2009; Pyles, 2007; Schamp, 2010). Misapplication of Scripture could and has sometimes happened quite absent from pastoral leadership involvement and could be a product of a lens, or worldview, devoid of spiritual formation and stifled by severe trauma that has caused an inability to understand and apply correctly (Heibert, 2008; Pazmino, 1997; Richards & Bredfeldt, 1998). What was found was that the nuances of decisions to stay are many and varied and could be the topic of a dissertation study all on their own (Barnett, 2000; Stanton, 2002). However, for the purposes of this study, the researcher only presented a brief description of the literature that maintained survivors have reported foundational understandings of evangelicalism as a reason to stay and suffer through continued abuse (Braken, 2008; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 2016; Stanton, 2002).

### *Silence*

Reports from survivors have suggested that outcries of abuse to religious leadership have often been met with a suggested silence on behalf of the victim (Frances et al, 2017; Pyles, 2007), a silence about it from the pulpit, and a silence about it within the congregation (Pyles, 2007; Nason-Clark, 2009; McMullin et al, 2015). While this could certainly not be applied generally to all evangelical congregations or pastors, this "holy hush" (Nason-Clark, 2017) has been suggested by researchers to lead to further victimization of the abused, whether intended or not. Research suggested that silence of this kind turned abusive episodes into opportunities for forgiveness and longsuffering through quiet prayer and fasting (McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2004; Pyles, 2007). Nason-Clark (2017) has maintained that

> [t]he presence of a holy hush robs any opportunity for the office of a religious leader to become a safe place to discuss the fear and the vulnerability of all family members — victim and abuser alike — when domestic violence strikes the home of the faithful" (n. p.).

Feminist researchers have suggested that these attitudes of silence proceed from patriarchal hierarchical power structures that still subjugate women to men (Kim, 2014) and are common in the traditional denominations of the evangelical church (Jankowski et al, 2018). The patriarchal reading and application of Scripture as explained earlier has been suggested as one possible reason for the silent denial of the problem as well as the lack of discipline for the abuser (Gustafson, 2005; Jankowski et al, 2018; Shei, 2004). While research suggested there are many reasons that shape a desire of the family to live in silent denial of abuse, for the purposes of this study, the researcher only addressed those that were suggested by researchers to be based on evangelical beliefs (Francis et al, 2017; Houston-Kolnik, Todd, & Greeson, 2019; Smith-Clark, 2016; Walker, 2014).

***Further Victimization***

As with other discussions of misappropriations and misapplication of scriptural texts, it must be understood that most evangelical pastors and believers have not intentionally or maliciously contributed to further victimization but have done so more out of a lack of knowledge and understanding of the complexities of the situations (Jankowski et al, 2018; Mahoney et al, 2017; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 206). Research showed that due to the psychology and sin patterns of abusers, unsuspecting pastors have at times been duped by the charismatic and seemingly gracious personalities of these perpetrators (Howard et al, 2010; Howard, Trevillion, & Agnew-Davies, 2010; Homiak & Singeltary, 2010; and Smith-Clark, 2016). According to research, one example of how well-meaning pastors have contributed to further victimization without realizing it would be having the abused and the abusers come together to discuss or be counseled on the issue (Jankowski et al, 2018; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 2016). While Matthew 18 has given the prescription for how to handle offenses and wrongs that are committed in relationships, research suggested that the approach recommended therein could be detrimental to the abused. Jesus taught in Matthew 18:15-17,

> Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector (NKJV, 1982).

But studies have shown that this approach has served to worsen abuse once the confrontation has been completed (Jankowski et al, 2018; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 2016). In these situations, the psychology of the abuser yielded a charming response while in the presence of the third-party mediator, whether that be pastor or counselor, followed by extreme physical, psychological, and emotional abuse once the couple was alone again. Confrontation of this sort has reportedly

resulted in abusers denying the abuse by saying the abused are exaggerating, or worse, admitting it occurred but claiming the abuse was because the victim refused to submit to godly authority (Howard et al, 2010; Howard, Trevillion, & Agnew-Davies, 2010; Homiak & Singeltary, 2010; and Smith-Clark, 2016). The third-party could only speak to what was being portrayed at the time, and without full understanding of the events that occur behind closed doors and the nature of the abusers to conceal, deny, or blame shift, third-party mediators, including pastors, often became unwitting supporters of the abuse (Jankowski et al, 2018; Smith-Clark, 2016). “Beliefs that function to rationalize, justify, and/or perpetuate men’s violence against women” (Gerger et al, 2007) or those that were used incorrectly to do so, have served to further victimize the condemned and, in the eyes of the abuser, gave ammunition in the form of pastoral support (Gerger et al, 2007; Nason-Clark, 1997; Nason-Clark, 2004). According to research, lack of discernment about the abuser’s true character and willingness to take the abuser’s word over the word of the abusee have been common due to internal doctrines that have seen men as more trustworthy than women because of theological misconceptions discussed earlier about Eve and sin (Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015).

One example of this was found in the Popescu et al (2009) study. These researchers interviewed evangelical female survivors of domestic violence. One of the interviewees, identified only as Karla, stated that when she attempted to outcry to her pastor this interaction occurred,

> And I said, "Bobby is sexually abusing me and tying me up," and I felt that I could confide in him [the pastor] a little bit. And I said, "I need help." And then he says, "This is hard for me to believe. I have never seen any evidence of that in him. All the times I've ever been with him, he never even said a curse word or anything, so it's hard for me to believe" (Popescu et al, 2009, p. 405-406).

In this instance, the pastor dismissed the claim immediately and investigated no further. Yet another woman, identified as Joanne, in this study reported that when she sought help that, "[t]here has only been one pastor that has been positive…but the rest of them always believed that we should stay married no matter what" (Popescu et al, 2009, p. 402).

**Unbiblical Ideas About Power and Control**

Heibert (2008) maintained that "worldviews are often ideologies that those in power use to keep others in subjection. Worldviews both enable us to see reality and blind us from seeing it fully" (p. 23). Researchers acclimated to a feminist worldview have maintained that patriarchal views of the roles of women and men have been at the root of DV and the lack of leaders addressing its existence within believing families. These same researchers maintained that ideas of submission as posited in the Bible have kept women subservient to men and limited the success a female can experience in a male-dominated society (Drumm et al, 2009; Gustafson, 2005; Kim, 2014; Knickermeyer et al, 2010; Shei, 2004). The passage of Scripture discussed earlier from Ephesians 5 is one such example of the submission to which these researchers were referring. Further, as Kim (2014) pointed out, the Old Testament is filled with stories about women being treated in ways that would not be socially acceptable today. At first look it might appear as though the Bible promotes this type of subjugation, a type of keeping women in the place history has made for females—that of property owned by husbands, fathers, or other responsible males (Kim, 2014), but other researchers maintained the Bible suggested no such thing (Drumm et al, 2009; Levitt et al, 2008; Stephens & Walker, 2015).

Other researchers suggested that Paul was working to institute a new, more Christ-like definition of submission and of power and control within the household and in society. Roberts (2016) highlights that "[m]ost household codes in the Hellenistic world addressed men as moral

agents, leaving women, children, and slaves as those acted upon by the superior men. Yet according to Ephesians, wives have the opportunity and authority to choose to submit themselves to their husbands. In Christ, their moral agency is both assumed and affirmed" (p. 199). Paul's writing here was meant to teach a largely Hellenistic society in Ephesus that the husband as the head of the wife does not mean that the husband is in authority over the wife, but that the husband is the source of the wife, just as Adam was the source from which God made Eve (v. 23; Genesis 2:22). Of course, the Lord is the ultimate source of all things, but what Paul was saying here is that wives have the right to choose to submit or not. This choice should be based on humble submission first and foremost to Christ Jesus which gives wives the freedom to resist the leading of the husband when it does not glorify God or leads the wife away from fellowship with Him. Researchers have suggested that what the Bible maintains is more of a mutual submission between two people that love God and that from that love they choose to love each other in a way that glorifies Christ (Reid, 2008; Roberts, 2016; Verhey & Harvard, 2011).

Literal readings of "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (NKJV, 1982, 1 Timothy 2:11-13) have appeared on the surface to contradict that free agency and mutual submission, but work to confirm this concept of woman proceeding from man as the understanding of headship as utilized by Paul in Ephesians 5:23. The Hellenistic world that had largely influenced the communities Paul, Peter, and Timothy were ministering in had always functioned as a hierarchical system where head meant authority and submission was meant to go from the bottom of that structure up. The Kingdom principles being taught work to flip that hierarchical power structure upside down making the servant the greatest

and the head the least. Concepts like equality of gender, race, and social standing were things Jesus instituted in His teachings and lifestyle (Roberts, 2016; Verhey & Harvard, 2011).

Research indicated that Paul's directions to Timothy in the biblical text, along with the apostle's directions to the Corinthian church,

> Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church (NKJV, 1982, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35).

have been used to form doctrines within the church that contribute to an unbiblical understanding of power and control over women (Knickermeyer et al, 2010; Levitt et al, 2006; Popescu et al, 2009). This same research maintained that apart from the careful contextual interpretation that has looked at all issues concerning the societal and cultural climate of the day these verses were written in, they could be used to contribute to the misconception that males are to be dominant and in control over females as well (Knickermeyer et al, 2010; Levitt et al, 2006; Popescu et al, 2009; Roberts, 2016).

Researchers have confessed that when taken at face value these passages of Scripture have seemed like harsh restrictions for women that have upheld a hierarchical system with men being superior to women since these verses seem to allow only men to speak, teach, and lead in the church. However, if this was the case and Paul the Apostle is making a rule that should apply to all churches, then why three chapters earlier was it written that "every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved" (NKJV, 1982, 1 Corinthians 11:5)? Beacon Bible Commentary (2009) has maintained this as proof that the apostle had no intention of forming a churchwide policy restricting women from public prayer, prophecy, and teaching. Instead, this commentary has held that Paul's concern was one that arose in these specific churches because of the influx of new

pagan converts that had taken liberties with the freedom found in Christ that were not in line with biblical character and appearance. These liberties were causing chaos and disorder in the church and had to be addressed (Beacon, 2009).

Also, at work in these two churches was the infiltration of false teachings. Because of the societal and cultural paradigms that did not allow women to be schooled in the Scriptures, be educated in philosophies, or become disciples of the rabbis of the day, women did not have the base of Torah knowledge that the men had. This left the women weak and susceptible to accepting false teachings and proselytizing those teachings rather than the true teachings of Scripture. Paul, in both 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-13, is prescribing a method of helping these women by instructing the congregations to just not allow any women to speak until sufficient time had passed for the true teachings of the gospel to be cemented. The apostle goes on to suggest that men should take the opportunity to teach the Scriptures to wives at home to reinforce the learning and growing process (Keener, 2014).

Furthermore, there is substantial proof found within Paul's other writings that support women in leadership within the church. "The fact that Paul acknowledges freely his debt to a considerable group of women who helped in the work of Christ's Church suggests that he himself was not always bound by such rigid stipulations as those expressed to Timothy" (Beacon, 2009). The Bible, especially the New Testament, gives equal power and authority to women, despite a couple of passages that are misinterpreted to keep women from serving in certain roles in the church. This can be seen in the multiple passages honoring the women of God that served alongside of Paul (Romans 16; Colossians 4; Acts 12).

Phoebe (Romans 16) was a benefactor and provided a place for worship and fellowship. Prisca, Mary, Nympha, and Lydia were all heads of house churches (Romans 16, Colossians 4,

Acts 12). While Prisca and her husband Aquila served together in ministry, Paul mentions Prisca first almost every time this couple is mentioned. In a culture adapted to a hierarchical system that favors the patriarchy, it would have been considered scandalous to list the wife's name before the husband's name (Reid, 2008). Junia and Andronicus are mentioned by Paul as fellow apostles that had been imprisoned for the sake of the gospel (Romans 16). While all these women are noted by Paul as holding positions of authority in the church, most still hold onto a Hellenistic reading of the passages discussed limiting the power and authority of women in the church. Scholars have believed that what is most likely true is that the words attributed to Paul about restricting women in the church had nothing to do with male authority over women and everything to do with the way the speaking in the church was occurring (Reid, 2008). Because of patriarchal patterns that have existed legally, socially, and culturally throughout history, those in the church have interpreted these few words of Paul in a way that does not glorify God (Gustafson, 2005; Verhey & Harvard 2011). Misconceptions, misinterpretations, and misapplications of these Scriptures have been cited by researchers as foundational to possible perpetuation of abuse and the denial of its existence (Gustafson, 2005; Schamp, 2010; Ware et al, 2004).

**Denial of the Problem's Existence**

Researchers have found that many religious leaders believe that this kind of violence does not happen within the walls of the church (Gustafson, 2005; Nason-Clark, 2009; Schamp, 2010; Ware et al, 2004). These leaders have sited Scripture that discourages violence of all kinds and maintained that through consistent attendance to services issues that might exist within the marriage can be overcome (Homiak & Singletary, 2007; Ware et al, 2004). Scriptures that describe the ways people are supposed to submit to one another in love and humility have also

been cited by religious leaders as tenets of faith that believers should not violate. This denial was found across all major religions, but evangelical Christian views on marriage, divorce, and family have often superseded what the Bible says about the issue. Church culture and stigmas surrounding DV have contributed to this suffering silence and denial (Ware et al, 2004).

This belief that DV is something that happens to non-believing families has only helped to perpetuate the societal views of the abused (Shei, 2004). People in church culture might believe that the abused are lying, overexaggerating, or otherwise misrepresenting the issues in the family. Traditionally, this has been part of the underlying reason why some church leaders shy away from addressing the issue of DV from the pulpit and from introducing programs within the congregation that are geared specifically toward serving DV impacted congregants. For these leaders, it has been incomprehensible that this kind of violence could be happening in homes within the congregations being served (Ware et al, 2004).

Schamp's (2010) exploratory dissertation looked at the issue from the perspective of Christian counselors currently working with DV clients. Findings in this study suggested that pastors and leaders often counsel congregants to pray and fast, be more compliant, and to try harder to not provoke the abuser. Counsel such as this could only come from a basis of misunderstanding of the entire issue, not to mention biblical truths about the ways in which a wife is to submit, what that means, and how the husband should respond "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (NKJV, 1982, Ephesians 5:25). Wives in these situations have often seen the situation as an opportunity to glorify God by faithfully staying with husbands that abuse, sacrificing self for the sake of the family unit (Schamp, 2010).

Still, others have maintained that it is impossible for a husband to abuse a wife as 1 Corinthians 7:4a says, "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the

husband *does*" (NKJV, 1982). DV survivors have attested that pastoral leaders have suggested that what has been experienced is not abuse but rather a husband having authority over the wife's body and doing what is seen as necessary to keep the wife in righteous submission (Kim 2014). What is distorted here is that Paul goes on to say the same thing to husbands and is mentioning all this in the context of keeping each other pure from sexual defilement and temptations of adultery (1 Corinthians 7:1-5). It does not give the husband rights to the wife as though the wife is property, even though it has been used to support such claims historically (Gustafson, 2005).

### Summary of Theological Framework

While seminary training is meant to prepare leaders for ministering to the needs of people through a biblical worldview, many have reported feeling inadequately prepared to handle situations like DV. With cultural, historical, and religious implications, DV is one topic that has consistently not been easy to maneuver. Personal biases, ideologies, and mindsets must be addressed within prospective members of evangelical church pastorate so that Scriptures can be seen and taught through clear lenses. Scripture sets a precedence for mutual submission in marriage and life, explains the dynamics of godly power and authority that exist in every believer regardless of gender, and negates ideologies that keep pastors in denial.

## Theoretical Framework of the Study

The researcher chose to study seminary preparedness as reflected in perceptions of adequacy among evangelical pastors because this is the camp personally identified with and the camp in which the seminary this research has been presented to resides. This is also the camp that historically holds more traditional views about marriage, family, and divorce and holds to a more literal reading of Scripture. In this section, literature on evangelical seminary training, preparedness for ministering to congregants affected by DV and the resulting feelings of

adequacy among pastors, and theoretical methods of interpreting research findings, those considered and chosen, is explored.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of seminary education has been to prepare students for ministering to the needs of the people from the perspective of a thoroughly biblical worldview. What has not been addressed in a basic overview of seminary is that not only is the worldview taught at each seminary meant to be biblical, but each seminary holds certain denominational doctrines, or readings and understandings of the biblical text, which have determined the lens through which the Scriptures are read, understood and ministered. Seminaries that have supported denominational beliefs in line with evangelical doctrine have maintained four core beliefs: 1- that the Word of God is inerrant and written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; 2- that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way one can be saved; 3- that one must be born again and have a personal conversion to be saved; and 4- that it is every believer's job to intentionally spread the gospel through a lifestyle of evangelism. This camp has maintained a more traditional reading of Scripture and has held to stricter ideas about proper conduct among believers (Green, 2004).

Seminaries that are mainline protestant have held a different perspective about these four core beliefs: 1- that the Bible is simply a historical work meant to be deciphered in context with the current age and societal atmospheres; 2- that one can be saved through Jesus, but that other various means of reaching God are possible; 3- that there is no need for a personal conversion experience but that one is spiritually transformed throughout the journey of life; and 4- that evangelism is much less proselytizing and more about creating economic, social, and justice reform. Those in this camp have tended to be more modern, liberal, and progressive in the reading of the Word and in lifestyle behaviors (Green, 2004).

Research showed that differing perspectives on biblical principles, impacted how the various camps might view issues concerning domestic violence very differently (Stephens & Walker, 2015). It also demonstrated how these differing theological doctrines would impact the perspective from which seminaries teach the students about how to minister to various issues within society (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013).

## Evangelical Seminary Training

A brief overview of seminary, its purpose, and the hopeful outcome of participation has been highlighted throughout this review. Included here is the literature that already exists to better define seminary, further designation of seminary that is specifically evangelical in nature, and a brief summary of studies on course offerings to evaluate the potential to equip pastors to minister to those experiencing DV.

### *Seminary Defined*

Seminary is a graduate school for those wanting to pastor or lead in some religious setting (Malphurs, 2016). The purpose of this education is producing students with Bible knowledge that is translatable into service to the community and its many and varied needs. Another purpose of this education is to prepare the student to work in positions of religious leadership. One could infer that preparation for the pastorate would include training that would help seminary graduates learn ways to serve the needs of the community through the lens of Scripture, but that inference is not implicit. Malphurs (2016) has maintained that "many of our classical evangelical seminaries appear to have missed the paradigm shift that has taken place in our culture. Instead, they are preparing pastors to minister as if we are still living back in the 1940s and 1950s" (p. 10). That the education is theological, is inherent, but that has not necessarily translated into preparedness for pastoral duties to the congregation. It has prepared

them for the duties of preparing and preaching sermons but does little for those students hoping to leave seminary prepared for pastoral work (Malphurs, 2016). One might suggest that each of these points has the same implication of personal spiritual development and growth, but neither of the others have pointed to that as a defined purpose for the educational study.

According to the Bylaws of the Association of Theological Schools (2020), or ATS, *seminary* has been limited to theological "schools…that offer graduate, professional theological degrees, [and] are demonstrably engaged in educating professional leadership for communities of the Christian and Jewish faiths" (p. 3). ATS (2020) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation established for the purpose of enhancing, defending, and improving theological education and the institutions through which that education is administered in the United States and Canada (p. 1). In furtherance of this goal to advocate on behalf of seminaries while improving the education received therein, the Bylaws of the ATS (2020) state that this organization serves as "a supporting organization of the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools" (p. 1).

While it is true that not all seminaries are accredited, the standards used to validate the institutions that are accredited have served to further define the term seminary for the purposes of this study. These standards, defined by ten characteristics according to the Commission on Accrediting of the ATS, have served to determine accreditation worthiness and are widely accepted as valid measurements of educational credibility (Commission, 2020). The Commission's ten characteristics have maintained that accreditable seminaries have been focused on biblical principles combined with scholarly discipline that is integrous and practical (Commission, 2020). Details of these attributes can be found in Appendix F. What is common among all these characteristics is that seminaries have first and foremost been defined as schools

of graduate or professional level education that “are communities of faith and learning” (Commission, 2020, pp. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17). The Commission went on to say, theological schools have given appropriate attention to the intellectual, human, spiritual, and vocational dimensions of student learning and formation. Schools have pursued those dimensions with attention to academic rigor, intercultural competency, global awareness and engagement, and lifelong learning. Schools have supported student learning and formation through appropriate educational modalities and policies (p. 2). This researcher maintained that this information does not only contain the definition of seminary but also has delineated the goal of this education in training students for the pastoral vocation in that it has maintained that “the Master of Divinity degree prepares people for religious leadership or service in congregations and other settings, as well as for advanced degrees” (p. 5).

This researcher recognized the need to develop a working definition of seminary for the purposes of this study, one that encompassed and clearly depicted what seminary is and what purposes it has served to accomplish according to the Malphurs (2016) text, and the information gathered from the ATS (2020) and the Commission (2020). That said, this researcher combined all the above points into one more comprehensive definition of seminary training that served as the base of understanding it throughout this dissertation. Seminary then, for the purposes of this study, has been defined as a graduate school that: 1- teaches all subjects through the lens of Scripture; 2- offers advanced teachings on religion, church history, the Bible, and more; 3- promotes personal spiritual growth and development; 4- teaches the basic tools necessary for vocational ministry, and 5- prepares the student for ministering to the needs of the community.

### *Evangelical Seminary*

According to ATS (2020), seminaries are usually denominational, meaning they have been established to teach people to minister based on a certain set of theological doctrines. This is evident in standards 3-5 as listed by the Commission on Accreditation (2020) and mentioned in the previous section of this dissertation. Ensign-George (2013) explained that,

> Denomination is a form in which Christians can live out varying understandings of faith in Jesus Christ and of what that faith requires in terms of right belief and right practice. Denomination provides a form in which new insights into the faith, or new applications of old insights to changing contexts and circumstances, can be tested by being lived out. Denomination provides a form in which human creatures, finite and creaturely, can live in the freedom to pursue the multiplicity of patterns of life and belief that are generated by the richness of the Gospel, and to do so in a way that is partial and fragmentary, and thus dependent on and essentially connected to the wholeness of the Gospel (p. 3).

Still, other researchers maintained that "'Denomination' is the term most commonly used to denote families of churches that share the same doctrines or dogmas and thus share fellowship" (Kurian & Day, 2017, p. 15). Therefore, a seminary that is denominationally evangelical would be one that has been designed by a body of collected churches that hold doctrinal beliefs of the evangelical tradition. These schools teach all material through the lenses of those doctrinal belief systems and produce graduates that are usually employed within those denominational forms (Commission, 2020). It is important then to understand the traditions, beliefs, and practices of the evangelical denomination to understand the lens through which all education is accomplished in those seminaries.

A very brief overview was given previously in which the four core components of evangelicalism were mentioned. Those four core beliefs are 1- the inerrancy of the Bible; 2- a born-again experience; 3- that Jesus is the only way to salvation; and 4- that believers have a responsibility to evangelize the word of God for the purpose of converting non-believers into born-again Christians (Green, 2004). Outside of these four core beliefs exist a host of other

traditions and practices that vary slightly from denomination to denomination under the umbrella of evangelicalism. Research has suggested there are some of these traditions that have been attributed to the perpetuation of abuse due to biblical misconceptions. Some extreme evangelicals have been found to adhere to unbiblical understandings of power and control in male-female relationships (Barnett, 2000; McMullin yet al, 2015). These extremes and unbiblical understandings are cited by survivors as reasons for staying in abusive marriages (Barnett, 2000), remaining silent about the abuse, and feeling more victimized by leadership when help is sought (McMullin et al, 2015).

While researchers do not maintain that evangelical beliefs are causal in nature or that seminaries teach foundational beliefs in a way that is unbiblical, it is suggested that people suffering from the sin condition can and do often utilize such foundational beliefs as headship and submission to support such actions as staying in the abuse, remaining silent about the abuse, and sometimes result in further victimization whether intended or not (Frances et al, 2017; Pyles, 2007; Nason-Clark, 2009; Gerger et al, 2007; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015; Smith-Clark, 2016). For this reason, and because it is the responsibility of the pastor to exegete and teach Scripture in such a way that it leads people into righteousness and transformation in Christ, it is imperative that pastors are educated to know the possible pitfalls and how to help guard against them in the congregations being served. Education of this sort has been cited by researchers as leading to greater perceptions of adequacy for ministering to the needs of this population (Houston-Kolnik, Todd, & Greeson, 2019; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; Pack, 2020; Smietana, 2018; Ware et al, 2004).

**Adequacy Defined**

As the goal of this study was to discover the perceptions of adequacy among this population of pastors for ministering to the needs of those impacted by domestic violence, this researcher formulated a working definition of adequacy. Because there were various definitions, this was necessary so it could form a foundation upon which the reader and researcher alike would comprehend the idea of adequacy. One researcher arrived at a definition of educational adequacy in relation to primary school education (Wise, 1983). This definition was sparked by a controversy in New Jersey and West Virginia where parents sued the state boards of education claiming that the students were not receiving an adequate education because of the way finances were being distributed among the schools. Although Wise's (1983) definition was formulated for young children and the educational systems built to foster learning and prepare them for adulthood, it contained core elements that this researcher believed were applicable to the understanding of adequacy in this study.

"Adequacy," according to Wise (1983), "is the provision of that minimum educational opportunity necessary to (minimally) prepare students for adult roles" (p. 309). What it was important to note, however, was that the schools in question for Wise (1983) were public schools where attendance was free for the students, required by the government, and sustained by tax-payer dollars. Although one might not agree with the politics that allowed the most minimal possible educational standard for children, one could argue that the educational standard was what was possible to attain based on budget and time constraints within the public school system (Wise, 1983). Seminarians, on the other hand, pay for the education they have received. No government funding that would lend to the expectation that the schools should offer the basic minimums of education. Should those pursuing graduate degrees from theological institutions

that cost tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars accept that adequacy has been the "minimum educational opportunity necessary to (minimally) prepare students" (Wise, 1983, p. 309)?

Educators in other fields have attempted to define adequacy. Mijares and Liedtke (2008) made one such attempt in law enforcement training. Although the disciplines are different, the topic of training adequacy and a definition thereof still related to adequacy where educational preparedness was concerned. Mijares and Lietdke (2008) posited that training that was adequate was training that held to a certain set of formidable guides: 1- learning objectives were clearly stated at the beginning of instruction; 2- pretests and post-tests were given to establish what knowledge the student entered the class with versus what knowledge the student was leaving the class with; 3- trainers were knowledgeable in the field; 4- the learning process had to be monitored for any needed adjustments, including materials and methods of educating; 5- educators should have remained informed of new developments in the field through continuing education; and 6- educators should have been student-focused in that the trainer, or teacher, knew the background, limitations, experiences, and aptitudes of the students that were being taught (Mijares & Liedtke, 2008). "Anything less is inadequate" (Mijares & Liedtke, 2008, p. 117).

These guideposts for Mijares and Liedtke's (2008) definition of training adequacy were like the explanations expressed in the *Standards for Accreditation* published by the Commission (2020). Looking back at these standards this researcher found that points one, two, and four listed above from Mijares and Liedtke (2008) were echoed in standard two of the Commission (2020). This standard from the Commission (2020) explained that accredited schools must be "guided by institutional visions that inform thoughtful planning grounded in ongoing evaluation" (p. 2). The Commission's (2020) standards policy went on to explain that some ways to

accomplish this task were: 1- the school's submission to constant evaluation of resources, materials, and methods; 2- clearly written learning outcomes; and 3- a commitment to determining "how well they [students] are learning and how that learning helps them achieve appropriate personal and vocational goals" (p. 2) by a maintained focus on the students.

This commitment to focusing on the student was further amplified in standards three and seven as posited by the Commission (2020). Standard three maintained theological schools that were accreditable were those that focused on "student learning and formation [that is] [c]onsistent with their missions and religious identities" (p. 3). As the Commission (2020) expounded on this point, this focus on learning and formation was further delineated as academia that was rigorous, maintains the goal of growth and formation in all aspects of the person, instilled the importance of lifelong learning, and that instructors were well-qualified and equipped to accomplish these tasks. Points three and six from Mijares and Liedtke (2008) echoed these same sentiments in saying that trainers should be knowledgeable and focused on the development of the student in a way that made the student also well-qualified and equipped.

Continuing education and lifelong learning have not only been the goal for the students attending seminaries but have also been the goal and expectations of the faculty in those that are accreditable. Under standard eight of the *Standards of Accreditation* (2020), the Commission (2020) stated that accreditable seminaries were those that focus on maintaining "a qualified, supported, and effective faculty of sufficient size and diversity to achieve schools' educational missions and support student learning and formation" (p. 13). The Commission (2020) went on to say in subset 8.9 of this standard that "[t]he faculty role in scholarship encompassed faculty staying current in their fields" (p. 14). Mijares and Liedtke (2008) held to the same idea in point five of their definition of training adequacy which stated the importance of trainers staying

informed and knowledgeable of new information in the field and new methods of teaching that develop.

These points, coupled with the specific requirements listed by the Commission (2020) for seminaries to provide master and doctoral level education, were used as the beginning to form the definition of adequacy for this research study. Under standard four, the Commission (2020) maintained that accreditable seminaries were those that not only offer masters-level programs but focused on

> (a) religious heritage, including an understanding of scripture, the theological traditions and history of the school's faith community, and the broader heritage of other relevant religious traditions; (b) cultural context, including attention to cultural and social issues, to global awareness and engagement, and to the multifaith and multicultural nature of the societies in which students may serve; (c) personal and spiritual formation, including development in personal faith, professional ethics, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and spirituality; and (d) religious and public leadership, including cultivating capacities for leading in ecclesial or denominational and public contexts and reflecting on leadership practices (p. 5).

Master of Divinity Students according to the Commission (2020), should expect that an accredited seminary would

> require supervised practical experiences (e.g., practicum or internship) in areas related to the student's vocational calling in order to achieve the learning outcomes of the degree program. These experiences are in settings that are appropriately chosen, well suited to the experience needed, and of sufficient duration. These experiences are also supervised by those who are appropriately qualified, professionally developed, and regularly evaluated (p. 5).

What emerged was a definition of adequacy related to educational preparedness that maintained that seminaries that are accredited should provide a standard of education that is: 1- student-focused; 2- encourages personal growth and development, both spiritually and professionally; 3- outlines clear learning outcomes and tests for efficacy; 4- submits itself to constant evaluation and improvement, including course offerings, modalities, and continuing education for faculty; and 5- provides the opportunity for experiential learning through practicum or other means. It is

interesting that adequacy then can be boiled down to making all efforts to ensure that the appropriate opportunity for learning and growth in a specific area of study is offered and cultivated by the seminary through the measurement of student-focused learning outcomes while maintaining an evaluatory attitude at every turn that fosters a dedication to lifelong learning and prepares students practically for vocational ministry.

Areas of specific learning have been possible for seminarians but have not always been covered in the span available for all degrees. Apart from a specialized study in an area, one should not have expected to be prepared for work in that area exclusively. The same has been true for seminarians. Although, as vocational pastors, seminary graduates have been expected to minister in ways their master's program did not prepare them for, it has not been for lack of wanting to. Seminaries have been faced with a lack of available time within the degree program because often the specialization has not necessarily lent to meeting the required learning outcomes that have been established by the school and their evaluation boards (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011). A brief evaluation of what has been taught at these schools follows.

**Evaluation of Course Offerings at Seminaries**

Studies showed that domestic violence (DV) impacted congregants that heard sermons about DV's violation of Scriptural power and control, had informational signs that offer hotline numbers and resources, and had females in pastoral leadership were more likely to seek help and find safety (Green, 2015; Houston & Todd, 2016; Mahoney et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2009). The difficulty with this lay in the training that pastors had or had not received during seminary about DV. Preaching about Scriptural support for the abused was found to be difficult because it was not considered one of the major topics for learning at seminaries. Gustafson (2005) conducted a study of North American theological seminarians that were about to graduate to disclose what if

anything was being taught about ministering to the needs of the abused in formal education courses. The results found showed that 39.2% reported no education about it at all, 33.3% had one to four hours of such training, 13.8% reported five to ten credit hours of DV related courses, and 13.8% had between ten and thirty-six hours of completed coursework and training in this area (Gustafson, 2005).

Another study conducted by Buikema (2001) examined the seminary course devoted to premarital counseling. Courses in this area of ministry have included but were not limited to "the biblical basis for marriage, communication and conflict resolution, marital expectations, relationship roles, personality issues, sexuality, and parenting skills" (Buikema, 2001, p. viii). These were areas of counseling that could have been helping pastors and potential marriage partners of red flags or warning signs of abuse prior to marriage. Recognizing these signs before marriage could have saved the abused from ever experiencing such torment and pain since violence of this type usually begins after the wedding vows were taken. This study found that findings from a previous study, Buikema (1999), were upheld. Results from both rendered a result of 86% of respondents that had no premarital counseling training during seminary. With religious leaders being the number one source sought for premarital counseling in the United States, one can see how this lack of preparedness in seminary could have contributed to feelings of inadequacy when ministering to the needs of engaged couples (Buikema, 2001).

Firmin & Tedford (2007) completed a similar study that looked at the course offerings of evangelical Baptist seminaries. MDiv courses were examined to see how many credit hours of coursework were required to complete the degree. Out of 31 seminary programs that were examined, two required two counseling courses (6 credit hours out of a necessary 96 to graduate), 17 required only one (3 out of 96 credit hours), and 12 required none (Firmin &

Tedford, 2007). Considering that premarital counseling has dealt with issues related to male-female relationships, power and control, and conflict resolution, one can see how a lack of preparedness in this field would directly impact the ability to minister to those experiencing DV as well as pastoral perceptions of adequacy to do so (Buikema, 2001; Firmin & Tedford, 2007).

**Resulting Preparedness and Perceptions of Adequacy**

While it has been true that each of these degree programs and schools researched may be found adequate in that they have been student-focused, conducive to personal growth and development, learning outcome-driven, submitted to a constant evaluation, and committed to lifelong learning, there seems to have been something lacking in preparedness for the practice of vocational ministry. This might help to explain why research found that pastors and religious leaders in Midwest America (Zust et al, 2017), Wyoming (Pyles, 2007), Canada (Nason-Clark, 1997), New York & Connecticut (Smith-Clark, 2016), and various geographical regions and belief systems (Ware et al, 2004) have reported feelings of inadequacy when ministering to the needs of domestic violence (DV) impacted congregants. Nason-Clark (1997) found that "Only 26 out of 332 (8%) pastors in our survey study reported that they felt well equipped to respond to situations involving family violence, while 124 (37%) claimed that they have been poorly equipped, with others falling in-between these two extremes" (p. 146). While not all these studies were done studying specifically evangelical pastors, the research overall has suggested that this trend has been common overall religious traditions among seminary educated leaders (Buikema, 2001; Firmin & Tedford, 2007; Ware et al, 2004).

Seminarians were interviewed about personal perceptions of preparedness for the work of the ministry where DV impacted congregants were concerned. Answers ranged from the admission that there was no way the student was prepared by the seminary education to minister

to congregants experiencing DV to “is this going to destroy my congregation” (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011). However, almost all the participants expressed fear or unease over knowing the level of unpreparedness for ministering to this group. In this same study, McMullin & Nason-Clark (2011) determined that, of the seminarians surveyed, 75.8% of single men, 55.6% of married men, 71.1% of single women, and 49.1% of married women reported feeling either poorly prepared or not prepared at all. These students all expressed an expectation for the seminary to prepare them for this type of ministry and all expressed disappointment that the expectation was not met (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011). What began to emerge here was a divergence between what students viewed as adequate and what the seminaries deemed to be so.

A study conducted by McMullin & Nason-Clark (2013) pointed to possible reasons why there was not more education given in this area at the seminary level for aspiring pastors. These researchers found that seminary leaders and educators were aware of the need to transform the course curriculum to make room for more training about domestic violence and the biblical ways to minister to the needs of congregants suffering this trauma. Of the seminary leaders and educators interviewed, all acknowledged that the need existed, but none had developed plans of change that appeared to have any real support. Ideas about incorporating discussion about domestic violence ministry in current course offerings fell flat and the talks stopped. What was realized was that the leaders of these seminaries also felt ill-equipped and inadequate in a knowledge of the issue and how to minister a biblical worldview in DV issues (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013).

These researchers also found that seminary faculty and students alike maintained somewhat unrealistic thoughts about the existence of domestic violence in the homes of Christian families. Whether through conscious choice or some internal unconscious structure, the

issue of violence within church-going religious families was thought by most seminarians and pastors alike to be unlikely. Naïve ideations that Christian families were almost always kind, gentle, and nurturing permeated student replies to questions asked about violence in the Christian home. Students quoted verses from Ephesians and Corinthians, Scriptures discussed earlier that are sometimes used to perpetuate male-dominant roles in the home, explaining that these tenets of faith preclude the possibility of abuse within the home and that cases that do occur are far fewer than the number of cases associated with homes outside of the faith (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). Statistical data has painted another picture with researchers such as Aune and Barnes (2018) who reported findings that suggested that the numbers have been the same inside the church as outside of it.

Research posited that visiting local domestic violence shelters has been one of the most effective ways to teach students about this issue and annihilate false ideations of Christians being exempt from DV (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). All but a small percentage have admitted that students and faculty alike have not been prepared in seminary through coursework and that adjustments need to be made to place more emphasis on preparing seminarians for this very real work of ministry (Buikema, 2001; Firmin & Tedford, 2007; Gustafson, 2005). This idea is enforced by the Commission's (2020) standard four that has maintained the need for practicum as a part of the course offerings for the Master of Divinity degree. Apart from education and practical application, pastors and seminarians could not have been expected to understand the fundamental issues involved with DV. This leads to continuing treatment of DV as a behavioral sin issue rather than a heart issue that requires transformation through the power of Christ, usually through the sphere of group and individual counseling (Buikema, 2001). Researchers found that those interviewed were honest about personal

perceptions of inadequacy stemming from unpreparedness for the task (Binford-Weaver, 2005, Holtmann & Nason-Clark, 2018; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Zust et al, 2017) and agreed that it was imperative to seek out training from some DV training facilitators outside of the church (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). Recognition that continuing education and lifelong learning have been needed was part of the definition of adequacy. Even those that work currently in the field must remain diligent in efforts to continue learning due to the complexities of the issue.

**Theoretical Methods of Interpretation Considered and Chosen**

Various theoretical models have been developed to explain the complexities of the phenomenon of domestic violence (DV). For the purposes of this study, the sociological theories were examined to see which, if any, would serve to best interpret data relative to the perceptions of the evangelical pastors about adequacy to minister to congregants experiencing DV. Sociological theories have sought to explain "violence as a function of social structures as opposed to individual pathology" (Lawson, 2012, p. 573). Under the umbrella of sociological theories are 1- strain theory which holds that violence occurs when frustrations or difficulties arise from society or in relationships; 2- social disorganization theory that states that environmental factors contribute to conditions that cause people to resort to crime; and 3- benefit theory which says that people will react to situations with violence when it yields a greater gain or reward to the abuser than the loss potential of perspective social penalties. Within each of these macro-areas of theory exist micro-areas that could also be considered. While these theories might yield answers to questions geared toward the why of DV and might reveal internal mindsets that affected how pastors perceive abuse overall, none of these theories have been

sufficient to examine the perceptions of inadequacy noted in seminary educated evangelical pastors (Lawson, 2012).

However, the Zust et al (2017) article cited a qualitative study that used a methodology known as an interpretive phenomenological interview approach championed by van Manen (1997, 2014). Zust et al (2017) reported on the study that examined the experiences of a group of evangelical pastors from the Midwest of the United States of America. This study found that the pastors interviewed expressed feelings of inadequacy because of a perceived lack of preparedness to minister to the needs of those suffering from DV (Zust et al, 2017). Yet another study conducted by Spencer-Sandolph (2020) explored domestic violence impacts on pastors and congregants in Texas using an interpretive phenomenological method as well. The method these researchers used was an expanded version of this same van Manen (1997, 2014) method. Van Manen's (1997, 2014) approach was chosen by this researcher because it allowed the researcher to look for the meanings that were buried within a respondents' answers to generalized questions. It left room for "the understanding that the meaning of human experiences cannot be embraced by observable, concrete data. Instead, the meaning or implicit truths about human experiences have been hidden within the narrative accounts of an experience as told by those who have had the experience" (Zust et al, 2017, pp. 678-679). Because of the nuances that have existed in mindset, religious ideology, personal experience, etc., this researcher felt an approach that allowed for the "implicit truths" (Zust et al, 2017, p. 678) to be examined would yield the most appropriate results for the questions posed in this study.

**Summary of Theoretical Framework**

Whether seminaries have been preparing pastors for ministering to the needs of congregants experiencing DV is not up for debate. The research that was drawn from both seminarians and faculty alike has pointed to a glaring gap in the education about DV and the biblical response to it. While other things might have also contributed, this gap in education directly contributed to the perceptions of inadequacy that evangelical pastors have reported when dealing with DV issues as it has been cited as a reason for these perceptions in almost every study perused. Seminaries, post-graduate schools meant to prepare students for the vocational work of ministry through personal spiritual formation and sound biblical teaching (ATS, 2020), may well have been meeting most of the requirements of educational adequacy. However, they have seemed to be failing to produce students that feel prepared for the daily work of pastoring (Firmin & Tedford, 2007).

The stark reality is that with or without specialized training in the area, seminary graduates must be willing to commit to a journey of lifelong learning and continuing education that will continue preparation for ministry (Commission, 2020; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). Scores of women that seek help from pastors before going elsewhere are depending on that commitment. Mindsets based on evangelical misconceptions about male-female roles, power and control within the relationship, and what the Bible says about how the family should function can be overcome by the pastors through education and empathetic exposure to shelters and women experiencing the issues (Gustafson, 2005; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011). While many sociological theories have existed by which to frame this study, the van Manen (1997) method of interpretive phenomenological analysis was utilized as it is the model this researcher believed would yield the best answers to the research questions posed in this study.

# Related Literature

## Introduction

The Aune & Barnes (2018) study demonstrated the theme of DV in the church by examining the occurrence of DV in churches in Cumbria, Coventry. While this study was performed in another country, statistics have shown that the DV rates quoted by these researchers are compatible with those noted by the National Domestic Violence Hotline (n. d.), the Centers for Disease Control (2019), and the Durose et al (2005) report for the United States Bureau of Justice. Other studies already cited also contributed to the overall theme of lack of preparedness and understanding among church leaders that could have contributed to healthy ministry to those impacted by DV (Mahoney et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2009; Schamp, 2010; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017).

A survey conducted by Smietana (2018) suggested that pastors were beginning to understand that the existence of DV within homes in the church has been real and requires action on the part of faith leaders. Action that must first begin with the understanding that DV is multifaceted and is impacted by many things including faith and culture. The impact of faith and the mishandling of scriptural truths have already been discussed. The issue of culture and how cultural traditions have impacted ideas about male-female roles, the power, and control within those relationships, and the methods by which to handle domestic abuse, if it has even been seen as such, were addressed here as the related literature was examined. What was also examined was the need for continuing education in DV for evangelical pastors and an exploration of possible sources for that, encouragement for bridging the divide between church and secular resources to foster teamwork between the two groups and tools and resources for programs that can be established in churches. These topics are related in that understanding in these areas

would help pastors receive the equipping needed for the work of the ministry to DV-affected congregants, if it was not received through seminary training, and would aid in bolstering perceptions of adequacy because of the confidence that would come with preparedness.

**Impact of Culture on Domestic Violence**

The ungodly exertion of dominant power in male-female relationships has already been examined here in the light of Scripture. These 'faith-based' perversions of the beauty of mutual submission heralded by Jesus are even more complex when looked at through the lens of various cultures and ethnicities. Lack of cultural intelligence, or CQ, has severely limited the effectiveness of ministry to those experiencing relationship violence and muddied the waters even more for evangelical pastors that now have congregations that are more ethnically and culturally diverse (Barna, 2017; Livermore, 2015).

Francis et al (2017) contributed to the thematic overview of the cultural ideologies about the roles of men and women that has contributed to the continued subjugation and abuse of women. This article spoke to how these misogynistic undercurrents that have existed for centuries create atmospheres in which women in all sectors of life have experienced some form of oppression to the extreme of physical and sexual abuse that has been sometimes perpetrated, encouraged, and dismissed by church leaders. Ideologies such as these have created climates in which the victim has questioned whether abuse was happening or not and have refused to leave for fear of further subjugation and stigma (Francis et al, 2017). Researchers such as Bent-Goodley (2005), Buzawa and Buzawa (2017), Gatobu (2006), Kim (2014), Mogfu and Lyons (2014), Raufu (2019), Sanders (2016), Whitaker et al (2077), and Yoshioka and Choi (2005) all found that responses to DV have varied based on culture and ethnicity. This has not been the

case only where the abused and abusers were concerned but was also when church leadership perspectives were evaluated on the phenomenon.

These studies found that doctrinal religious beliefs, cultural traditions, and ethnic expectations have all played a part in DV response. This has meant that for pastors to be able to properly recognize DV situations among congregants, as outcry might be taboo in the culture the congregant belongs to, address those situations, and help the congregant find safety and begin the healing process, cultural intelligence (CQ) was key. Developing that CQ has been essential in properly ministering to those of cultures other than personal heritage in any area, but especially in DV situations. Stigmas surrounding male-female roles, divorce, and more must be considered and this cannot be done without understanding the background from which congregants are making decisions about how relationships function (Livermore, 2015).

Multiple researchers have suggested that cultural norms surrounding male-female dominance and ungodly power and control models could even have prevented people from knowing that the abuse being suffered is not God's will for life and marriage (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Buzawa and Buzawa, 2017; Gatobu, 2006; Kim, 2014; Mogfu & Lyons, 2014; Sanders, 2016; Whitaker et al, 2017; Yoshioka and Choi, 2005). Some researchers have conducted studies specific to ethnicity and culture, lending credence to the idea that cultural tradition has had an impact on perceptions of violence, how to respond to it, and what types of programs have been most beneficial to those experiencing DV in a culturally appropriated home (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Gatobu, 2006; Kim, 2014; Mogfu & Lyons, 2014; Raufu, 2019; Sanders, 2016). These studies found that each culture has specific worldviews that have contributed to abuse, kept the victim unaware that options exist to live a different way, and silenced discussion of DV in a corporate setting, upholding findings of Buzawa and Buzawa (2017) that those accustomed to the

culture of violence, no matter what other cultural tradition espoused, would have yet another worldview specific to that of abuse which supersedes all other lenses through which to examine life and happiness. Domestic violence itself has evoked cultural traditions that span across ethnic traditions worldwide utilizing parts of faith and cultural ethnic tradition to further entrench victims (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017; Gatobu, 2006; Mogfu & Lyons, 2014).

**Training Church Leaders**

Training for pastors hoping to understand better the beast of family violence must then include education about different world cultures, the traditional views about male-female roles and power and control within those relationships within those cultures, and appropriate methods of outreach to those that may be impacted according to culturally acceptable means of interaction and service as well as the necessary teachings about DV itself. This attention to teaching seminarians about world views and cultures and how to bridge gaps between them in ministry is a subsection of standard three of the *Standards of Accreditation* (Commission, 2020). Standard three has maintained that education that was accreditable was that which provided formation of the student from a global perspective. This included, but was not limited to, learning about other cultures, that issues looked different through the lenses of various cultural perspectives, and the importance of students learning from other cultures through mutuality and respect (Commission, 2020).

Not only would culture have an impact on congregants' views of DV, but so would mental health. Studies have found direct correlations between family violence and issues such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, and suicide in both the abused and the abusers (Howard et al, 2010; Howard & Agnew-Davies, 2010). This has meant that pastors seeking to better serve congregants impacted by this trauma would need some training on what to look for as far as

mental illness that would need to be referred to a clinical psychologist or therapist and what could be counseled spiritually (Kollar, 2011; McMinn, 2011). With all these facets at work, one might see how easy it would be to study for quite some time and still have need of more understanding.

Again, the complexity of the issue of domestic violence ministry and care has required a dedication to lifelong learning. It has not been realistic to expect seminaries to require enough courses to prepare the student for this work in pastoral care. What could be conveyed through seminary education has been the fact that seminarians, even those completing the MDiv with concentration on a specialized ministry, must be prepared and dedicated to continuing education and lifelong learning to meet the needs of congregations being served (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). This continuing education has been supported by numerous researchers that have designed programs that offer hope to pastors seeking to increase in knowledge in this area. What has been clear is that "silence is no longer an option" (Walker, 2014, title) as the world sits and watches the number of victims rise each year. This silence that has pervaded the church in DV can be attributed to several things. First, pastors have not felt comfortable preaching about DV and how God views it because there has been no real training to yield an understanding of how God views spousal abuse. Second, personal cultural or theological beliefs about the roles of men and women and the levels of power, control, and authority each should possess have formed a baseline of knowledge that has left pastors with sometimes blurry lenses through which to see and analyze DV. And finally, fear of what might have been revealed within the congregation and feelings of inadequate preparedness to effectively minister to the needs of those affected (Walker, 2014; Yoder, 2013).

Walker (2014) developed a pastoral training program that addressed the importance of not remaining silent, has provided pastors with tools to examine personal biases that might be hindering ministry to survivors, and suggested methods for pastors to begin preaching, teaching, and taking a stand against violence in the home. Pastors must understand that "[t]he faith community has viewed pastors as representatives of God and if God has not spoken to them through the pastors about freedom and options in regard to domestic violence, then God has been silent and even condoned domestic violence" (Walker, 2014, pp, 27-28). Training pastors on how to properly address this issue openly and to establish programs to handle the influx of outcries once it has been addressed openly was the goal of the training program developed by Walker (2014). This position has been upheld by numerous researchers including Clark (2005; 2009), Nason-Clark and Clark Kroeger (2001), and Yoder (2013) and various training programs have resulted.

Walker (2014) developed, in conjunction with local law enforcement and DV service agencies, a training program that has been a one-day event called *Pastors Against Domestic Violence*. While it has been better to have some training than none, this researcher does not believe that a one-day event could possibly provide enough training for pastors to grasp the fullness of this issue. The program was designed as a workshop where pastors would hear from various agencies about the issue and provided time for survivor testimonies and Q & A. Admittedly, Walker (2014) has addressed key topics of the discussion and the material looked thought-provoking, but the depth of this issue would require training that cannot be acquired in one day.

This would be a good program to attend while also considering more avenues of continuing education for pastors. Domestic violence agencies, law enforcement officials, and

social service organizations have all offered basic DV training as well. These programs have been specific to the region each pastor hails from and could have been identified through a google search or phone call to the local DV shelter, social services, or police. Training programs for this issue have existed. Pastors must have however been willing to receive that training from sources outside of the church (Jones & Fowler, 2009). Pastors must also have been ready, willing, and able to make referrals to congregants needing services offered by outside agencies, i.e., housing assistance, food assistance, and mental health care. Knowing the resources available and which agencies would support the women in choices of faith has been vital for pastors that would find themselves in need of a team of helpers for each DV case (Cary, 2005; McMullin et al, 2015; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005). This point has been further driven home when understood that awareness of all the supporting agencies has been congruent with staying informed of current trends in the field. Continuing education of this kind has been encouraged under standard three's requirements that maintained an outcome of seminary education should have been student formation that resulted in a desire for lifelong learning (Commission, 2020). Dedication to lifelong learning has been one expected result of adequate education according to the working definition of adequacy from this study.

**Working with the Community**

Most researchers have agreed that the best course of action for pastors and secular agencies alike has been to work together (Cary, 2005; Jones & Fowler, 2009; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2001; Pyles, 2007; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005). This idea has been supported by the third standard of the Commission's (2020) requirements which encouraged collaboration between faculty, students, and governing agencies that has ensured evaluation and improvement of educational practice. This is the same standard that has

maintained the importance of multi-culturalism and inclusion (Commission, 2020). Cary (2005) saying,

> Education, training, and collaboration between agencies and professionals are what may offer the most hope in decreasing the violence between partners. As domestic violence utilizes a wider range of agencies, such as shelters, medical and mental health establishments, child protection agencies, social services for benefits, housing, vocational training, law enforcement and the courts, the need for these services to be linked becomes an issue of efficiency, safety, and expediency. In this age of effectiveness, accountability and limited allocations, social workers need to expand their arsenal of skills to address this problem. This includes advocating for the end of oppression, challenging dominant ideology, and pursuing social change at all levels, with the help of other helping professions. This legislation has tacitly confirmed that domestic violence is a problem much larger than the individual's personal deficits and requires a vision broader than any one theory can provide (p. 6).

What Cary (2005) left out was the importance of faith-based leaders in this fight. Since pastors and church leaders have been among the first to hear the outcry of victims (Barna, 2017), then these church leaders must be prepared to offer as much help and guidance as possible. That cannot be done efficiently apart from inter-agency cooperation (Cary, 2005; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013; Weaver et al, 1997; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005).

Historically, this inter-agency cooperation has not been looked upon by either side as enjoyable. This has begun to change some as the importance of helping these beloveds has outweighed the ideological disagreements and judgments between the church and secular agency camps. It must be understood that "networking and trust-building take a very long time when crossing secular-faith and inter-faith boundaries" (Jones & Fowler, 2009, p. 424). McMullin, Nason-Clark, Fisher-Townsend, and Holtmann (2015) have referred to this networking as "bridge-building" (p. 115) and have maintained "that building bridges between sacred and secular communities holds the most promise for reducing violence in our communities and responding with compassion and best practices to those who suffer its impact" (, p. 115).

What has become necessary for the best possible care and overall treatment of DV-affected families has been for pastors to collaborate with law enforcement, child services, domestic violence agencies and nonprofits, medical professionals, other churches, and everyone else that could play a part in the helping of DV impacted congregants. One of the biggest hindrances to this has been that pastors have sometimes been reticent to refer congregants out for secular care. While there might be reasons pastors would be hesitant to refer congregants to secular care, lack of resources available that are explicitly Christian or evangelical limit options. Pastors, out of well-meaning hearts that desire to help, have sometimes continued counseling when what should have been done was referring the individual or family to licensed mental health professionals. Stigmas surrounding faith, healing, and sin as a cause for mental illness have historically broken cooperation between pastors and secular counselors with neither supporting the other's function in the individual's life (Houston-Kolnik & Todd, 2016; Jones & Fowler, 2009; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 2016).

Moran, Flannelly, Weaver, Overvold, Hess, and Wilson (2005) found in a study conducted among New York City Clergy from various Judeo-Christian faiths that "[o]n average, the clergy we surveyed consulted with pastoral counselors and social workers 'a few times a year.' Consultation with psychologists and psychiatrists was less frequent, except among rabbis" (p. 264). This has begun to change as seminaries have admitted the lack of training offered in pastoral counseling and have begun to train seminarians to refer to licensed professionals and when to do so (Buikema, 2001; Kollar, 2011; McMinn, 2011; Moran et al, 2005). Knowing personal limitations and being prepared with a list of referral agencies are two actions that have

demonstrated adequacy according to the working definition which maintained that personal formation and growth and lifelong learning are imperative.

**Impact on Survivors**

Pastors must understand that dealing with personal bias, going to continued education, taking time to develop policies, procedures, and programs, and being willing to talk about the hard issues from the pulpit can save lives, not just in a spiritual sense but in the very real physical plane of existence. Emotional, mental, and spiritual factors have been at work when an abuse victim has come to seek counsel or help from a pastor. Being able to meet the victim in understanding, patience, and gentle supportive love is imperative. These beloveds have been struggling with deep and sensitive issues. Pastors must be sensitive to the extremely tenuous position these congregants find themselves in.

That means refraining from giving advice such as stay or go. The threat of death has increased exponentially when an abuse victim has decided to leave. Threats from the abuser to harm the abused or to harm the children have often been tactics used to keep victims from leaving. Other reasons abuse victims have stayed instead of leaving have included, as discussed earlier, wrong belief systems about Scriptural texts (Mahoney et al, 2015), feelings of shame and failure (Stanton, 2002), and financial concerns (Braken, 2008). Taking all these possible scenarios into consideration along with the constant feelings of anxiety and stress that may or may not have contributed to some amount of mental disease, illness, or dysfunction is a task that pastors must take on prayerfully, tactfully, and wisely. Survivors have stories of experience with church leadership that ranged from the rarely phenomenal to the most often extremely disappointing. Some even reported feeling more violated after leaving the pastor's office than they felt before going in (Cary, 2005; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 1997; Nason-Clark,

2004; Nason-Clark, 2009; Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013; Weaver et al, 1997; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005). Seeking education on this issue, pursuing the construction of church policy surrounding the topic, and beginning to connect with other agencies that can help supply the enormous needs of these abused if the decision to leave ever happens (Stanton, 2002).

Pastors should also be prepared for the long-term healing that will be required on behalf of the abused. The amount of mental, emotional, and spiritual damage that occurs in the middle of these types of traumatic home situations is tremendous. That amount of damage has sometimes taken years of specialized therapeutic and spiritual counseling (Braken, 2008). Remembering to not push and to allow the survivor time to process, forgive, and heal according to the survivor's timeclock instead of the pastor's or counselor's has become vital as well. In all this, the pastor must not forget the children. While there is a significant amount of data suggesting the impact of DV on children in the home, this researcher has only mentioned it here briefly as it has been one of the greatest deterrents to the abused leaving the abuser (Braken, 2008).

It must also be considered that the abused will choose not to leave. If that is the choice of the DV-affected congregant, then the pastor must support lovingly while keeping a close watch out for increasing violence. There is some research that has suggested new models of counseling for the abusers could help by working to keep the family together while the treatment or therapy is occurring. This study acknowledges that some continue in the behavior but suggests that there has been some success for those that truly did not want to end the marriage but could not take the abuse any longer (Yoshioka & Choi, 2005). Whatever the decisions of the ones experiencing violence, pastors and leaders have had a responsibility to be educated and prepared to handle the needs of these congregants.

**Summary**

Multiple studies (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Nason-Clark, 2009; Zust et al, 2017) have shown that seminarians have been leaving school feeling unprepared to minister to the needs of those oppressed by violence in the home. The only option that has remained at this time has been to access continuing education opportunities offered by law enforcement agencies, social organizations, and nonprofit entities that are committed to stopping domestic violence. Resources such as books, flyers, posters, Bible studies, sermon outlines, and much more could be found through multiple streams of information (Berry, 1998; Clark Kroeger & Nason-Clark, 2001; Gallet, 2015). Ministry models that have had success in replication have been available to pastors and leaders to format to the needs of the congregation being served (Danielson et al, 2009; Green, 2015; Kelly 2010). Collaboration between the religious communities and these outside agencies has been imperative to offering the best continuum of care available for survivors (Buikema, 2001; Kollar, 2011; McMinn, 2011; Moran et al, 2005). The willingness of pastors to work with these agencies, including the mental health professionals, would increase the quality of understanding and would result in an arsenal of services that could be offered to the congregant seeking help. In short, education and preparation can help the pastor or leader to show grace, love, and support to these beloveds that are in turbulent situations that involve intense emotions, considerations of family, and other factors. It can also lead to the establishment of policies, procedures, and programs that literally save lives.

## Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Research

With the prevalence of DV, there has just been no way to hide from the reality that this type of violence has been happening in the churches just as it has been in the world. That

prevalence coupled with the findings that suggested evangelical pastors perceived that they were not being prepared for these ministry issues in seminary (Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Nason-Clark, 2009; Schamp, 2010; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017) leaves this researcher more certain than ever that it was time to evaluate further what impact, if any, seminary training has had on perceptions of adequacy in evangelical pastors.

Pastors serving in the Southwestern (SW) counties of Pennsylvania (PA) were chosen as this is where this researcher currently resides and works as the founding director of Joel 2 Missions, Inc., a nonprofit Christian ministry that has offered free pastoral counseling, inner healing prayer counseling, mentorship, and transitional housing for survivors of domestic violence. Many of the pastors that this researcher has worked with have no domestic violence policies in place, never preach on the sin of DV, and have had people experiencing abuse in their congregations. This regional subset of pastors that work in SW PA, have been formally educated in seminary, and have been by ideology evangelical were chosen by the researcher because a gap in the literature has existed in that concentrated study of the evangelical pastors in this region of the United States had not previously been done.

Zust et al (2017) studied perceptions of adequacy in evangelical pastors in Midwest America and found that all those interviewed expressed the same feelings of inadequacy. Pyles (2007) cited a study of Christian and Jewish clergy in Wyoming that concluded those studied felt ill-equipped, denied the problem, held views of male-female roles that further disempowered women, and often encouraged female survivors to take responsibility for healing the marriage and stopping the abuse through submission, fasting, and prayer. In Canada, Nason-Clark (1997) studied evangelical protestant pastors in relation to domestic violence ministry. This study found

that these conservative evangelicals were aware of the existence of the problem but felt inadequately prepared to minister to the needs effectively. Raufu (2019) found that 90% of Nigerian Christian pastors in Houston, Texas self-reported that religious counseling was effective in curbing domestic violence. Raufu (2019) also found that results of the study could not conclusively support that self-reported claim. These same pastors did admit in that study that more education and better collaboration with secular agencies was needed to offer better support of congregants experiencing DV. In New York & Connecticut, Smith-Clark (2016), found that out of ten pastors only one had any specified training and that was a workplace sexual harassment and violence class. Only one of the ten held a master's degree and that degree was not from a seminary, nor was it an MDiv. None of these pastors had policies in place in their congregations, nor did sermons get preached on the matter. Most agreed they really did not know how to approach the topic publicly and that if women approached them for counseling in this matter, then referrals to counseling would be made (Smith-Clark, 2016). Laced through each of these researchers' findings and suggestions for future research was the need for further evaluation of pastoral preparedness and perceptions of adequacy for ministering to DV (Nason-Clark, 1997; Pyles, 2007; Raufu, 2019; Smith-Clark, 2016; Zust et al, 2017).

Due to claims found in research, it was important to look at specifically evangelical pastors. Those claims maintained that traditionally patriarchal views of male-female roles, the power and control prescribed within those roles, and the possibilities of divorce and the resulting consequences contributed to a culture of silent suffering (Green, 2004; Gustafson, 2005; Jankowski et al, 2018; McMullin et al, 2015; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Nason-Clark, 2004; Pyles, 2007). Research suggested that because of these views, this camp, and others that hold similar views, were the least likely to have received

training in this area while being the most likely to unwittingly give credence to mindsets that pervert foundational concepts into justifications for abuse. Research found that those unbiblical understandings were reported by survivors to have contributed to continuance of abuse, encouraged staying and bearing with the abuser in love and patience, and restricted the congregants' opportunities for safety and freedom by not speaking out against this violence congregationally. According to research, survivors reported experiences within the evangelical church that made victims feel as though the violence might even be condoned by God (Nason-Clark, 2017; Nason-Clark, 2009; Nason-Clark, 2004).

The researcher hoped that that conducting this study in this region would bring awareness to the pastors serving here about the complex nature of DV and the desperate need for pastors to be educated about it so that churches would establish policies, procedures, programs, and connections with outside agencies to better serve congregants impacted by violence at home. What, if anything, evangelical pastors have learned about this issue while in formal educational training and whether continuing education opportunities have been utilized has been of vital importance to the people of SW PA that are experiencing DV. To date, this researcher has found no other research that has been done in this region to discover the perceptions of adequacy in ministering to DV survivors among evangelical pastors.

Studies have suggested that educational preparedness and perceptions of adequacy have direct correlation with the implementation of potentially life-saving programs within the churches (Binford & Vaughn, 2005; McMullin et al, 2015; Zust et al, 2017). Some have also suggested that in addition to educational preparedness and perceived adequacy, personal biases about male-female roles, power and control, and cultural traditions have had a direct impact on the programs and services offered or received from pastors (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Gatobu, 2006;

Kim, 2014; McMullin &Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Mogfu & Lyons, 2014; Raufu, 2019; Sanders, 2016). Demographic questions in the initial survey were helpful in building a cultural profile of each participant. Asking semi-structured open-ended questions during the interview about male-female roles and power and control yielded data in this area that was helpful in determining themes of personal ideation that have had an impact on the implementation of DV related programs and policies in these pastors in SW PA. This study sought to discover whether perceptions of adequacy were influenced by these personal ideations in any way.

Further evaluation including how education has influenced perceptions of adequacy and how those perceptions have impacted the formation of DV policies, procedures, and programs has been done previously but only in limited studies that did not include this subset of pastors from this geographical region (McMullin et al, 2015). That gap can now be filled by the research conducted in this study. Ultimately, this researcher hoped that the personal reflection that the van Manen's (1997, 2014) interpretive phenomenological method inspired in each respondent would spark revelation, understanding, and transformation where needed among the pastors that participated. As an evangelical Christian, this has always been the desired end goal as it has been the one that brings everyone closer to exemplifying the image of God humanity was made in.

## Profile of the Current Study

Literature has shown that there have been godly principles that were meant to bolster love, peace, and unity in the home that have been twisted to create an atmosphere of male dominance which has contributed to domestic violence (DV) culture (Ware et al, 2004). These theological ideations that have been misinterpreted, misunderstood, and misapplied through many centuries of passed down patriarchal dominance that has, although quietly at times, kept

females particularly in fear of leaving abusive husbands (Gerger et al, 2007). Religious ideations of family and divorce have contributed to stigmas that have caused the abused to remain in abusive homes and prevented them from seeking the help that is both needed and deserved (Braken, 2008). Pastors, that have admittedly been one of the first groups to hear the outcry of survivors (Barna, 2017), have not been equipped through formal education to understand the facets of this type of violence and therefore have not been equipped to properly minister to those impacted (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). Education could help to highlight wrong belief systems, ways of looking at biblical passages, and bring understanding to pastors about how DV works, what to look for in congregations, and how to implement appropriate strategies, programs, and referral policies that would be of most help to the survivor (Clark, 2005; Clark, 2009; Jones & Fowler, 2009; Nason-Clark & Clark-Kroeger, 2001; Yoder, 2013).

Utilizing the van Manen (1997, 2014) method of interpretive phenomenological analysis, this researcher explored perceptions of adequacy in evangelical pastors in southwestern Pennsylvania when ministering to survivors of domestic violence. Because of the attention drawn to pastors' feelings of inadequacy in this nuanced field of ministry, this researcher has seen a gap in the literature and an opportunity to explore these pastors' thoughts and lived experiences in education, personal, and professional life. This qualitative method of discovery has given latitude for the emergence of underlying cultural, social, historical, and scriptural beliefs that have contributed to these perceived adequacies (van Manen, 1997; van Manen 2014). Further explored was how these underlying meanings and feelings have contributed to the pastoral development of domestic violence programs and policies within the congregations being served.

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the research problem, restate the purpose of the research and the questions that guided it, and give a detailed account of the study design and research methodologies that were utilized for data collection and interpretation. Discussion will include the setting in which the data was collected, information about the participants, the role of the researcher in these efforts, and the ethical considerations that were involved in doing a study of this sort on a topic that is so sensitive.

## Research Design Synopsis

Under this section of chapter three, the Problem that served as the background for this study, the Purpose Statement that dictated the reason for this study, the Research Questions that guided this study, and the Design that this study utilized for data collection and analysis will be discussed.

### The Problem

Domestic violence impacts 30% of women globally (WHO, 2021) and although there are no concrete numbers as of this writing, “Lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts have increased the exposure of women to abusive partners and known risk factors, while limiting their access to services” (WHO, 2021, n. p.). Issues such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, and a host of other mental and emotional illnesses often accompany survivors of domestic violence (DV). With DV occurring in the United States at a rate of 1 in four women and one in seven men (Safe Horizon, 2021), it has certainly been an issue that has impacted the people that make up congregations. However, the problem is that research has found pastors have felt inadequate when ministering to survivors of domestic violence (Clato-Day, 2020; Choi et al, 2018; Homiak & Singletary, 2007).

There have been many possible reasons for this. Research found that many clergy maintained that violence of this kind has not been happening inside the church (Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017). Other research found that belief systems in certain denominations have even served as a deterrent to women reporting the abuse being suffered (Barnett, 2000; Cooper-White, 2012; Houston-Kolnik et al., 2019). Homiak and Singletary (2007) found that only 8% of pastors interviewed felt adequately prepared to counsel survivors of domestic violence effectively. These researchers went on to show that only one third of the respondents interviewed felt safe sending congregants to other care givers for domestic violence services, and over half of the respondents maintained feelings of inadequacy for counseling and for referring to others (Homiak & Singletary, 2007).

Studies have shown that people of faith were most likely to seek counsel from pastors and other clergy in matters of domestic violence (Barna, 2017; Cooper-White, 2012; Day, 2013). However, due to perceptions of inadequacy (Zust et al, 2017), congregants experiencing DV have reported feeling overlooked, underserved, and silenced by pastors and leaders (Houston-Kolnik et al, 2019). Statistically, this has meant that 25% of females in churches in the United States (NCADV, 2021; Safe Horizon, 2021) and 30% of women in churches worldwide (WHO, 2021) have not been receiving the pastoral care needed to face and overcome the issue of DV. Studies addressing how those numbers have climbed during Covid-19 are not yet available (WHO, 2021). Nonetheless, the problem still exists that 25-30% of congregations have not been able to receive the pastoral care needed due to feelings of inadequacy among clergy which clergy have attributed to a lack of appropriate training (Clato-Day, 2020; Homiak & Singletary, 2007; Nason-Clark, 1997; Nason-Clark, 2009).

While there is a plethora of literature available on domestic violence (Abramsky et al, 2011; Clinton & Hawkes, 2009; Garcia-Moreno et al, 2006; Hegarty & Roberts, 1998), its many facets (Gibbs et al, 2018; Jankowski et al, 2018; Jewkes, 2010; Thompson et al, 2006; Whitaker, 2013), programs available to churches (Houston-Kolnik & Todd, 2016; Jones & Fowler, 2009; Kelly, 2010), the need for churches to cooperate with other agencies (Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013; Weaver et al, 1997; Yoder, 2013), and even the need for seminaries to do more to prepare graduates for the rigorous demands of vocational pastoring (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Pack, 2020), there is still little research on the perceptions of adequacy among pastors and clergy and on how those perceptions impact DV care that congregants receive (Nason-Clark, 2009; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 2016; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017).

One reason for this gap is that qualitative research has lent to the types of data needed to better understand perceptions but could only speak to a small sample of the population at a time. Because this type of study has required in-depth conversation and analysis of those conversations, fewer subjects should be studied at a time (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). Therefore, more research must be done to cover the same amount of ground that other research methods might be able to cover (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1999). The huge gap that has existed in this area of perception study has been filled, only minutely, through the discovery of pastors' perceptions of adequacy in SW PA, a geographic area that, to the researcher's knowledge, has not previously been studied for this purpose. "Nevertheless, through a steady accumulation of similar studies on other groups, generalizations may become possible over time" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 5).

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of adequacy experienced by seminary educated evangelical pastors in the SW region of PA when ministering to those impacted by domestic violence (DV). At the beginning of the research, feelings of adequacy were generally defined as a pastoral perception of preparedness for ministering to those affected by domestic violence. The theory guiding this study was put forth by Zust et al (2017) as it found that the seven evangelical pastors interviewed in the urban Midwest reported feelings of inadequacy in ministering to congregants affected by DV. This study utilized van Manen's (1997, 2014) method of phenomenological narrative interpretation used by Zust et al (2017) and explored perceptions of adequacy when ministering to congregants experiencing DV among evangelical pastors in SW PA and how these pastors perceived the impact of seminary training on adequacy for this ministry.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following questions guided this study:

**RQ1:** How do pastors define adequacy for ministering to DV impacted congregants?

**RQ2:** How do perceptions of adequacy impact the ability to effectively perform pastoral care for survivors of DV?

**RQ3:** Was there sufficient opportunity for personal learning and growth in DV ministry while in seminary?

**RQ4:** Were there measurable learning outcomes and/or evaluation in areas relatable to DV care and ministry?

**RQ5:** Do pastors believe continuing education in DV training is needed?

## Research Design and Methodology

Qualitative research, in contrast, is that which is poised toward "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem"

(Creswell, 2018, p. 3). Data yielded by qualitative research was found in the form of words, pictures, video, or audio collected through emergent means including in-depth, open-ended interviews that allowed for the meaning behind the data to be better understood (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Merriam & Tisdale, 2015; Moustakas, 1994). The interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) was the design method of qualitative study this researcher chose. IPA was popularized by van Manen (2016) in the early 1990's. According to Patton (2015) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015), phenomenology has had its roots in the philosophical holdings of early 1900's philosophers Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz that fathered qualitative research and the descriptive phenomenological method. Then, just a few years later, Heidegger (1927/2011) posited philosophical views that explored the meaning of being. These early philosophical ideas, although hard to decipher because of their complexity, sprang from the thoughts of Husserl and became the beginnings of what is now interpretive phenomenology (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar & Downing, 2016).

Researchers engaged in phenomenological studies have desired to study the complexities of human experience in real-life settings where the issues that impact them have happened. Questions focused on the personal feelings, experiences, and interpretations of the given phenomenon and were not generally concerned with attempts to simplify the data as it was assumed that the data would be multifaceted as human emotions, memories, and senses were concerned (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015; van Manen 2014; van Manen, 2016). While one might suggest that these components have been familiar to all qualitative studies, the difference lies in that phenomenology has sought to understand the structure or underlying essence of the matter (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Patton, 2015; Van Manen, 2014; Van Manen, 2016). This design has been touted by researchers as best suited for studies

desiring to understand the emotions or effects surrounding a certain phenomenon experienced by a group of people (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015; van Manen, 2014; van Manen, 2016).

Because the nature of phenomenological study was to "arrive at the heart of the matter" (Tesch, 1994, p. 147), interpretive methods that look for deeper underlying themes, including human emotions and perceptions and the possible socio-historical contexts that have underpinned these emotional and perceptive responses, were necessary. Many researchers in the fields of education, social science, and psychology have adopted these methods of data collection and analysis for the qualitative studies conducted (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar & Downing, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Tesch, 1994; van Manen, 2014; van Manen, 2016).

Lengthy, open-ended interviews have been the most common form of data collection in the interpretive phenomenological study and were utilized in this study as well. These open-ended questions are usually few and broad in nature and left room for the researcher to ask more questions when necessary throughout the natural flow of conversation during the interview. It also allowed the researcher to construct questions based on participant response to elicit deeper responses and understanding. As van Manen (2016), Zust et al (2017), Leedy and Ormrod (2015), Merriam and Tisdell (2015), and others (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015; Tesch, 1990) have maintained that human feelings and perceptions are constantly changing and being constructed. A fluid method of data collection was necessary for the complexities involved in studying such phenomenon (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015; Tesch, 1990; van Manen, 2016; Zust et al, 2017).

While researchers have agreed that open-ended questioning was desirable for this type of study, it has also suggested that the questions used to narrow the sample pool should have been

more succinct. A semi-structured method of interviewing was preferred. Also notable was that surveys were utilized in the beginning of the study for identifying the sample pool of 3-10 groups or individuals according to Creswell (2018) or 5-25 according to Leedy and Ormrod (2015) needed. Purposeful sampling of this kind yielded participants that all have shared experiences. This was an important piece for the interpretive phenomenological study as large amounts of data have usually been collected and then must be waded through and sorted carefully. For this type of research, larger numbers of participants could have led to too much information and an inability for the researcher to effectively interpret it all. Generalizations from the perspective of this small group may be limited to just the group interviewed, but nonetheless have lent information about the feelings and meanings humans in this people group have had or constructed and ultimately has helped the researcher and readers understand better how this subset of people experienced and interpreted the phenomenon (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Moustakas, 1994, van Manen 2014; van Manen 2016).

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) have noted, “In education, if not in most applied fields, interviewing is probably the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies” (p. 106). Other researchers confirmed this sentiment maintaining that the complexities involved with human beings and their feelings and perceptions have best been discovered through semi-structured, lengthy, open-ended interviews that have left room and space for following emerging themes and lines of questioning in the process of the interview. For these reasons, and because of the supporting examples of similar studies (Zust et al, 2017; Spencer-Sandolph, 2020; Clato-Day, 2020), this researcher chose to utilize this form of data collection and analysis.

## Qualitative Research Methodology

### Setting

The southwestern region of Pennsylvania was chosen because it is the region of the United States in which the research lives and works. Cultural heritage has been of great importance to the people of this region as have been various mindsets and belief systems that have shown themselves as congruent with those various cultures. This is true no matter where one goes in the world but has been fascinatingly true here in SW PA where there has been a large degree of immigrant nationalities that have formed individual sectarian neighborhoods that have only interacted when necessary. When immigrants from Poland came here, Polish neighborhoods were formed that had Polish-owned and operated businesses, social clubs, churches, etc. The same was true for Italian immigrants, Germans, French, Russian, Slovakian, Nepali, and so on. Firsthand accounts of historians have maintained that the reason for this phenomenon was that people that came here needed to be able to communicate with others, so the natural predilection was to form neighborhoods such as these so that everyone could communicate within their own sphere of life (Dahlinger, 1916; Rupp, 1846). Because research has suggested that cultural, historical, and Scriptural understandings undergird adequacy in ministering to survivors of domestic violence, this region was an excellent choice for a qualitative study that explored those underlying themes (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017; Buikema, Nason-Clark, 2009; van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014; Vehey & Harvard, 2011; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017). This researcher held that demographic information about the churches, the pastors, and the specific neighborhood the church is positioned in might yield emerging themes that could be analyzed about cultural underpinnings and their impact on domestic violence ministry in this region.

Another reason this region was chosen is as stated earlier—this is the region the researcher lives and works in. The camp of evangelical pastors was chosen because it represents the largest population of pastors that the researcher has worked with in the region. As mentioned earlier, this researcher runs a nonprofit ministry called Joel 2 Missions that houses, counsels, and mentors survivors of various abuses, particularly domestic violence. In this work, the researcher has heard from women about perceived mishandling, misdiagnosing, and further victimization at the hands of pastors trying to minister to their diverse needs. By the time some of these women have gotten to the offices of Joel 2 Missions, feelings of betrayal and abuse have been experienced not only at the hands of the abusive spouse, but also at the hands of pastors and leaders. Some have almost completely turned from faith in Christ due to these experiences. This, along with an abundance of research that has suggested that evangelical pastors have been particularly prone to "common meanings" (Zust et al, 2017) that contribute to victimization (Aune & Barnes, 2018; Barnett, 2000; Bent-Goodly, 2005; Francis et al, 2017; Houston-Kolnik & Todd, 2016; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2009; Schamp, 2010; Ware et al, 2004; Whitaker et al, 2007; Zust et al, 2017), has added to the need for a study of this kind in this region within this subset of pastors. Another rationale for choosing this setting was that no previous research of this kind conducted in this region of the United States could be found.

As for the setting of the actual interview, due to the sensitive nature of the topic all interviews were categorized confidentially, held in private settings that were conducive to the comfort of the interviewee, and were able to be stopped at any time if the interviewee became uncomfortable and wished to take a break. This researcher preferred that the interviews happened in the privacy of the pastors' offices with little to no interruption for the entirety of the hour and a half or two hours these interviews took to complete.

**Participants**

Respondents from the purposive sampling survey of evangelical pastors in SW PA that had completed seminary training were sample pooled for this portion of the study. Pastors that had attended forms of ministry training other than formal seminary were not considered. Denominations considered to be within the evangelical tradition included, but were not limited to, Baptist, Pentecostal, Holiness, Pietist, Adventist, Nondenominational, and Reformed (Pew, 2015). The ten counties that comprise the geographical area of PA considered to be the SW region, according to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (2021), are Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland. The Association of Religion Data Archives (2020) related findings generated in a 2010 report that there were evangelical churches of various denominations in each county. The totals reported were as follows: Allegheny County—349; Armstrong County—63; Beaver County—92; Cambria—67; Fayette—109; Greene County—32; Indiana County—100; Somerset County—93; Washington county—97; and Westmoreland County—170 (ARDA, 2020). This left a total of 1,172 evangelical churches in these ten counties of PA. More recent data on the number of congregations in SW PA was researched but not identified. Senior pastors from these churches served as the sampling frame for the research.

Demographics of these individuals have now been identified. County statistics are also available and in Appendix H. The demographic data that was collected from the pastor surveys has now been used to help to identify possible cultural intricacies and to ensure that the sample was for the most part homogenous, which is preferred in studies using IPA (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The homogenous group being tested consisted of pastors that are evangelical, attended seminary, and were culturally similar. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) have maintained

that homogeny has helped to narrow results and yield the emergence of similar themes, or underlying meanings, among the group. It was the hope of this researcher to discover underlying meanings of the perceptions of adequacy or inadequacy that could generate emerging themes that point to cultural, historical, and denominational biases within the pastors that have lent to their handling of matters like domestic violence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2105; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2005; van Manen, 1997; van Manen 2014; Zust et al, 2017). Using a largely homogenous group has helped to evaluate these meanings in IPA research (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

The researcher utilized single stage, purposive sampling to gather information on each of the 1,172 congregations by downloading the list of congregations from the Association of Religion Data Archives (2020). Single stage sampling is that which is done, quite simply, in one stage (Creswell, 2018). There was one database that this researcher utilized to gather data about specifically evangelical churches in southwestern Pennsylvania. Once that list was acquired, then the researcher began calling and/or emailing each church to see if they were still in operation. From the churches that were still operable, 250 were chosen randomly and contacted to find out who the senior pastor or leader was for the congregation and what needed to be done to contact that individual to inquire about interest in participating in the initial survey process. Once interest was gauged, the researcher utilized the purposive convenience sample of pastors that volunteered to participate in the survey. It was a purposive sample in that only a certain group of people that possessed a certain set of characteristics were being considered. It was convenient because it was the area of the country in which the researcher lives and works. The goal was to produce a sample pool of 125 respondents to the survey. This yielded the suggested 10% representative sample mentioned in Creswell (2018). From this pool, a final sample of 10 was chosen.

The researcher arrived at this number for the sample pool because it was within the suggested sample size for a study of this kind (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018; McGregor, 2018) with Creswell (2018) maintaining a suggestion of three to ten respondents for a qualitative study and Leedy and Ormrod (2018) suggesting that number should be between five and twenty-five. According to McGregor (2018), the sample pool could not go below ten, since this was not a case study. However, researchers such as Turpin et al (1997) and Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) suggest that IPA studies could have fewer than ten subjects since the goal was to go deeper rather than wider in understanding. Six to eight was the suggested sample size for IPA, according to Turpin et al (1997), and Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) point out that "IPA studies have been published with, for example one, four, nine, fifteen participants" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 4).

## Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was to listen intently, utilizing active listening skills, while asking those participants questions that were more open-ended and lent to the possibility of deeper answers and understandings of preparedness and perceptions of adequacy when ministering to survivors of domestic violence. Body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and a general listening for cues about emotional reactions to questions were employed according to the van Manen (1997, 2014) method of phenomenological interpretation. This included asking probing questions that dug deeper into thoughts and feelings of participants that were exploratory and based on answers to premeditated questions. The researcher then analyzed the collected data to draw conclusions about perceptions of preparedness based on the answers given and inferences drawn from reactions to said questions.

Vital to any interpretive phenomenological analysis has been the *epoché*, or separating, of personal experience from the answers received from participants. While personal experience was often the beginning platform from which studies such as these were derived and were motivated, the researcher was conscious of that and choose to report from the point of view of the participant rather than the self (Clato-Day, 2020; Spencer-Sandolph, 2020; van Manen, 2014; van Manen, 2016; Zust et al, 2017). Having survived domestic violence personally and worked for years counseling and mentoring women that have come out of domestic violence of all forms, this researcher does have significant personal history that cannot ever be completely removed. Keeping those personal experiences in check through internal reflection while listening and interpreting the conversations with pastors was imperative. The fact that these biases can never be completely removed from research of this type has been noted by researchers and used as reasoning for possible reliability issues with studies of this kind (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Moustakas, 1994; Spencer-Sandolph, 2020; van Manen, 2014; van Manen, 2016).

## Ethical Considerations

All research conducted by this researcher was first approved by the institutional review board, or IRB. Because humans were being surveyed and interviewed for this qualitative study, it was important that this researcher always consider the thoughts, feelings, and concerns of the participants. The job of the IRB was to do just that, to ensure that the researcher did everything necessary to protect the human respondents. According to Roberts (2010), "[t]heir [the IRB's] main purpose is the protection of those participating in a research study, particularly around ethical issues such as informed consent, protection from harm, and confidentiality" (p. 31). Essentially, the task of the IRB was to protect the participants from harm of any kind. Because the topic of discovery for this study was a sensitive one that had the potential to make

participants uncomfortable, stressed, or otherwise psychologically affected, this researcher was prepared for a full review rather than an expedited one (Roberts, 2010). All suggestions received from the IRB committee were implemented as the researcher did not desire to do any harm to anyone during this study.

Informed consent, respect for human dignity, humane consideration of participants, and protection of participants from unnecessary stress, hardship, or injury were vital to the ethical integrity of this study (Roberts, 2010). Statements about possible hardship, triggers, and other disclaimers were submitted to the potential respondents. Maintaining confidentiality and privacy was of equal importance as the pastors needed to feel free to discuss their deepest thoughts and feelings without threat of being identified in any way. Statements about the ways in which the researcher was going to ensure this confidentiality were distributed in advance as well. Examples of how this information would be stored, coded, and reported to ensure confidentiality included, but were not limited to; 1- giving all pastors and their churches pseudonyms; 2- keeping all recordings, notes, and surveys on password protected computer files that have only been accessible by the researcher; and 3- keeping no records that if compromised would identify the pastors in such a way that they could be revealed even with a pseudonym. Also, making sure that all research helpers or workers were educated properly helped to ensure the proper ethics for this study as put forth by the research and educational communities and review boards (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; McGregor, 2018).

Truthful and honest reporting of findings was paramount. Ensuring the integrity of data by remaining objective throughout the course of the study and being careful not to allow personal biases to skew data is also of utmost importance to the ethics of any study. With a study of this kind that admits the inability to completely remove personal bias, the researcher remained

fair in the distribution and random choosing of participants based on available population pool and voluntary agreement to participate. There were no minors involved in this study. At-risk populations were not recruited. However, it must be understood that with the prevalence of domestic violence, it was always a possibility that one or more of the pastors surveyed and/or interviewed may have had personal experiences with domestic violence. With this understanding, care was taken to handle the questioning in a way that was sensitive to this possibility and preparations were made to stop if signs of harm began. The researcher had a list of counseling resources available for each participant for after-study care in case the respondents needed it.

## Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Qualitative research has various data collecting methods and instruments at the disposal of any researcher. Because qualitative data comes in the form of words, these tools also operated in using words in various ways. This researcher used an interpretive phenomenological qualitative method of study to explore the phenomenon of how evangelical pastors in southwestern Pennsylvania felt about their adequacy and preparedness for ministering to congregants impacted by domestic violence.

### Collection Methods

This researcher's first step was to design the survey questions. Because this survey was used for purposive sampling, structured questions about demographic information were asked. Demographic questions found in the Clato-Day (2020) study fit the need for this study and served as inspiration for the demographic portion of the survey. The purpose of this survey was to identify a homogenous sample of pastors that had similar age, gender, and educational/professional experience. Homogenous samples have been the most effective when

administering IPA as the homogeny serves to help narrow contributing factors as well as provide a sample pool that might produce similar underlying themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The second section of the survey included questions relating to the pastors' lived experiences with domestic violence. Educational, professional, and personal experience were gauged in this survey. A disclaimer appeared between survey sections stating that the following section should have only been completed if the participant was interested in being considered for the final sample and was willing to submit to the open-ended IPA style interview for the study.

Following the generation of the survey questions, a field test with evangelical pastors from West Virginia and Ohio that have completed seminary was performed. Field test participants were pastors that have been in ministerial network connection with the researcher that agreed to help identify weaknesses and strengths in the survey and interview questions and who then suggested changes they deemed necessary. A total of three of these field-testing pastors were identified. Field testing of this kind has aided in the reliability and validity of the research study (Spencer-Sandolph, 2020). Survey questions were then modified according to suggestions collected from field testing and then circulated via email to all 1,172 churches with an attached cover letter requesting participation. The finalized survey can be found in Appendix A.

As mentioned previously, respondents chosen for the final sample then participated in one-on-one interviews for the research study. The researcher utilized the van Manen (2014) method of phenomenological interviewing to design a basic outline of questions that were then asked in the interview. These questions were open-ended and designed to leave room for the participants to share widely and broadly about experiences. For IPA studies, interview questions were generated with an overarching question and prompts that could have been used by the researcher to stimulate conversation about the topic without leading the participant in what they

then said about the topic. This method has been popular among qualitative studies, but most popular in IPA (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014).

Individual interviews were set up with lead pastors in evangelical churches that were willing to participate. The interviews were run off of a set of open-ended, semi-structured questions that were emailed to the respondents in advance to give time for contemplation. Interpretive phenomenological interviews, according to the van Manen (1997, 2014) method, were then conducted while listening intently to answers for possible additional questions that may or may not shed light on the meanings behind the encounters these pastors have had with DV-affected congregants. This method yielded the best possible understanding of the seminary preparedness of the pastors in SW PA that participated and how that preparedness has affected or not affected their perceptions of adequacy in ministering to these beloveds. Interviews took place via Zoom online or in person in the offices of the pastors, as this was most likely the place that was most comfortable and was the atmosphere in which the participants normally work (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1999; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). During this interview, questions were asked that delved into the perceptions of these pastors. Questions posited in the interview can be found in Appendix C and include perusal of pastors' definition of adequacy, personal accounts of ministry that has been performed adequately according to personal understanding of the word, as well as personal accounts of times when the pastors perceived personal performance to be lacking, and more.

Using an iterative process of shifting back-and-forth between data collection and analysis, this researcher has sought to understand these pastors' lived experience with domestic violence, what, if any, education they received in seminary addressing domestic violence, and what possible historical and social underlying meanings were identified. This shifting back-and-

forth was accomplished through actively listening to the initial responses given by pastors during the interview processes, asking exploratory questions as the answers were given, recognizing themes that might have emerged in other interviews, and making mental and field notes about those findings (Patton, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen 2014; van Manen 2016). Once further analysis was conducted through transcription and coding, if more questions emerged, then this researcher would have contacted the pastors for follow-up questions. All interviews were recorded with permission of participants.

## Instruments and Protocols

In this section, the methods and instruments utilized within this study were discussed. This discussion gave insight into each tool's description, its place in the collection process, and why it was chosen and utilized by this researcher. The van Manen (2014, 2016) interpretive phenomenological method for collecting and analyzing interview responses utilized in the Zust et al (2017) and Spencer-Sandolph (2020) studies was replicated. This researcher believes that this method applied with the use of multiple instruments of data collection remains the best possible method for identifying underlying themes as pastors have shared experiences with education and ministry relating to domestic violence. These instruments have included a survey, lengthy interviews, observation during the interviews, and document analysis. With the help of these tools, underlying themes emerged and helped the researcher explore pastors' perceptions of adequacy and preparedness experienced during domestic violence ministry (Patton, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; van Manen 2014; van Manen 2016).

### *Survey/Questionnaire*

As discussed earlier, purposive sampling was employed in this study. This sampling was accomplished through a survey generated through literature and field testing. It was distributed

by Qualtrics and emailed to all 1,172 senior pastors at evangelical churches in southwestern Pennsylvania as identified through the Association of Religion Data Archives (2020). This survey was constructed by the researcher and asked structured questions that gave definitive answers as their purpose was to identify a specific group of individuals—pastors in southwestern Pennsylvania that have completed seminary training and now lead evangelical congregations. Demographic questions about size, race, and gender make-up of congregations were also included in the initial survey and served as aids in the interpretation of data as emerging themes came forward during the interview process that were then better understood considering this demographic information. The questions asked in this survey were developed through the literary review and were based on the preliminary questions needed to identify the purposive sampling group.

***Interviews***

Once pastors were identified by the purposive sampling methods described above, each was then emailed a copy of the generalized, open-ended, semi-structured questions and an appointment for the face-to-face, video recorded interview was set. Interviews included questions that were designed according to the van Manen (2014) method of phenomenological interviewing. This researcher replicated that method in the designing of the interview questions that were used to inspire the respondent to speak from the place of experience, as though reliving it. As van Manen (2014) suggested, that when the respondents talked about the experience and recalled the sights, sounds, and smells of the moment when it was experienced, that the researcher would get a glimpse of what themes lay under the surface. Due to the nature of the interpretive phenomenological method, these underlying “common meanings” (Zust et al, 2017) such as thoughts and attitudes were what the researcher was seeking to discover in this study.

Themes this researcher hoped to explore were respondents' thoughts and attitudes about RQ1- defining adequacy for ministering to domestic violence impacted congregants; RQ2- perceptions of adequacy relating to perceptions of ability and performance in DV ministry; RQ3- lived experience in DV training during seminary; RQ4- lived experience with meeting measurable learning outcomes in DV ministry education; and RQ5- the need for DV training through continuing education. These, among other themes were expected to emerge as the collection of data proceeded and the researcher sought to answer the research questions. Relationships between domestic violence ministry preparedness and the completion of seminary training, the implementation of policies and procedures, perceptions of inadequacy, or adequacy, for ministering to congregants experiencing DV, and what, if any, underlying mindsets about Scripture existed in the participants that might contribute to domestic violence ministry preparedness and perceptions of adequacy.

Advance notice of the interview questions was given so that participants could have time to consider answers prior to the actual interview. Clarifying questions during and/or after the interview were asked to follow-up larger question topics. Some of the clarifying questions that were asked can be found in Appendix C as prompts under each main question. Prompts of this kind aided in getting to the deeper issues by helping the pastors talk about personal experience (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). These prompts were not sent in advance.

This framework helped to make the participant feel more comfortable as it provided a sense of foreknowing about what to expect from the interview process while still allowing the researcher latitude in asking qualifying questions that were different with each participant based on individual responses. Qualifying questions encouraged participants to dig deeply into the feelings associated with each question (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar & Downing, 2016; van Manen

2014; van Manen, 2016). Interviews were conducted either in person or via Zoom communication per preference of the interviewee, therefore the setting was considered a variable. Nonetheless, the researcher requested prior to the interview that the interviewee would be in a space where they felt comfortable and would not be interrupted during the interview. The researcher also maintained those same requirements. An interview protocol was constructed and emailed prior to the interview to all potential interviewees for review (Creswell, 2018).

The purpose of giving the participants prior knowledge of the core questions for the interview was so that they were prepared psychologically for talking about this subject. Without knowing each pastor's lived experience, it could have been traumatic to blindside a pastor with questions of such a sensitive nature as these pastors may have experienced domestic violence personally. While more questions were asked during the interview than the participant was initially aware of, giving the respondents an opportunity to prepare for the potential stress of such an interview was both ethical and in keeping with this method of analysis (van Manen, 1997, van Manen, 2014). What must be noted is that the semi structured method gave this researcher latitude in that core questions were given in advance, but additional questions that further explored the topics also yielded the opportunity for fresh and unplanned responses from respondents in an unthreatening manner (van Manen, 1997, van Manen, 2014).

Survey questions were generated based on the Clato-Day (2020) demographics survey and the Zust et al (2017) research questions. Once a definition of adequacy was formulated, the researcher devised research questions based on that definition. The research questions were then each broken down into 2-3 components which comprised the interview questions. This method was suggested by the researcher's supervisor and then submitted for approval. Each interview question, as is customary with IPA, contains a set of prompts that could be used by the

researcher to aid the participants in expressing lived experiences in a deeper way (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). This instrument of data collection was vital to all Research Questions as each helped to identify perceptions of adequacy in DV ministry within this group.

***Observation***

Important to mention here is the role of the researcher as an important tool of research data collection. Applying the interpretive phenomenological method of data collection and analysis was meant for the purpose of identifying themes that existed as humans have related personal experiences of feelings and perceptions that have gone beyond words (van Manen, 2014; van Manen, 2016). For this reason, skills of observation in body language, voice inflection, and comments that might be social or historical in framework were also vital to this researcher's execution of this study. Van Manen (2014) stresses the importance of the researcher making the participant feel safe by 1- conducting interviews in places that are comfortable for the interviewee, 2- being personable by sharing researcher experience in the matter being addressed, 3- choosing a time more conducive to conversational interviewing that will not be rushed, 4- recording the interview so that the researcher can be more engaged with the interviewee, 5- stay focused on the research question and looking for data about personal experience, and 6- be okay with silence as it often will lead to the interviewee sharing more without prompting.

An observation protocol was generated and included in the email information sent to participants that were chosen for the interview process (Creswell, 2018). Having the interview in a place that is deemed comfortable to the respondent also helped the researcher to identify through body language, etc. which interview questions had what impact on the effect of the participant. According to van Manen (1997, 2014), sometimes the ways that people react

physiologically could shed more light on the matter than what is said. Being an active observer of body language, facial expressions, and stress levels that are indicated in the participants affect aided the researcher in identifying feelings that were under the surface of what was being said (Spencer-Sandolph, 2020; van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014; Zust et al, 2017).

The tool of observation was extremely helpful when handling interview questions related to Research Questions One, Two, and Three. Interview questions related to RQ1, "How do pastors define adequacy for ministering to DV impacted congregants." required respondents to share about lived experiences of perceived adequacy and inadequacy in ministry. This researcher recognized, as was expected, body language that either supported or delegitimized the participants' answers as the retelling of incidents in which the respondent genuinely felt adequate were marked by postures, facial expressions, and vocal tones of confidence and happiness. The retelling of incidents in which the respondents felt inadequate was also evidenced through postures, facial expressions, and vocal tones that could be attributed to feelings of defeat and failure (van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). Interview questions related to RQ2, "How do perceptions of adequacy impact the ability to perform pastoral care for survivors of DV," required respondents to share how the adequate and inadequate situations shared influenced policies, programs, and sermon teachings. Interview questions related to RQ3, "What opportunities existed for personal learning and growth in the area of DV ministry," required respondents to share about lived experience with DV education as well as personal experiences in life and ministry. The researcher did see visible signs of affect and demeanor which shed light on perceptions of these issues that were under the surface (van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). Observing facial reactions, tone of voice, and other bodily movements during this part of the

interview aided in the research by sharing some of those common understandings that van Manen (1997, 2014) believed people hold but might not divulge vocally.

***Document Analysis***

This tool was utilized for the reviewing of information found in written or another artist format. Audio, video, books, paintings, and photographs have all been included as types of documents that might be analyzed for meaning relevant to the exploration of these pastors' perceptions of adequacy in domestic violence ministry (Creswell, 2018). For this study, all video recordings have been carefully transcribed, and field notes were taken during the interviews. Pastors that have domestic violence policies already in place in their churches were asked for access to those policies and procedures. These policies and procedures, the field notes, and the transcriptions of the interviews, were then analyzed for the discovery of emerging themes that were present in the answering of the interview questions. This relates to Research Questions Four and Five. RQ4 asked about measurable learning outcomes that were accompanied by some form of evaluation. The interview questions associated with this RQ asked the pastors to explain educational experiences either in seminary or in specialized continuing education that might be sourced as having helped to prepare them for DV ministry. RQ 5 asked about the perceived need for continuing education. Interview questions connected with this RQ delved into personal feelings about continuing education, collaboration with outside agencies, and referral/resource lists. Any written records or files that showed prior knowledge of community services and agencies available for DV care helped to validate perceptions of the need for continuing education and community collaboration. Compiling data about emerging themes about domestic violence ministry and then seeing which pastors have existing policies and procedures, what they are, and their effectiveness helped to answer this question through analysis.

**Procedures**

It is important for the trustworthiness of this study to have set, reproducible procedures that were succinct and easy to follow. Listed here is the set of procedures followed by this researcher.

1. IRB permission sought as a full review was needed and was suggested for topics that have a sensitive nature such as domestic violence (Roberts, 2010).

2. Survey questions were generated through the permitted use of demographic questions from the Clato-Day (2020) study and a structured version of the research questions that guided the Zust et al (2017) study. These were structured survey questions only for the intent of performing a purposive sample on the population and to lend demographic information on the pastors studied.

3. Field test group was contacted by phone or email and asked to take the survey, make suggestions, and submit feedback for any questions they felt should be added or omitted. A list of these pastors will be included in the acknowledgements.

4. The initial population of potential respondents was gathered from the Association of Religious Data Archives (2020).

5. This initial pool was emailed or called to find out if they were still in operation.

6. This pool was then emailed the survey that was created in concert with literature and the field testers.

7. All pastors that have not been seminary educated were immediately rejected as potential respondents.

8. The purposive sample was further narrowed through random choosing of every fifth pastor that had completed seminary, serves in southwestern PA, and was willing to submit to the hour and a half to two-hour interview process. It was then whittled down to ten participants that were similar in demographics, education, and length of pastorate so that the desired homogenous sample could be found (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

9. While being interviewed, the researcher utilized the van Manen (1997, 2014) interpretive phenomenological analysis method. This method is one of many qualitative methods used to identify emergent, but underlying themes that exist within a population where a certain phenomenon is concerned. Because this purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of adequacy in the participants, this type of conversational method was preferred as it left room for the respondent to share experiences, go down rabbit trails, and give clues to perceptions both historical and cultural that might underpin certain convictions or actions (van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014).

10. This method was conducted using lengthy, open-ended interviews held in a space that was considered comfortable and relaxing to the respondent so that any uncomfortable responses could be narrowed down to reactions to questions that were asked by the interviewer as much as possible. This method required dedicated observation techniques by the researcher. These techniques included video recording, taking field notes, watching closely for bodily cues, listening carefully for tone, and a constant decision to view the answers from the standpoint of the respondent instead of through personal lenses.

11. Data collection instruments included the researcher, the video recording device, journaling, observation, and document analysis where available.

12. Recordings were watched three times by the interviewer, at least, and once by the second coder. All recordings were saved under pseudonym and faces of pastors were blurred out so that the second coder could not identify them. These recordings have been password protected and stored by the researcher in a secure computer.

13. It must be noted that because of the subjective nature of this type of study, personal reflection and awareness of personal bias has been always guarded. To further safeguard against personal bias, the researcher has had the help of the dissertation supervisor, the second reader, a second coder, and utilized a computerized software for further data analysis. These safeguards ensured that the researcher was not identifying themes based on personal bias but was instead identifying themes based on participant responses

.

14. Data has been stored on a password protected computer in password protected files. Each interviewee was assigned a pseudonym, as were the churches they represent. No one except the researcher, not even the second coder, has access to the real identity data.

15. Interview protocols were developed to ensure safety and ethical standards being upheld during the research process. These are included in the appendix.

16. Confidentiality notices were also developed and are included in the appendix of this work.

17. Copies of findings will be offered to participants and other researchers upon request.

## Data Analysis

The van Manen (1997, 2014) method of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) cannot be successfully utilized apart from proper coding and analyzing of themes. Coding, in this type of study, has been part of the analysis process as it has aided in identifying the underlying social and historical themes that came through as the pastors' answers were interpreted by the

researcher. Instruments and methods of coding and analysis are discussed in this section. These processes have been chosen because of the research findings from literature that support them as reliable forms of data collection and interpretation for studying the topic chosen by this student, as demonstrated in the Zust et al (2017) and Spencer-Sandolph (2020) studies.

**Analysis Methods**

Van Manen's (2014) suggested route for analysis of these lived human experience that were recounted during the interview process was as follows: "The experience was presented as (a) a lived experience description; (b) converted into an anecdote; (c) submitted to the wholistic, selective, and line-by-line thematizations; and (d) themes used for some exemplary phenomenological reflective writing" (p. 320). Because these analysis methods are heavily reliant on the researcher the constant act of separating personal biases and thoughts from the recounting of the interviewee was one of the most important analysis requirements for the phenomenological researcher. Epoché, or this separating of self from data, was a bracketing, or a taking away from, a text that removes preconceived ideas and understandings. Reduction, however, is the process of getting back to the underlying themes of meaning that gird up experiences and belief systems without real acknowledgement in everyday thought processes. The work of epoché and reduction was done by the researcher to help identify, or dredge up, those deeper "common meanings" (Zust et al, 2017) or "meaning structures" (van Manen, 2014, p. 215).

Because the data was in the form of narrative accounts, coding should be acknowledged as hugely important as the data was analyzed. There were various methods possible for coding—by hand or through a computerized coding program such as MAXqda, Atlas.ti, Provalis and QDA Miner, Dedoose, and QSR NVivo. While coding by hand might offer opportunities for

researchers to be more iterative in the process, it is tedious and time consuming as well as prone to human error. Computerized coding used the thoughts and ideas of the researcher while it yielded a more thorough, timely, and accurate coding of all information (Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2105; Patton, 2105). Computerized coding was useful even though van Manen (2014) has maintained that "analyzing thematic meanings of a phenomenon (a lived experience) is a complex and creative process of insightful invention, discovery, and disclosure" (p. 320) suggesting that this type of analysis was best done by the researcher through a "free act of 'seeing' meaning that was driven by the epoché and the reduction" (p. 320).

Namely, the analysis showed what, if any, themes arose that pointed to the influence seminary training has had on perceptions of adequacy and preparedness for ministering to survivors of domestic violence in southwestern Pennsylvania. Because these feelings could be expressed through body language, gestures, postures, facial expressions, and the like during the answering of interview questions, close examination of the video recordings was necessary. Because of all the data that needed to be analyzed and collected through transcripts and observation of body language, each recording was watched three times. Those findings were then entered into the NVivo 12 software which combined them with the remaining data that was entered and coded. Emerging themes expected were that pastors in this region felt ill-equipped for such ministry. Lack of exposure and training has been cited as reasons for these perceptions of inadequacy. Connections between themes of underpinning attitudes about gender roles, biblical understandings of submission and marriage, and social and historical contexts for power and control have also been noted. The only way to identify these was through exploratory open-ended questions during the interview process that encouraged the pastors to share more than they might normally and possibly even more than they were aware they were sharing. Tables, figures,

and charts that highlight the theme, quotations from the pastors that exemplify the themes, and the research questions satisfied by each theme have been posited. Once all coding was completed, themes emerged, and a narrative account of the findings can now be presented.

## Trustworthiness

A study is determined to be good or bad by its trustworthiness. Court, Abbas, Riecken, Seymour, and Tran (2017) maintained that "[v]alidity and reliability both relate to the general (and, on the surface, pretty obvious) idea that research must be constructed and conducted in such a way that the results are true, correct, accurate" (p. 29). Trustworthiness is the sum of that validity and reliability and in qualitative research it is made up of four characteristics: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

### *Credibility*

Credibility has been defined as "concerned with the aspect of truth-value" and "is the equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research" (Korstjens & Moser, 2017, p. 121) and Patton (1999) declared:

> The credibility issue for qualitative inquiry depends on three distinct but related inquiry elements: 1- rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high-quality data that are carefully analyzed, with attention to issues of validity, reliability, and triangulation; 2- the credibility of the researcher, which is dependent on training, experience, track record, status, and presentation of self; and 3- philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry, that is, a fundamental appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, purposeful sampling, and holistic thinking (p. 1190).

As for point number one from Patton (1999), multiple types of data collection tools were implemented with triangulation techniques employed and two methods of coding were used. These were: a second coder, as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) and utilized by Zust et al (2017), and a computerized program known as NVivo 12, which was utilized by Spencer-Sandolph (2020). The dual coding route was chosen by the researcher to assist in assuring the

reliability of this study in that the multiple coding processes helped guard the study against too much personal bias in the identification of themes in the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Tesch, 1990). The dissertation supervisor and the second reader also aided in the assurance of credibility as they worked with the researcher to ensure that all ethics protocols and bounds of research were being met throughout the process (Roberts, 2010). Although van Manen (2014, 2016) was not a fan of computerized coding, this researcher utilized the NVivo 12 program as used by Spencer-Sandolph (2020) as a precautionary tool to enhance the trustworthiness of the thematic findings of this study and to allow for combining of observational data with narrative data in a more reliable way.

As for Patton's second point, the core principles of the interpretive phenomenological method, epoché and reduction, were better guarded with the use of these multiple coding methods. While it was important for the researcher to keep personal biases in check, the experiences of this researcher as a domestic violence survivor and a minister that works with other survivors gave a unique ability to understand the topic at large. This personal experience also served as a motivating factor for wanting to better understand the phenomenon of seminary educated pastors feeling ill-equipped for this type of ministry. Steps to ensure that personal bias did not interfere with the interpretation of the data also increased credibility. One such step was a second coder. A second coder is a person other than the study participants and not the researcher that looks over the data to see if common meanings and themes are evident. Although wording might not be the same, the idea is that the second coder would recognize similar themes that are identified by the researcher. The second coder helped to ensure that the researcher's personal biases did not influence the coding of data and the computer programs available helped to sort

through what was a healthy amount of data that had to be coded. Both also helped identify themes and interconnections that the researcher might have missed.

Finally, to Patton's (1999) third point, the researcher recognized the important contributions qualitative research had made to the fields of psychology, social science, education, and more. The work this student has done in helping women heal from the trauma of domestic violence has allowed for a deep appreciation in the need for holistic studs on this phenomenon. Because people in faith-based communities have been most likely to outcry to pastors and religious leaders (Barna, 2017), it was important to study the experiences of pastors in ministering to these specific needs. Preparedness for this type of ministry then also needed to be studied. Qualitative study allowed for those things that could not be measured in numbers to be explored and discovered. Contributing to the body of research that supports this idea or need was of great importance to this researcher as it could mean the difference between life and death for the abused.

***Dependability***

Korstjens and Moser (2017) states that "[t]he stability of findings over time" (p. 121). All procedures, protocols, and methods have been documented here in the writing of this study. These steps of the study are clearly outlined and replicable. Records of decisions made during the entire study will be kept in a journal and will be made available upon request of other researchers. These records will indicate the consistent adherence to the processes of van Manen's (2014, 2016) interpretive phenomenological method.

***Confirmability***

"Confirmability concerns the aspect of neutrality. You need to secure the inter-subjectivity of the data. The interpretation should not be based on your own particular

preferences and viewpoints but needs to be grounded in the data" (Korstiens & Moser, 2017, p. 122). To ensure confirmability, the researcher journaled continual introspection throughout the study (van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). Journal samplings can be found in the appendix of this work and the full journal will be made available upon request from other researchers. A second coder was also utilized to ensure neutrality in the data collection and analysis (van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). Biographic information about the second coder and a sampling of the notes from the analysis done by this coder are available in the appendix. Full records of the second coder's notes will be made available upon request. The amount of data collected for this study was too voluminous to include here or in the appendices. All data, however, will be made available to other researchers upon request.

***Transferability***

The goal of this study was to identify themes that may point to underlying meanings associated with the perceptions of adequacy experienced by seminary educated evangelical pastors in southwestern Pennsylvania when ministering to domestic violence impacted congregants. Because such a small sample pool was evaluated, it cannot be stated with certainty that the emergent themes that speak to those perceptions are transferrable to other evangelical pastors. Things such as personal experience, social and historical underpinnings of beliefs, what seminary was attended, and the like cloud the ability to transfer the perceptions of the pastors interviewed to other pastors. However, the goal of the interpretive phenomenological method was not to produce a generalizable or transferrable evaluation (Patton, 2005; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). The goal was simply to determine perceptions of adequacy associated with domestic violence ministry for this group of pastors alone. Once all data was collected and analyzed, the researcher will be able to see if there is any

similarity between findings of this study and others like it, as suggested by researchers (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). Future study in this area would then be needed. These findings are only transferable among pastors in this ten-county region of Pennsylvania that have been seminary educated, identifies as evangelical in beliefs, and are homogenous demographically. Even then, because of the impact of personal experience, pastors that have lived experience with DV personally or professionally may view adequacy differently than those that do not have similar lived experience (Bennis, 1989). There may be a broad comparative possibility with studies that have been done in other regions of the United States that also focus on seminary educated evangelical pastors, but that would be fuel for another study.

What must be noted is that this research may not be transferrable to other denominational groups outside the evangelical tradition. It would also not be transferrable to those not seminary educated. While the researcher did not attempt to evaluate individual seminaries, it must be understood that the underlying tenets of belief that have permeated various religious or philosophical traditions are foundational for the building of curriculum and training offered by these seminaries. Put simply, the tradition the seminary espouses will influence thought and understandings about biblical texts and can have an influence on the student's beliefs about violence within the family. Findings in this study may be transferrable to those that hold similar underlying belief systems about male-female relationships, power and control dynamics, and biblical interpretations of those roles.

That said, this research would not be transferrable to all seminarians, nor does it speak to the adequacy of preparation that is being, or has been, achieved by seminaries. Generalizations about course offerings, adequacy of educational preparedness, and/or the abilities/responsibilities

of seminaries to offer more specialized training can also not be made from this research alone. What can be understood from this research is that much more research is needed in preparedness for vocational duties among seminarians.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter has identified the make-up of this study. The researcher chose an interpretive phenomenological study, which was a qualitative study, and chose to replicate methods of data collection and analysis found in the Zust et al (2017) and Spencer-Sandolph (2020) studies that addressed domestic violence form the standpoint of evangelical pastors in different regions of the United States of America. These studies were chosen as inspiration because of the research problem and purpose chosen for study which was to explore perceptions of adequacy in ministering to domestic violence impacted congregants in seminary educated evangelical pastors in southwestern Pennsylvania. Southwestern Pennsylvania was chosen because this is the region the researcher lives and works and because no studies were identified as previously exploring this research problem in this region of the country. Guiding this study were questions meant to illicit conversational responses that when analyzed pointed to common and underlying meanings, or themes, which could then be identified, coded, and analyzed in a narrative format.

This researcher video recorded interviews with a purposive sample of evangelical pastors identified through a survey generated by literary research findings and field testing that relied on data collected through answers to structured questions about experience and demographics. Once identified, this sample participated in lengthy, open-ended, semi-structured interviews conducted in places of safety for the interviewees. These places of safety included pastoral offices where interviews were conducted in person or through online communication sources like Zoom.

Research of this kind placed the researcher as an instrument of collection and analysis. Personal reflection, field tests, and a second coder were also used by this researcher to help assure reliability and validity as bias from lived experience was both the catalyst and a possible shortfall for this study. This was also an ethical consideration, as were the care and treatment of pastors as experiences were discussed that might bring hurt or trauma as they were discussed. Being constantly aware of body language and other cues was vital to both validity and ethical responsibility. Ensuring confidentiality as well as explaining all procedures through each step of the study was also part of ethical considerations that had to be observed. Because the van Manen (2014, 2016) method emphasized the researcher as the main tool of data analysis, or theme identification, the ability to utilize the practices of epoché, a separating of self from the data, and reduction, a getting back to the participant's point of view about the matter, were imperative. These processes helped to address the personal bias of the researcher in the data, but this type of study was done even when a complete removal of bias was unrealistic and unattainable.

After data was collected via video recording, it was transcribed and then analyzed as a whole per participant to look for one main identifiable theme. Data was then analyzed again through selective analysis which went paragraph by paragraph through transcribed data to identify more themes and possible sub-themes that were present. Then, line-by-line analysis was done to further substantiate themes and guard against missing something. A second coder was e utilized to verify findings and increase reliability and validity, and all findings were also coded and analyzed using NVivo 12 software for a final source of analysis. Findings were then reported in narrative fashion using charts, tables, and figures where possible to illustrate connections between themes, quotes, and interconnections.

# CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

## Overview

In this chapter, the researcher presented the findings and analysis of those findings. Guided by the research questions, interviews with pastors yielded a vast amount of data. Themes and subthemes emerged within context of RQs. Underlying meanings and belief systems also emerged. Findings and analysis presented here served to fulfill the research purpose of discovering pastor perceptions of adequacy for ministering to domestic violence impacted congregants.

## Compilation Protocol and Measures

The researcher utilized the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) method of qualitative study. Submission to IRB yielded few and minor changes to verbiage and format. Those changes were made, and IRB approval was received. After approval was received from IRB, the researcher began field testing. Field testing was done by three pastor friends that had all completed seminary. It produced no suggested changes to the sampling survey and suggested adjustment to only one of the interview questions, the first question that asked pastors to define adequacy. Two of three field testers felt that the original question asked bluntly would put pastors in the defensive immediately and could taint that remainder of the interview. The pastors suggested adding a brief lead in about adequacy could make the pastors feel more comfortable about answering questions related to such a sensitive topic like personal adequacy. This suggestion was accepted and implemented in the interview process.

Once field testing was completed, the researcher prepared to contact pastors in the ten counties covered geographically in this study. The original list found through the Association of Religion Data Archives (2020) showed 1,172 churches active in the ten counties of southwestern

(SW) Pennsylvania (PA). In preparing that list for contact, the researcher found a more complete data list that provided updated phone, email, and address information. That list was purchased through Data Axle and was current to 2021. The Data Axle list showed 1,730 evangelical churches in SW PA. 250 of these were chosen at random and contacted. Of the 250 contacted, 137 returned completed surveys. Surveys were not anonymous as interviews would be completed in person and began being returned by the end of July 2021. The final one was received the third week of August 2021. Qualtrics was used to evaluate responses. The final pool of ten was selected at random by choosing every third qualifying respondent and interviews began promptly. The interview process took a month to complete.

During the interview process, one of the pastors behaved in a way that caused the researcher to question whether the data collected from the interview could be used in an unbiased manner. In this population of subjects, this was not expected. Actions and comments of this pastor encompassed all three themes found in this study in ways not seen in any other pastor. These actions and comments included: 1- how good the researcher looked; 2- explicit stories about congregants' behaviors sexually when questions did not pertain to that topic; 3- multiple requests to stop recording at which time the pastor made lude comments; 4- references to male genitalia and how many languages it was known in; and 5- unwanted physical contact. The researcher froze in shock. Throughout the remainder of the interview, the researcher felt trapped thinking many different things: 1- that it was unprofessional to stop the interview; 2- that this man was an influential part of the community which the researcher works in ministerially; 3- is this really happening; 4- surely, I am misinterpreting this; 5- what did ethics class and readings say about this; 6- this is data, just record the data, and 7- if this is happening in this context, what is happening in other male-female interactions with this pastor.

In the interest of trustworthiness and the *epoché*, or the continual self-evaluation needed to decrease bias, which was required by the interpretive phenomenological analysis, the researcher decided to exclude this pastor from the study. Because researchers maintained that sample pools of 3-25 were common in this type of study (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Turpin et al, 1997), eliminating the pastor in the interest of removing possible researcher bias was deemed the best solution to the issue. This brought the final sample pool to nine seminary educated evangelical pastors.

Interviews were transcribed and coded. The researcher read through the transcripts and coding three times and then turned it over to the second coder. The second coder then coded the transcribed interviews independently of the researcher and emailed notes. Confidentiality was guarded and interviews and transcripts were kept on a password protected computer. Once the researcher and second coder finished coding, the interviews were entered into NVivo computerized software. This data was compiled to form the findings reported here.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many churches were not available when initial contact was made. Voicemails were left and those interested returned the calls. Some were contacted multiple times. Limited office hours due to Covid-19 restrictions were the main contributing factor to sampling taking an entire month. Interviewing was also complicated by Covid-19 as two initially chosen respondents contracted the illness and had to drop out and be replaced. Despite these unpredictable challenges, the Lord made the way, and the study was completed.

## Demographic and Sample Data

Respondents to the survey were not routed by Qualtrics to the end if requirements for continuing in the study were not met. The researcher wanted to collect the demographic data for possible future study usage. 137 pastors returned the survey which yielded a +/- 5 confidence

interval at 80% certainty. Of the 137 surveys received, only 42 fit research criteria of being a seminary educated evangelical pastor serving in SW PA and willing to participate in the interview process.

**Table 1**

*Sampling Data Per Study Criteria*

| County | Seminary Educated | Evangelical | Both |
|---|---|---|---|
| Allegheny | 19 | 10 | 8 |
| Armstrong | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Beaver | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Cambria | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| Fayette | 9 | 9 | 6 |
| Greene | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Indiana | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Somerset | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| Washington | 5 | 12 | 3 |
| Westmoreland | 8 | 11 | 7 |
| TOTALS | 72 | 67 | 42 |

Demographic information such as age, gender, and race were included for the sake of narrowing to a homogenous sample but were not considered otherwise. Tables outlining gender, age, race, denomination, and whether the respondent identified as evangelical or not were included for each county in Appendix I in Tables 2-11. The researcher eliminated female respondents which created a more homogenous sample and brought the pool down to 33 respondents. The researcher then modified the original plan to randomly select every third pastor for the final

sample and instead selected every fifth pastor to accommodate for the smaller pool. Two of the originally chosen respondents contracted Covid-19 and were unable to participate. The researcher removed those two from the group, recombined all respondents, and again randomly selected every third respondent from the remaining pool of 31. The pool of ten was identified and interviews began the end of August 2021 and were completed October 4, 2021. During transcription, one pastor was removed as mentioned earlier, which left a final pool of nine.

## Data Analysis and Findings

The researcher found that the research questions were answered by all pastors interviewed in various ways. There was not one uniform definition or response for all pastors, but throughout the interviews common themes emerged. Due to the focus of the study, all five RQs had thematic material pertinent to Abuse, Adequacy, and Theology. These three became the parent codes under which all references were coded. Experience was found to be one underlying meaning that admittedly informed all ten pastors' perceptions of adequacy and surfaced in relation to all themes and subthemes noted. Resources was another underlying meaning that was noted as was Ministry of Presence. Subthemes and underlying meanings such as these were noted under each parent code. The second coder and NVivo confirmed subthemes and underlying meanings. Themes and meanings emerged in relation to interview questions designed and asked to inform the research questions that guided this study. The researcher included figures that demonstrated Parent Code and Subtheme relationships and tables that showed the frequency of occurrences within each pastor interview.

**Table 2**

*Parent Codes/Themes and Their Frequencies Verified by Researcher/Second Coder*

| Parent Codes | Number of Pastor Interviews | Number of References to Code/Theme |
|---|---|---|
| Adequacy | 9 | 359 |
| Theology and Beliefs | 9 | 242 |
| Abuse | 9 | 137 |

**Research Question One Findings**

RQ1 asked, **"**How do pastors define adequacy for ministering to DV impacted congregants?" Pastor One defined adequacy as depending solely on the sufficiency of Christ with a motivation to be present and help whenever needed. That help included practical help like being present and supplying natural needs such as childcare and transportation, knowing who to refer to, and responding quickly. Pastor Five defined adequacy as "being able to bring from Scripture the help that people need to bear into their situation," as highlighted in Table 13. Further discussion revealed that "trying to guide people closer to Christ is, to me [Pastor Five], all that adequacy entails… and giving them the kind of [spiritual] tools that they need to get through their current challenges in a way that they feel like the Lord's with them, and that if they hold on to him that they're going to make it through." Pastor Nine agreed that adequacy could be found in the Lord alone. This pastor maintained that the Lord equipped those called to this work and that it had very little to do with personal adequacy at all. Pastor Nine explained, "I don't want to get in the way or be a stumbling block or be a reason or a cause for someone to doubt or not trust the Lord in any way or form. So, there is the sense of inadequacy that is looming, always, not so much for myself, but to be the instrument of God's grace and truth. For others."

These three pastors maintained that adequacy was found in the Lord alone and was expressed through acts of service. Pastor One included practical acts of service where Pastor Five and Nine believed spiritual service was the limit of the pastoral role. Theology was imbedded in the pastoral concepts of adequacy.

Pastor Two defined adequacy for ministering to DV impacted congregants as a combination of education, experience, and knowing when to refer and whom to refer to. Pastor Four echoed Pastor Two's definition of adequacy and maintained areas where referral was needed immediately included mental illness, addiction, and domestic violence because, "They [the congregant or individual being served] need a deeper level of counseling than I'm able to provide them. Perhaps they need psychiatric help, or they need multiple thing services involved in the situation, for a domestic violence situation, they might need to go to a shelter as soon as possible. That kind of thing. And can I direct them to those kinds of resources" (Pastor Four, 2021). Neither of these pastors mentioned the adequacy of the Lord as connected to personal definitions of adequacy.

Pastor Six defined adequacy as, "education, experience, and then also the blessing of God, the Spirit of God, equipping you to be able to do his ministry because, you know, let's face it, it's his work in people's lives and I don't change anybody's life." Pastor Seven defined adequacy as education and experience combined with the ministry of presence as a representative of Christ "to be there for someone or, you know, a group of people or whatever the situation is centered around. It's more of being and showing up rather than doing and fixing." These two pastors combined all previous pastor definitions. This definition of adequacy included education, experience, resources for referral, and the grace of God for the equipping of the work of ministry to all areas of need.

Pastor Three was the only pastor to speak about adequacy in relation to the success of other churches or pastors. This pastor tied adequacy to Scripture related to God being sufficient for our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9) and spoke about staffing weaknesses in terms of Scripture related to each one having different gifts from God that work together to make the whole fruitful (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:7-16). This pastor also connected adequacy to being prepared and not being taken off guard. This pastor further defined adequacy as help from the Holy Spirit, practical tools like resources, and experiential knowledge learned through exposure to the issue. “Not being blindsided” was unique from other pastor definitions.

Pastor Eight introduced the concept of efficacy to the discussion. This pastor defined adequacy as 1- “having a certain set of knowledge and maybe personal experience” and/or 2- “efficacy, the ability to train somebody to have a sense that maybe they have not been in a situation before, but they would have at least enough self-confidence to say I can least take a stab at it.” Pastor Eight went on to say, “adequacy of ministry would be the same, you might have situations or experiences in which you haven't lived through them or [don’t] have a complete set of knowledge, but at least could [you] say I could take a stab and feel faithful at it.” This pastor maintained that education, experience, and self-confidence combined to form perceptions of adequacy.

**Table 3**

*Questions and Answers Related to RQ1*

| Interview Questions | Pastor Answers |
|---|---|
| Define adequacy in your own words | "being able to bring from Scripture the help that people need to bear into their situation" (Pastor Five, 50).<br><br>"education, experience, and then also the blessing of God, the Spirit of God, equipping you to be able to do his ministry" (Pastor Six, 54).<br><br>"It's more of being and showing up rather than doing and fixing" (Pastor Seven, 26).<br><br>"Adequate would be having a certain set of knowledge and maybe personal experience…but they would have at least enough self-confidence to say I can least take a stab at it" (Pastor Eight, 34). |
| Tell me about a time when you felt adequate in ministry | "There haven't been too many times where I felt adequate. But I know God is adequate" (Pastor One, 60).<br><br>"I feel adequate to handle any situation." (Pastor Two, 63).<br><br>"How could anyone feel fully adequate to do every little thing in ministry? I don't think it's personally possible" (Pastor Three, 44).<br><br>"I'm prepared to deal with a variety of situations…either myself or with the people I have available to me, or direct people to an appropriate agency or person" (Pastor Four, 61).<br><br>"My sense of adequacy is usually low" (Pastor Nine, 58). |

**Research Question One Analysis**

Interview questions linked to RQ1 yielded all three parent themes with subthemes of Seminary, Continuing Education, Resources, and Government associated with Adequacy. Underlying meanings, which were shown as subthemes in charts, were identified as Protective

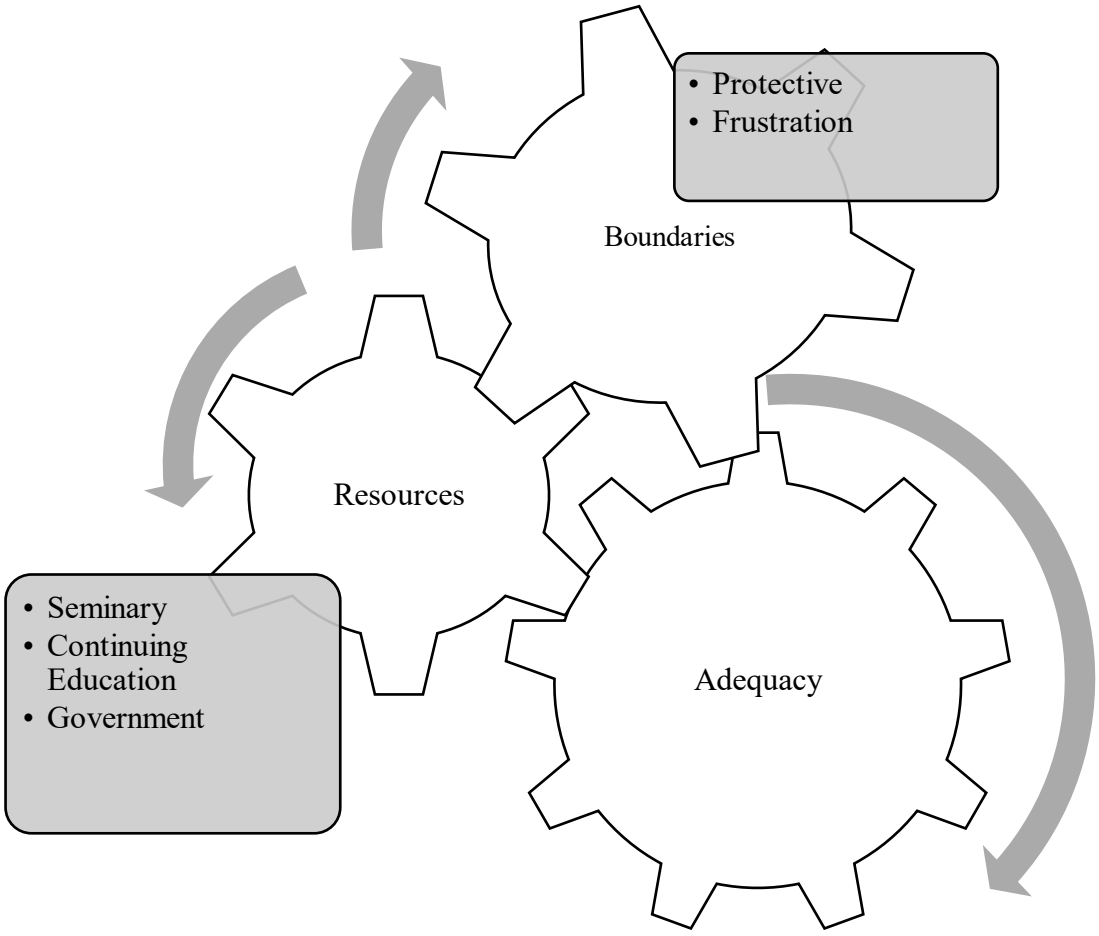
and Frustration. The parent code Adequacy was the focus of this study which explained the large number of references to it. Subthemes were noted as they emerged in conversation. Using an iterative process of analysis during data collection, the researcher noted commonalities that were immediately obvious during the interviews. During transcription those subthemes were cemented as they continued to occur throughout the pastor interviews. Many themes and subthemes were interconnected and double or triple coded. Frequency tables for all parent codes and related subthemes, Tables 14-16, were included in Appendix J. Frequency Table 14 applied to Adequacy.

***Adequacy***

For these nine pastors, adequacy was equated with 1- education that included seminary and continuing education, 2- general adequacy in ministry which to these pastors meant being called to the ministry by the Lord, 3- resources in the community which included people like friends and other professionals in various organizations like governmental agencies and hospitals, and 4- boundaries that served to protect the pastor, the people in need, and the church. The only subthemes of adequacy addressed in this section of writing were those that emerged during questions related to RQ1. Subthemes that emerged during interview portions were analyzed along with those research question synopses.

**Figure 1**

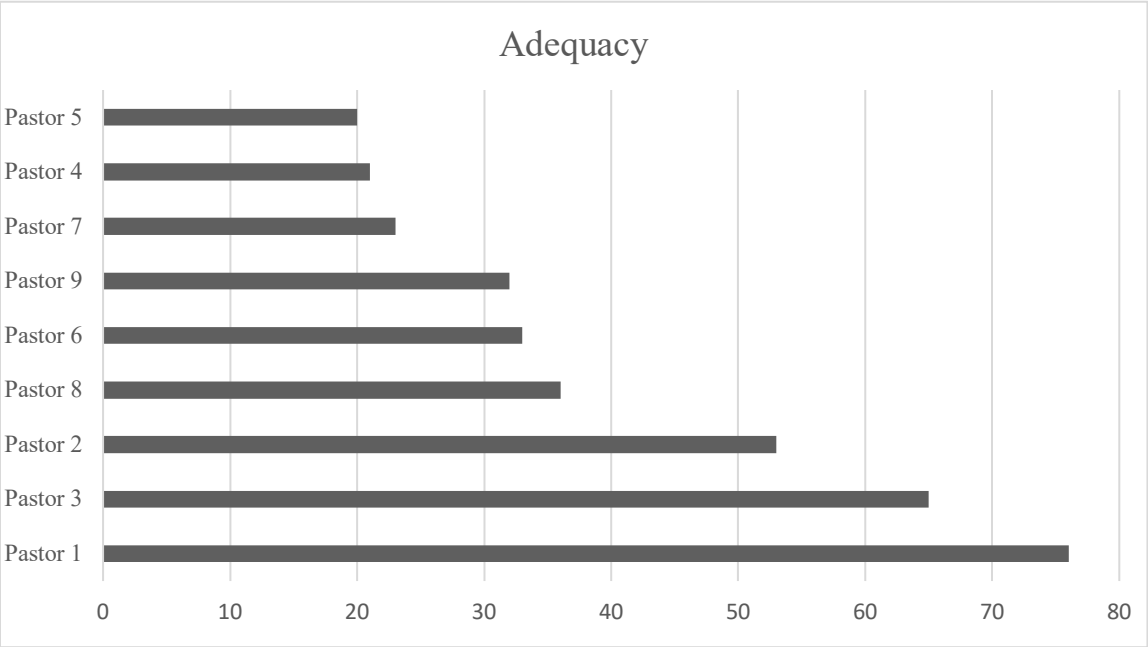
*Parent Theme Adequacy with Subthemes*




NVivo and the researcher coded and noted frequencies of theme and subtheme occurrences within each pastor's interview. Pastor rankings for frequencies changed from theme to theme and within subthemes. Figure 2 showed pastor rankings in the parent theme Adequacy.

**Figure 2**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Adequacy Parent Theme*




**Seminary.** Seven out of nine pastors had no seminary training at all in domestic violence ministry. One had one class that referenced domestic violence one time in an eight-week class, and one had two classes that referenced it with one taught by a professor that did doctorate work on domestic violence. Pastor Six mentioned that seminary did not cover many topics pertinent to pastoring today's congregations and admitted leaning on outside training from an online counseling certification. Pastor Six said,

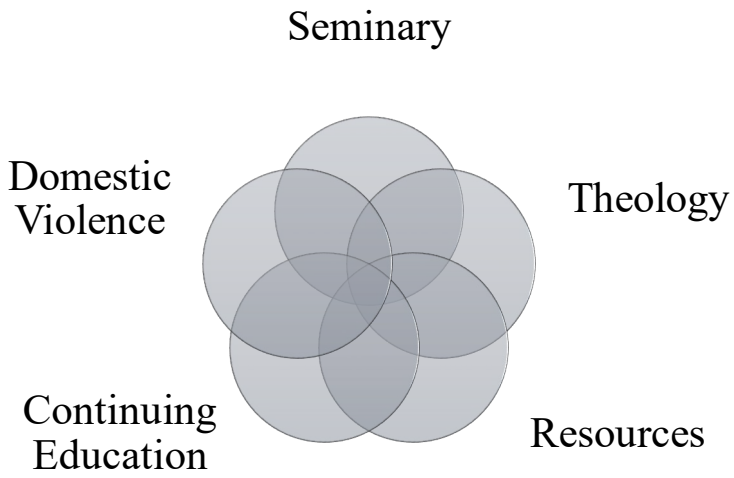
> You think seminary you think oh, Hebrew, Greek, pastoral theology. systematic theology you have all that and you think well that's seminary. That's what seminary is about. seminaries going in and taking all these deep theological classes and language classes. You don't think this kind of stuff you don't think like counseling issues, we still have that so adequate Yeah, I can handle the text.

Seven of nine pastors agreed they were prepared adequately to preach teach and handle the Scriptures, but seven of the nine perceived insufficient education in seminary to handle issues like mental illness, addiction, homelessness, and domestic violence. The two that expressed

perceived adequacy for ministry to domestic violence impacted congregants leaned that adequacy on theological underpinnings of the ministry of presence, and stated seminary contributed through theological training and pastoral care classes that highlighted just being there for people in love. These statements were multi-coded with theology, domestic violence, ministry of presence, continued education, and adequacy. Resources were also tied to the discussion of seminary as some pastors developed key relationship resources that were still influencing development. Eight of nine pastors spoke about seminary in relation to inadequacy for DV related ministry. Only one pastor remembered that seminary administration addressed the issue of domestic violence. This was imprinted in the pastor's mind because the administration declared that violence of this kind disqualified one from ministry. Figure 3 demonstrated the interconnectedness of these subthemes and themes.

**Figure 3**

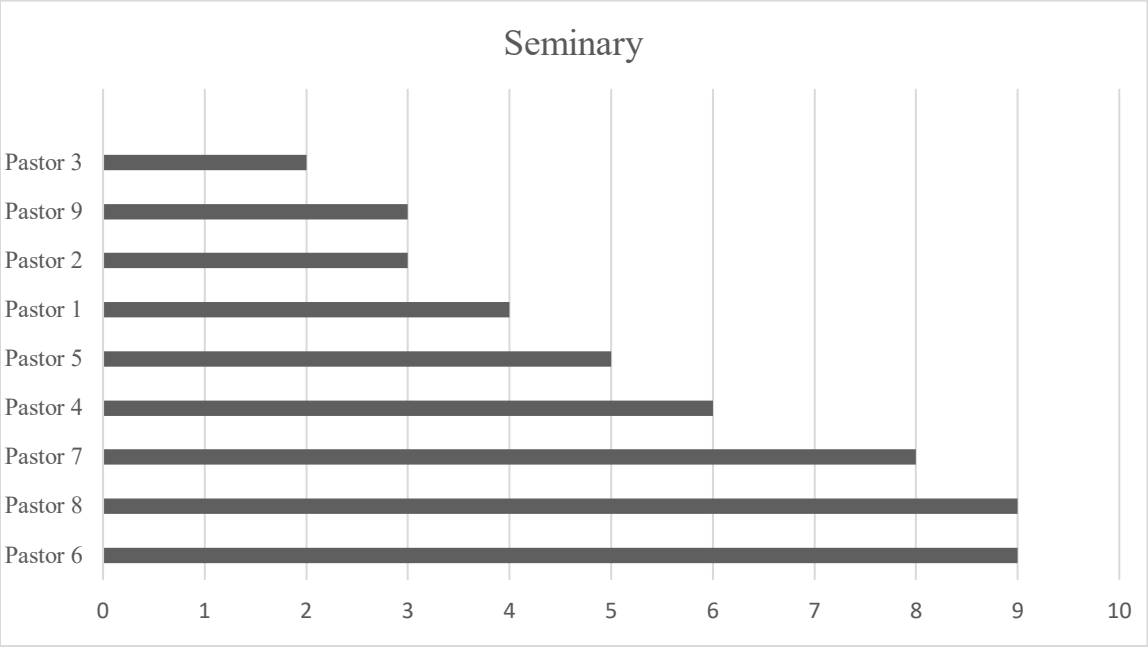
*Overlapping Occurrences of Seminary Subtheme Related to RQ1*




There was robust conversation about seminary with all the pastors. The pastor rankings of the frequency of occurrence of the subtheme of Seminary were shown here in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Seminary Subtheme*




**Continuing Education.** Pastor Six scored highest in frequency of references to continuing education. This pastor expressed a passion for learning and teaching others and incorporated the idea of small group ministry into discussion about continuing education. Pastor Six felt continuing education was part of the call and that pastors were to be life-time learners. While this certification in counseling was the primary continuing education this pastor sought, he saw books as an endless source of learning. This pastor maintained that once a book was read and the content mastered, it increased personal perceptions of adequacy in that area enough that he felt confident to preach on the issue. These statements were double coded, some with seminary and some with resources. Pastors Two and Nine agreed that continuing education was important but maintained they did only what was required by the denomination. Of these two pastors, only Pastor Nine shared Pastor Six's vigor for training others. Discussion about small

group ministry and the theology behind the need to train lay leaders were both double coded with theology.

Pastor Nine spoke of continuing education in the non-traditional format of gathering and reasoning together with like-minded believers. This pastor, as did others, shared about the covenant group that he was in that began in seminary and was still going. Unlike the other pastors, Pastor Nine explained how going through the issues of life together had taught them all lessons they would have never learned otherwise. Pastor Nine spoke fondly of this group and expressed life situations they had walked through together. It was evident that it was a robust experience that enriched the pastorate ministry of Pastor Nine. These statements were triple coded with continuing education, seminary, and resources.

Pastors Two expressed a general disdain for continuing education and said it was only done when required by the denomination. Pastor Three confessed the desire to continue education but spoke of it only in terms of higher formal education in terms of another master's degree or a doctorate. For this type of continuing education, Pastor Three maintained "I would go to the ends of the earth." Pastors Seven and Eight discussed plans for continuing education in the mental health field. As for continuing education where domestic violence was concerned, all the pastors recognized the need, but only Pastor One said that he had gone to domestic violence training in the community. These statements were double coded with domestic violence, and some with resources. Figure 5 demonstrated interconnectedness of subthemes related to continuing education.

**Figure 5**

*Overlapping Occurrences of Continuing Education Subtheme Related to RQ1*

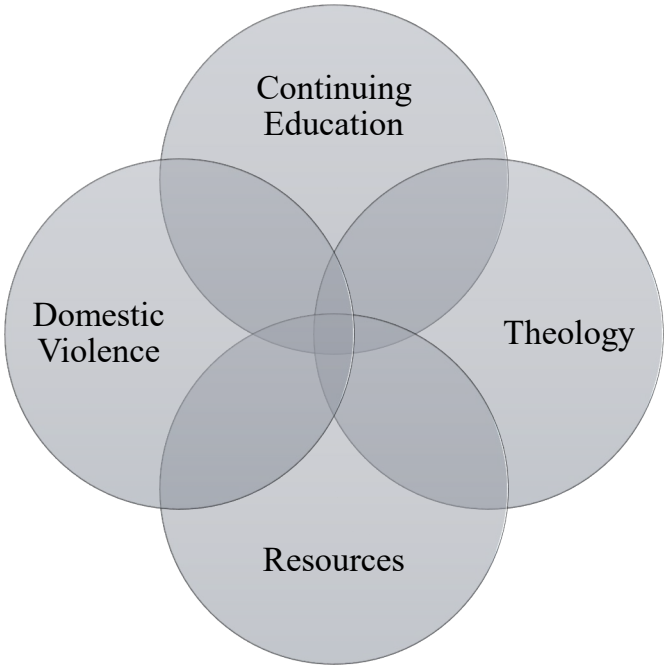
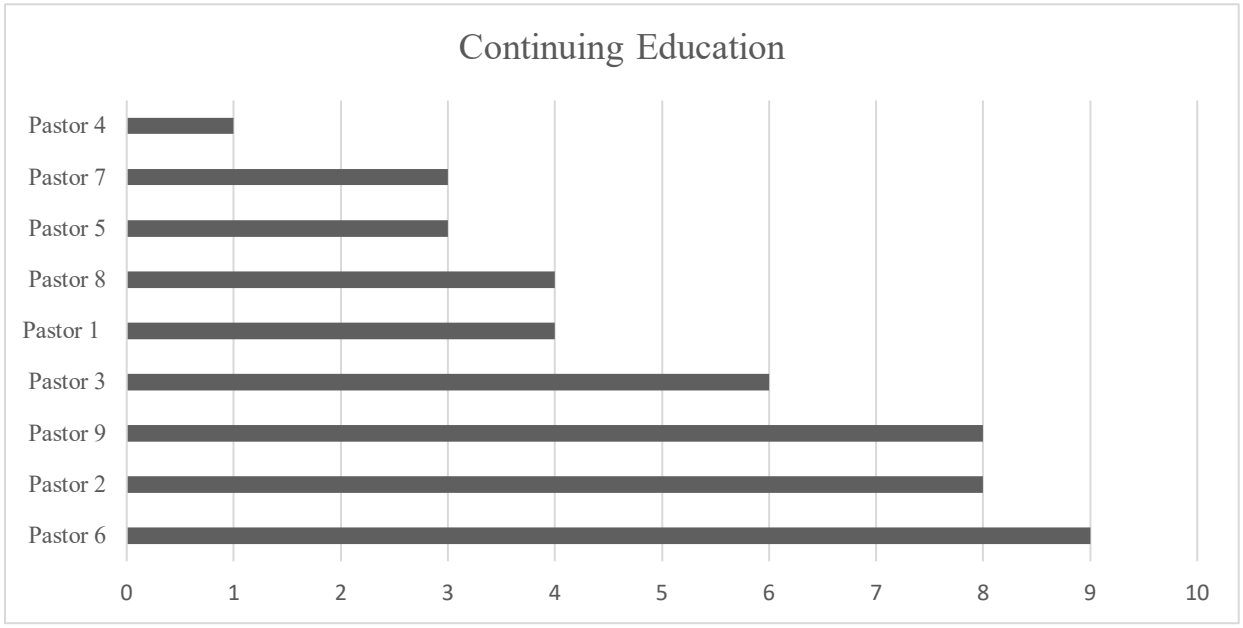



Figure 6 demarcated pastor rankings within this subtheme.

**Figure 6**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Continuing Education Subtheme*

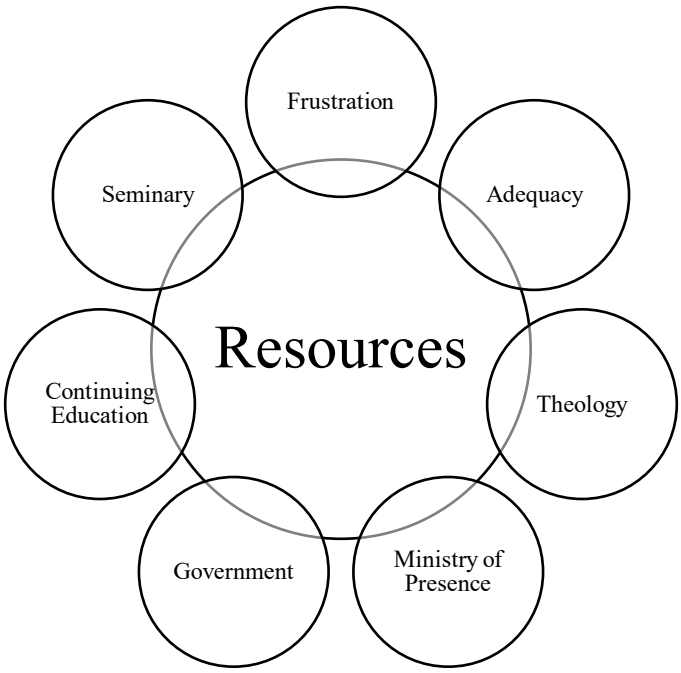


**Resources.** Pastor One expressed contempt for government in matters of domestic violence. This pastor postulated that government spending was wrongly allocated and that social and governmental agencies often pushed the pastor to the side in these matters. These were triple coded with Frustration and Government themes. Pastors Four expressed a need to have resources such as agencies and outside ministries presented to the congregation. One pastor suggested this occur on Mother's Day and another during Women's Appreciation Month. All nine pastors recognized that domestic violence impacted congregants had needs outside of their reach and that getting people connected to the resources that were needed was part of the pastoral role. These instances were double coded with domestic violence. Some credited that as part of the Ministry of Presence theme and those instances were double coded as such.

All nine pastors mentioned people as resources in some capacity. This list included seminary professors, mentor groups, other clergy, government agencies, social organizations, staff, and spouses. Pastor Three said he "staffed his weaknesses" and credited perceptions of adequacy to a team of people resources that helped the work of the ministry. This was double coded with adequacy. Pastor Three also mentioned books as a number one resource for continued education on daily topics addressed by pastors. Pastors Nine and Six agreed with this stance. These three pastors maintained a high regard for continuing education, but also maintained that what was needed could be gleaned from reading. These instances were double coded with Continuing Education.

**Figure 7**

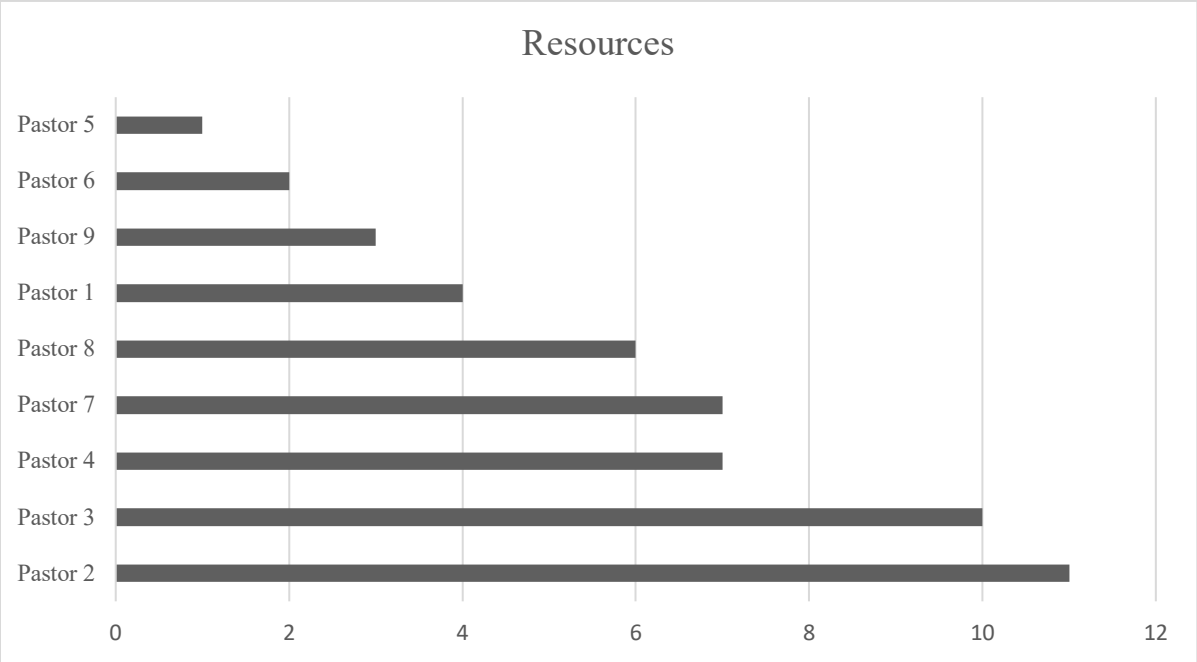
*Overlapping Occurrences of Resources Subtheme Related to RQ1*




The researcher found that Pastor Three had resources and policies for marital infidelity and finances; Pastor Six for grief, home care, and small groups; and Pastor Eight for mental illness. Only Pastor Four produced a list of resources for domestic violence. That list was dispersed by Jefferson Hospital and included all types of referral resources including domestic violence. Other pastors noted that denominational policies and resources existed, but that research would be needed to find them. Hyperlinks to the Jefferson Hospital's resource list and denominational literature were included in Appendix K and L respectively. The researcher emailed resource lists to the pastors. Rankings of pastor references to Resources subtheme were listed here in Figure 8.

**Figure 8**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Resources Subtheme*




**Government.** Seven out of Nine of the pastors interviewed maintained the need to refer domestic violence impacted congregants to outside resources including government, social, and psychological services; but only one was aware of the services that existed in the congregational area they served. One pastor demonstrated disgust toward government agencies and law enforcement in matters of domestic violence. Other pastors referenced government when interviewed, but only one said they were frustrated to the point of hostility. These references were double coded with frustration.

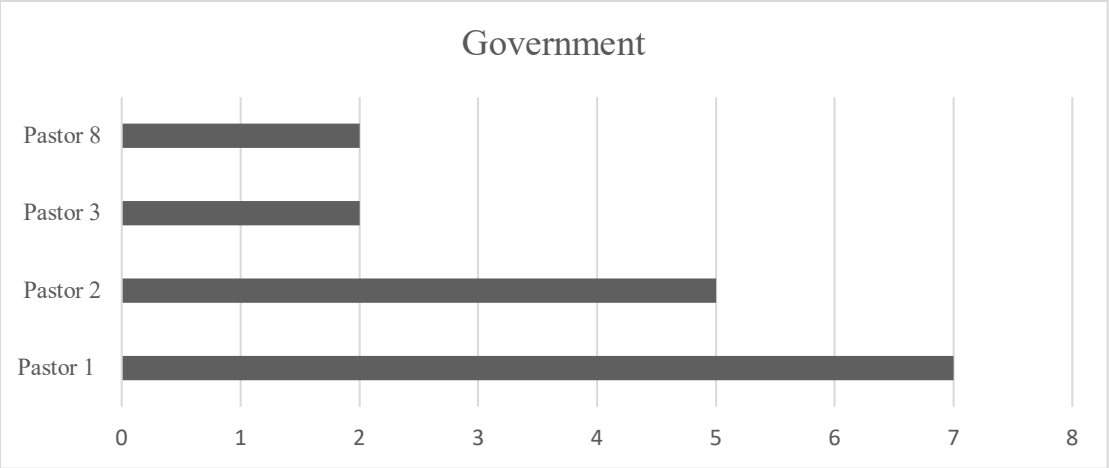
**Figure 9**

*Overlapping Occurrences of Government Subtheme Related to RQ1*


All the pastors interviewed were aware of governing policies and procedures in place in their churches or denominations to deal with legal ramifications of sexual harassment, but only three knew of policies at the denominational level that govern pastoral and congregational care of domestic violence impacted individuals. The other six said no policies or procedures existed that addressed domestic violence. The researcher found denominational documents and policies for all denominations represented in this sample. Those links to documents were listed in Appendix K as referenced earlier. Pastor rankings for this subtheme were listed here in Figure 10.

**Figure 10**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Government Subtheme*

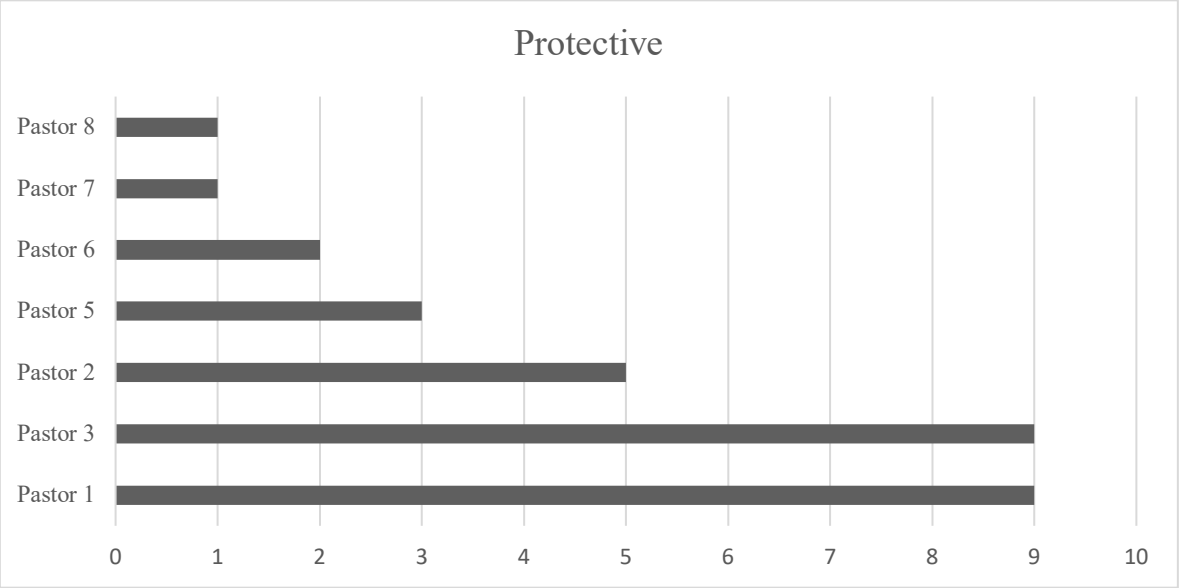



**Protective.** It was while Pastor One discussed referring congregants to resources including governmental authorities that the underlying meanings Frustration and Protective first emerged. They were identified as underlying themes after they occurred in four and eight of the pastors respectively. Eight of nine pastors confessed that protection was an underlying meaning that influenced perceptions of overall adequacy, the performance of pastoral care, and motivations for continuing education through their denominations. Pastor Three lamented over the lack of boundaries perceived as pastors. Pastor Three expressed feeling violated by being approached at home and felt boundaries needed to be implemented that kept his home and wife safe from possible harm. Pastor Six maintained that protection was the theological responsibility of the husband to the wife. More than any other pastor interviewed, Pastor One talked had the most references to being protective of the hurting. Another reference to protection was in the form of controlling liability for the church. Four pastors referenced protective in that manner. Occurrences of protective did not occur alone but were always coded with some other subtheme. That is why the researcher listed it was an underlying meaning as protection informed other

subthemes. That is also why the researcher did not include a figure representing the interconnectedness. Pastor rankings were included here in Figure 11.

**Figure 11**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Protective Subtheme*

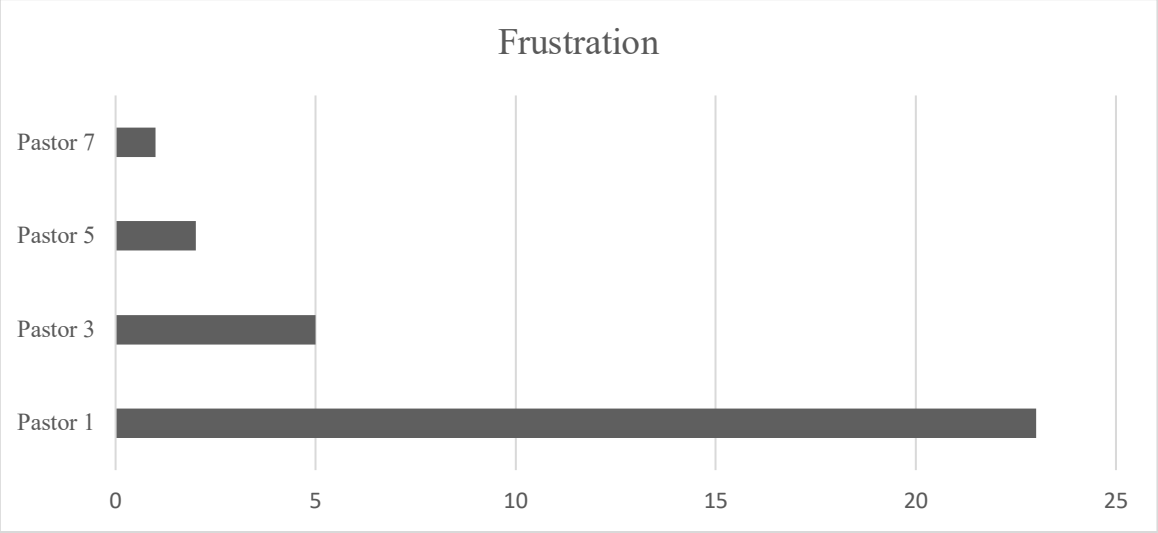



**Frustration.** Frustration was identified as an undercurrent throughout Pastor One's interview by both the researcher and the second coder. This pastor was responsible for 23 out of 34 occurrences of the underlying meaning. Four more pastors made up the other 11 occurrences. Pastor Five noted frustration when he could not help more or give answers that seemed sufficient for the need. Three pastors mentioned frustration experienced in situations linked to domestic violence and other social ministries within the context of the church. Two pastors expressed frustration over boundaries of privacy and secrecy in homes and maintained they perpetuated abuse and limited the pastor's ability to protect and serve. The frustration associated with boundaries of care was expressed by Pastor One and was also discerned when the pastor spoke of government and outside agency involvement. This pastor believed there were boundaries

established by government and social help agencies that prohibited the pastor from being as involved as he liked. The boundary of personal choice to stay with the abuser exhibited by the abused was mentioned by five pastors that all showed frustration connected to it, and these were double coded. All references to frustration were found to be underlying meanings that informed other subthemes and topics of conversation and were double coded accordingly. Pastor rankings of occurrences were stated here in Figure 12.

**Figure 12**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Frustration Subtheme*

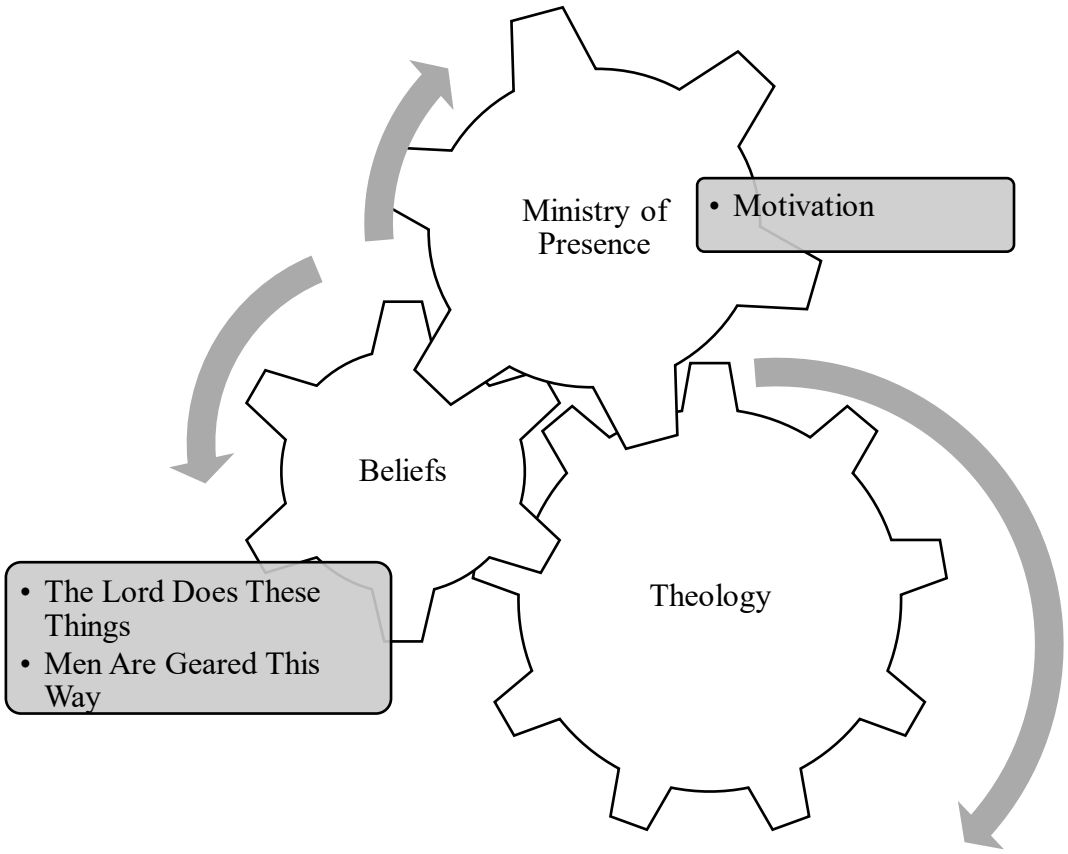



***Theology***

As mentioned previously, Theology was another parent theme that emerged during questions related to RQ1. Subthemes of Motivation, the Ministry of Presence, and Beliefs associated with Theology also emerged as questions that pertained to how the pastors defined adequacy were asked and answered. Underlying themes that emerged during interview questions related to RQ1 were The Lord Does These Things and Men Are Geared This Way. Table 15 showed subtheme occurrence frequencies among pastors and was included in Appendix J. Figure 13 was included here to show Parent Code with Subtheme relationships.

**Figure 13**

*Parent Theme Theology with Subthemes*




**Theology and Beliefs.** All nine pastors spoke of marriage. Eight of the pastors expounded on those ideas of marriage being between a man and woman only. All nine agreed that the proper foundation for marriage was Christ. Eight pastors agreed that divorce was biblically permissible in cases of domestic violence and seven spoke about divorce multiple times throughout the interview. Pastor Two explained that a woman he ministered to stayed with an abusive husband for decades until her father passed away. The woman believed her father would not allow her to divorce due to theological beliefs that marriage is for life, that women should never divorce except for marital infidelity which is applied only to sexual unfaithfulness. Pastor Eight maintained that domestic violence was tantamount to marital unfaithfulness and

broke the marriage covenant. This pastor explained that in domestic violence cases he ministered "Jesus wept" (NKJV, 1982, John 11:35) and spoke about how Jesus wept for how she was treated and would want her to be safe and end the marriage. While all pastors expressed hope for reconciliation, only one pastor maintained that the wife should not divorce but make every effort to maintain the marriage, even if only from a distance. These statements were all double coded with domestic violence.

Pastors Three, Four, Five, Six, Eight, and Nine all agreed that some Scriptures were used to further propagate abuse and that such use of Scripture was wrong. These points were also double coded by the researcher, the second coder, and in places, NVivo. Six pastors talked about gender roles and cited Ephesians 5:22-24, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything" (NKJV, 1982) as support. Pastor Six spoke about how easy that was for women to do when their husbands were loving them as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25-29). Pastor Three mentioned three times during the interview that the women that were pastors in his church were "beneath" him and that the only reason he had female pastors was because the denomination he served in allowed it. This pastor went on and said, "I think the world around us has done more to influence the church, you know, having more women in your leadership or more women in your church just because of political correctness, I don't think is the right cause." This pastor acknowledged that women believed they were being called into ministry by the Lord but followed it saying that women did not really want to lead but that they really wanted men to step up so they could follow. Pastor Three cemented this understanding with reference to Deborah and said that she was made judge by God because her

husband would not step up (Judges 4). The researcher and the second coder noted this as a theological underpinning of misinterpreted Scripture and misunderstanding of God's call on women.

Seven out of nine pastors said that marriage counseling is a large part of ministry. Three of these seven said that they had never had any training in domestic violence ministry but felt adequate to handle it and had a plan for how they would approach it. These three pastors maintained it was a matter of getting the parties to sit down together and talk things out to see "where it went off the rails" (Pastor Six, 2021). Six of the seven that do marriage counseling brought up women abusing men before any genders were mentioned at all and three of them said it was a problem caused by both parties. One pastor had done marriage counseling for 32 years and never addressed domestic violence. Four out of seven had no experience with domestic violence and maintained that it had not occurred in their churches. Only two maintained personal perceptions of adequacy in domestic violence ministry. References to adequacy came up during this discussion enough that some instances were double coded with adequacy.

When asked what the pastors believed the Bible said about domestic violence, all nine agreed it was sin. Five pastors cited various writings of Paul about loving one another (1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 5), one cited all humanity being made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), and three cited three guiding principles of the denomination, "do no harm, do all the good you can, and stay in love with God" (Pastor Two, 2021). The overlapping subthemes were represented here in Figure 14.

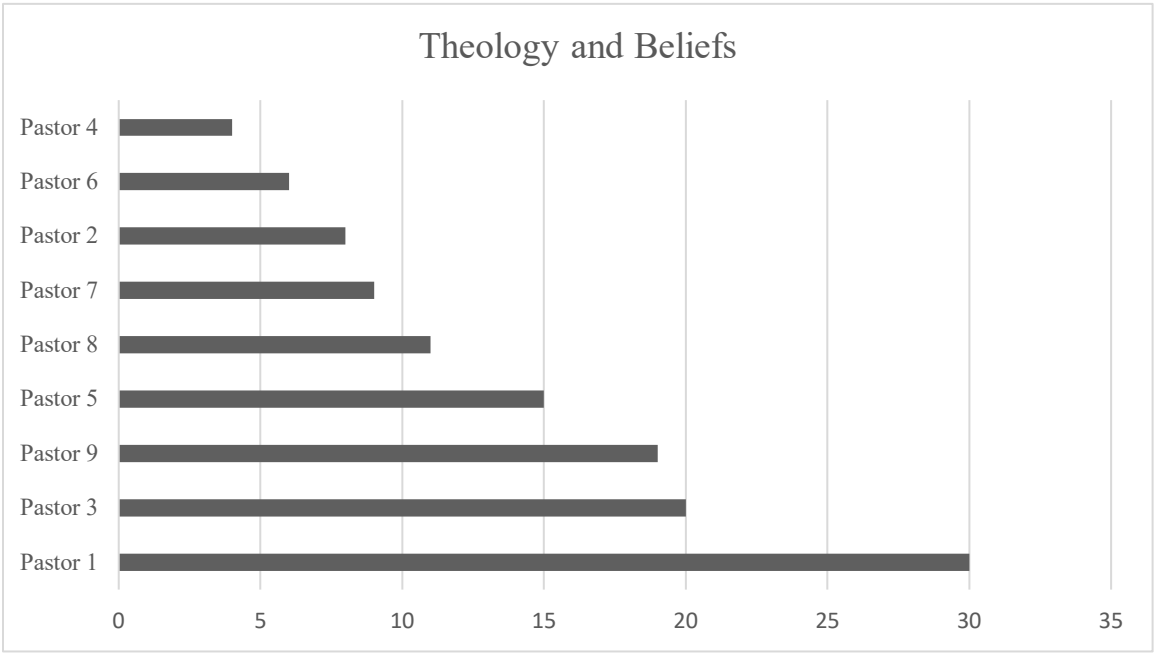
**Figure 14**

*Overlapping Occurrences of Theology and Beliefs Subtheme Related to RQ1*


Pastor rankings according to frequency of this subtheme's occurrence were listed here in Figure 15.

**Figure 15**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Theology/Beliefs Parent Theme*

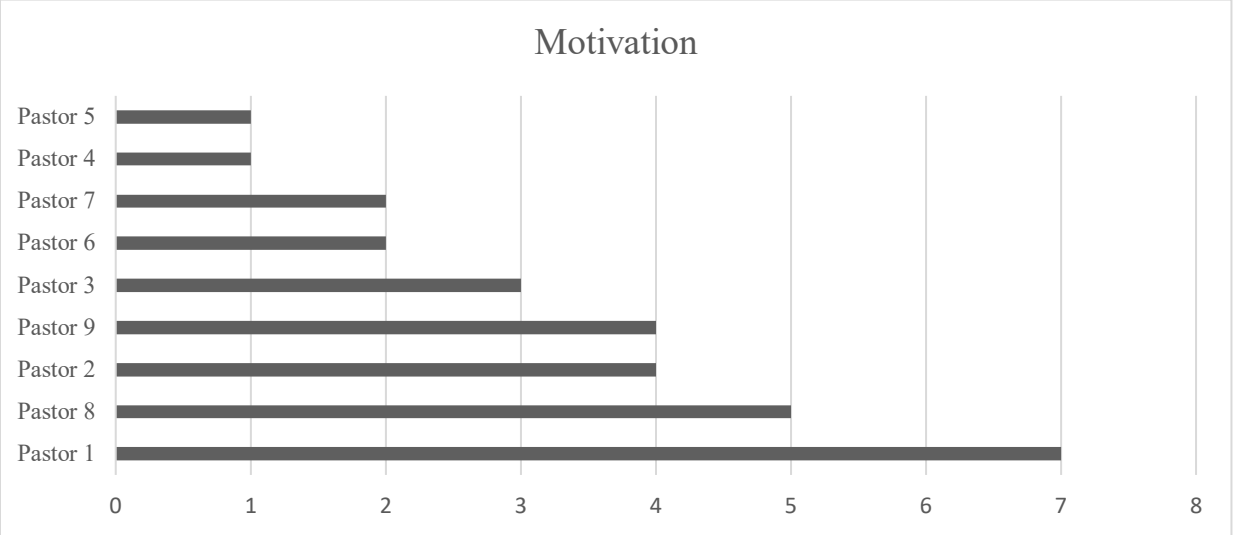


**Motivation.** Pastor One first talked about motivation of ministers and resource people. The other eight pastors spoke of motivation as well. All pastors interviewed agreed without being prompted that being called into the ministry by the Lord was the most important part of being adequate in ministry. Each of the pastors recognized the need for guidance and help from Holy Spirit in all works of ministry and life in general. Each pastor included the work of the Holy Spirit in perceived adequacy definitions in one way or another.

Motivation in terms of required training through denominations was also discussed. Liability was the identified motivation for much of the continuing education that denominations required. Pastors maintained that motivation for denominational training in sexual harassment and child safety was born from lawsuits. Pastor Two said of this denominational stance, “there's the side of keeping young people safe, but there's a side of protecting the congregation. We do that because we could lose a lot of money in lawsuits where with domestic violence, which isn't the case. We know, obviously, we could be sued for malpractice, if we did something wrong, but that's much rarer with domestic violence.”

**Figure 16:**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Motivation Subtheme*



**Ministry of Presence.** Pastor One was first to speak about the ministry of presence and the importance of it as a guiding principle in all ministry interactions. It became a theme when all nine pastors mentioned it in some form. Most pastors spoke about the ministry of presence as something taught during seminary that impacted all areas of ministry and life. All the pastors maintained that the primary job of pastor was to just be there, listen, and bring to light Scripture when appropriate. Pastor One maintained that people needed to know God was with them and Pastor Five said being there was a representation of God's presence. Pastors Two and One talked about practical ministry presence in terms of what Pastor Two called "technical assistance." That would be rides to the attorney, court, standing by while the abused gathers belongings and that sort of thing. Pastors One, Five, Nine, and Seven spoke a lot about just being there and listening. Pastor Seven called it "being and not doing." These were all double coded with theology and some were triple coded with theology and domestic violence. Seven of the nine pastors mentioned that this ministry of presence enhanced perceptions of adequacy except when their presence was not received well and then it decreased perceptions of adequacy. These were double coded with adequacy.

Pastor Five suggested the ministry of presence was sometimes a negative thing. This pastor maintained that negative manifestation of presence occurred when theological ideologies and misunderstandings of male-female roles and power and control in marriage were disseminated. This was also the only pastor that talked about how these ideologies have influenced abuse victims to leave Christianity. Pastor Five recounted the testimony of a girl he knew that this happened to. He said,

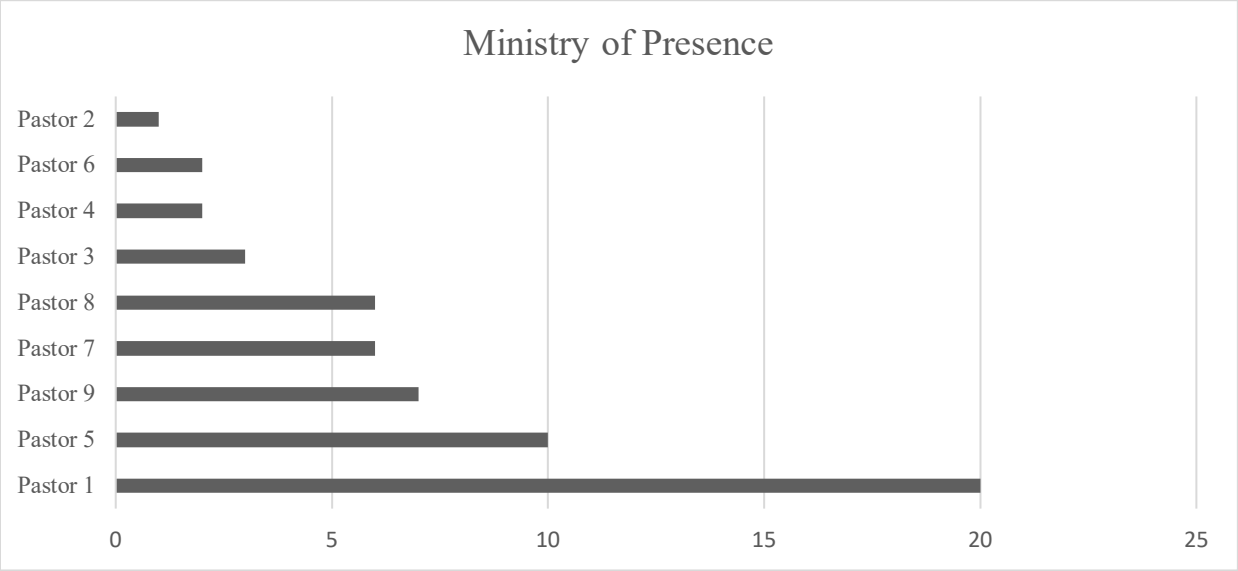
> She had been raised whatever the Canadian version of Baptist is, but she had been sexually abused. And she actually went in and told her pastor who made her promptly the one who was at fault for all that. You know, basically, oh, you're dressing wrong, you're inviting it by something with your mannerism or something like that, you know. He sure

> did her a lot of good because she left the church and she was a Wiccan by the time that I knew her, you know. So, all because of that, she faced that terrible trauma of sexual abuse. And she didn't get the help from Christ that she needed, she got condemnation instead.

This pastor explained that the ministry of presence can be bad because humans often fall short of the glory of God and do not always represent Him well. Pastor Five went on to lament over how people confuse human failings for God failing them.

**Figure 17**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Ministry of Presence Subtheme*




**Men Are Geared This Way.** The researcher questioned Pastor One directly about resources that he used to attain understanding of marriage and family and resources that he referred others to for direction. Pastor One answered that Bill Gotthard had excellent teachings on marriage and family and that Mr. Gotthard had linked anger in men with pornography. Pastor One stated that he wondered how many abusers are addicted to pornography, and how many are alcoholics. He went on to explain that, in his experience, most "of the violent stuff" happens when men are drunk. Further conversation revealed that Pastor One believed that "men are just

geared" to fight. He brought up the way boys were taught when he was growing up and how fighting and being tough were praised and applauded. Pastor One also stated that some men "are just rough" and must be taught how to talk to and treat people. Pastor One's belief that "men are geared" toward being violent and that Bill Gotthard was a good, biblical source of information about marriage and family were noted. Mr. Gotthard was a fundamentalist American pastor who "resigned from the ministry in 2014 after more than 30 women had alleged that he had molested and sexually harassed women he worked with, including some who were minors" (Bailey, 2016). Men being geared for violence, anger, and aggression came up in five out of nine interviews. It is also noted as an underlying belief system as it came up in relation to multiple parent codes and subthemes, but because most references were in relation to belief systems this was coded as a subtheme of theology. Some occurrences were double coded with domestic violence, and some triple code once with frustration. Figure 18 demonstrated as the three subthemes overlapped.

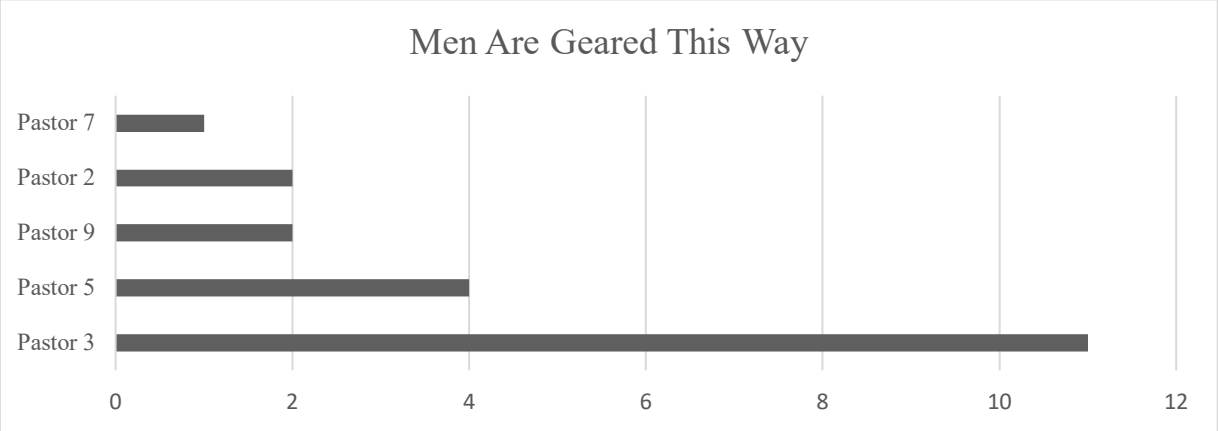
**Figure 18**

*Overlapping Occurrences of Men Are Geared This Way Subtheme Related to RQ1*


Pastor rankings of frequency occurrence were included here in Figure 19.

**Figure 19**

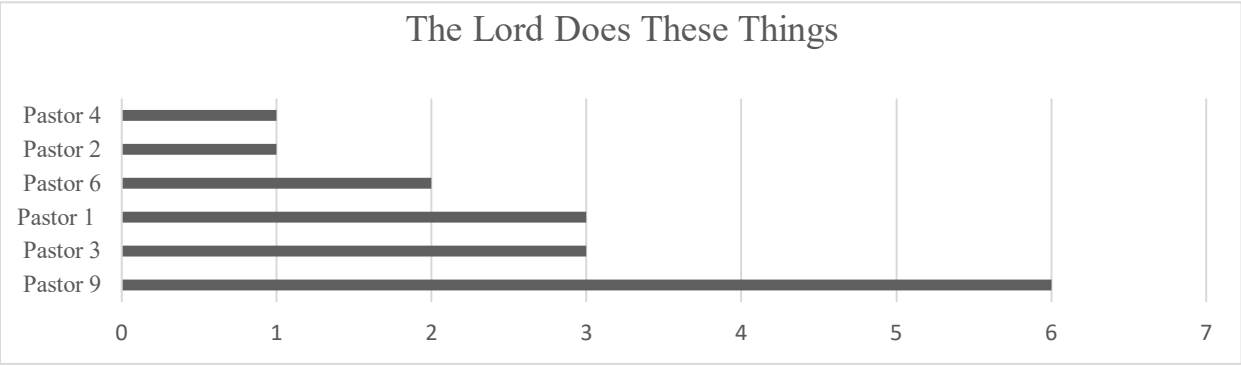
*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Men Are Geared This Way Subtheme*




**The Lord Does These Things.** Another theological theme noted and double coded was the belief that the Lord does these things to people. The researcher made this a theme when it was mentioned by six pastors, but only two referenced it in relation to domestic violence. The pastors meant that the Lord put hardship on people to grow them spiritually and prepare them for ministering to others. This concept was referred to multiple times by Pastor One in reference to God bringing calamity, sickness, and hardship onto His people to teach them or train them for service to others.

**Figure 20**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of The Lord Does These Things Subtheme*



## Research Question Two Findings

RQ2 asked, "How do perceptions of adequacy impact the ability to effectively perform pastoral care for survivors of DV?" Seven pastors perceived inadequacy for ministering to domestic violence impacted congregants. Of those seven, one believed that perceptions of inadequacy negatively impacted ministry to this population and five believed that perceptions of inadequacy positively impacted pastoral care in this area. One believed there was no way to know if perceived inadequacy hindered pastoral care. Of the two pastors that perceived adequacy for domestic violence ministry and increased abilities with each successful pastoral encounter. All three parent codes were found, subthemes previously listed for RQ1 popped up from time to time, and new subthemes emerged. Only new subthemes that emerged during conversation related to RQ2 were summarized in this section.

### Adequacy

The interviews revealed the interconnectedness of conversation in volved with adequacy, theology, and abuse. The researcher tried to separate the topics, but it proved almost impossible to do. In relation to RQ2 the researcher found that adequacy was more nuanced and personal perceptions of the pastors were exposed. Questions related to RQ2 revealed subtheme Boundary under the parent code Adequacy which was double coded at times under parent code Abuse. Also revealed was that pastors acknowledged adequacy impacted pastoral care in both positive and negative ways. When the researcher shifted the focus from general adequacy to adequacy specific to domestic violence ministry, answers became more nuanced. Table 17 showed direct quotes from pastor interviews that demonstrated this shift.

**Table 4**

*Questions and Answers Related to RQ2*

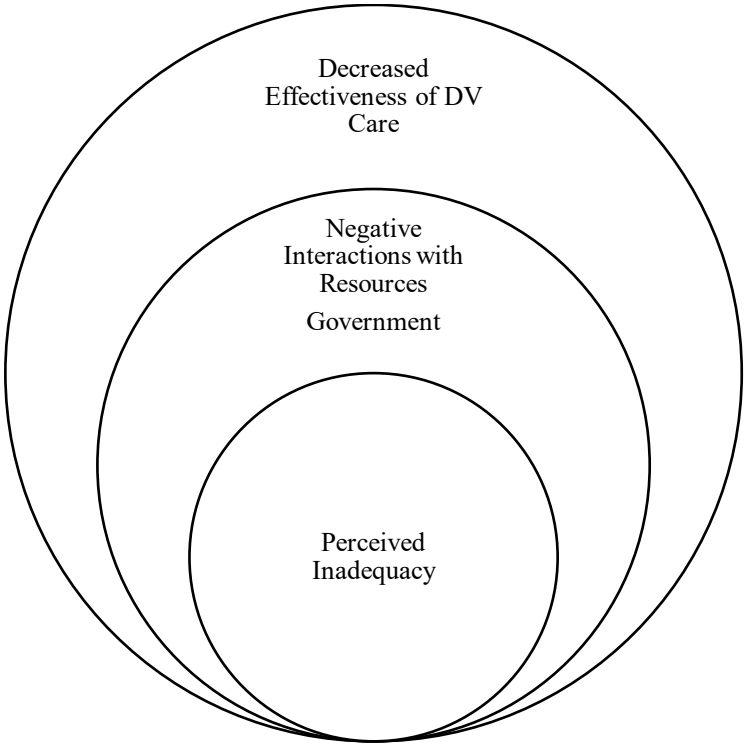
| Interview Questions | Pastor Answers |
|---|---|
| To what extent, if any, do you think your own perceptions of adequacy have impacted your pastoral care to others in general? | "Maybe some in negative ways, and maybe some, definitely some in positive ways" (Pastor Three, 44).<br><br>"I would say both. There are times where it helps and there are times when it hinders: (Pastor Four, 61).<br><br>"I'm a highly self-reflective and self-critical person, you know. There's always things that I wish I would have done or said better than then what I did…so it does sometimes it gets in the way" (Pastor Five, 50).<br><br>"That's a good question, but I was trying to think has it been negative or has it been positive? I'm sure it's a mixture of both" (Pastor Eight, 34).<br><br>"I think it's both I think that in some ways the unrealistic expectations I have for myself have had both positive and negative effects" (Pastor Nine, 58). |
| To what extent, if any, do you think your own perceptions of adequacy have impacted your pastoral care to others in DV ministry? | "Thankfully, we haven't had to use many here. But like I said, we just last week had the abuse ministers for several counties here" (Pastor One, 60).<br><br>"I feel adequate to handle any situation. And I think in about 39 years in ministry, I probably refer a lot more than I used to" (Pastor Two, 61).<br><br>"Now, some things like our topic today, I would feel inadequate, maybe that's one of your questions because I have not dealt with, you know, that specific topic very much at all in ministry" (Pastor Six, 54).<br><br>"I feel like striving to be adequate is definitely at the forefront of my ministry. But it is not for self-gratification. But because I've seen the damage that I would say inadequate pastors have done in congregations as well as to congregants" (Pastor Seven, 26). |

***Inadequate Negative***

Pastor One confessed frustration with personal and others' perceptions of the pastor's inadequacy. Pastor One admitted that personal perceptions of inadequacy negatively impacted the ability to properly minister in DV situations and generated personal frustration. Pastor One stated that when congregants have not updated the pastor after being referred to resources perceptions of inadequacy were experienced. Pastor One attributed these personal perceptions of inadequacy to the boundaries established by outside agencies which the pastor perceived as slights against church involvement. This pastor expressed contempt for governmental agencies on multiple levels, but especially in situations of abuse. Pastor One shared a belief that government and secular agencies shut out the church, labeled pastors as "crazy evangelicals," and took a "condescending we got this" approach in instances of abuse where churches referred a congregant or community member. Pastor One admitted these perceptions impacted ministry negatively and caused the pastor to go into future domestic violence ministry already frustrated. For this pastor, Perceptions of inadequacy were reinforced by interactions with resources like service agencies and government authorities and led to decreased pastoral care for domestic violence impacted congregants. Figure 21 represented that sequence.

**Figure 21**

*Subthemes Involved That Caused Inadequacy to Negatively Impact Pastoral Care*




***Inadequate Positive***

When asked how personal perceptions of adequacy impacted ministry, Pastor Three stated, “How could anyone feel fully adequate to do every little thing in ministry? I don't think it's personally possible. But I do think as you're researching, I think there are ways to help pastors feel more equipped and more adequate to be able to handle these things as we move forward.” Pastor Three added that understanding who God is, research, education, and counsel from mentors all could help. Pastor Three admitted that personal perceptions of inadequacy did impact the ability to minister to domestic violence impacted congregants in that they caused the pastor to refer in these cases. Pastor Three stated that success experienced in a ministry area made perceptions of adequacy increase in future attempts and that people getting connected to the right resources was a personal success. For Pastor Three, personal perceptions of inadequacy

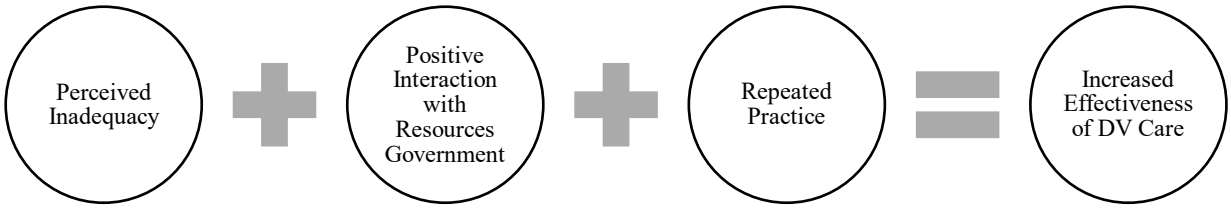
impacted pastoral ministry positively because they caused the pastor to refer, but the pastor had no referral list available.

The same was true for Pastor Four. Because of admitted inadequacy in this area of ministry, being taught to refer, and a history of referring successfully, Pastor Four felt more adequate in this referral strategy with each incident faced. Pastor Four maintained that there have "been times where it helps and there are times when it hinders." Pastor Four expressed, as no other pastor did, that there were times when congregants were upset with the boundaries for referral and believed the pastor should do more and be better equipped. The pastor stated overall pleasure with the outcome of this approach and had received positive feedback. Pastor Four said, "So it was affirming for me that all right, I wasn't able to give him more help myself, but at least he was pointed in a direction where he did get the help that he needed. So that was an affirmation for me."

Pastor Six maintained similar beliefs and admitted "now, some things, like our topic today, I would feel inadequate…because I have not dealt with that specific topic very much at all in ministry, but I would say in counseling in general I feel fairly adequate." Pastor Six explained that perceptions of inadequacy would yield quick referral to outside agencies or authorities and felt confident this constituted effective pastoral care. Pastors Eight and Nine agreed. These pastors self-reported that perceptions of inadequacy led to quick referrals and positive interactions with those referrals. Repeated practice of this, according to these pastors, increased effectiveness of pastoral care in future ministry. Figure 22 showed this relationship between subthemes and effectiveness.

**Figure 22**

*Subthemes Involved That Caused Inadequacy to Positively Impact Pastoral Care*

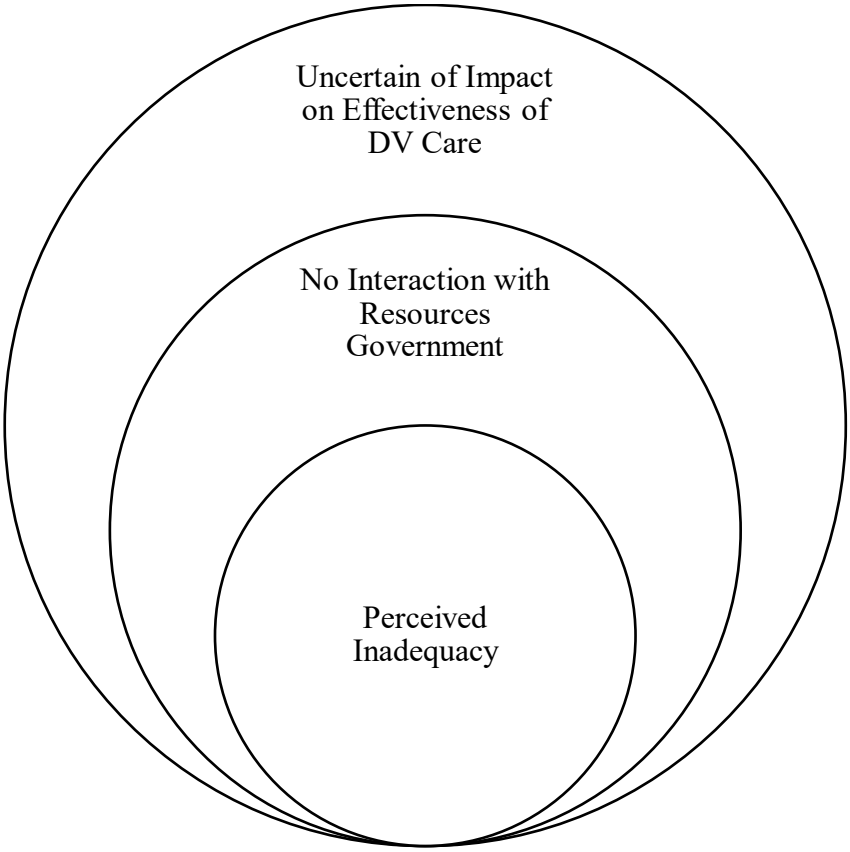



***Inadequate Neutral***

Pastor Five expressed perceptions of adequacy in ministry in general but recognized perceptions of inadequacy where domestic violence ministry is concerned. This pastor expressed that domestic violence cases would need to be referred because they had never been experienced before. Pastor Five said there was no way to know how perceptions of adequacy impacted pastoral care because there were no experiences at all to measure it by. The researcher classified this pastor's answers as inadequate and neutral because of the admitted inadequacy coupled with a stated uncertainty as to how perceptions of adequacy would impact pastoral care to domestic violence impacted individuals.

**Figure 23**

*Subthemes Involved That Caused Inadequacy to Neutrally Impact Pastoral Care*




***Adequate Positive***

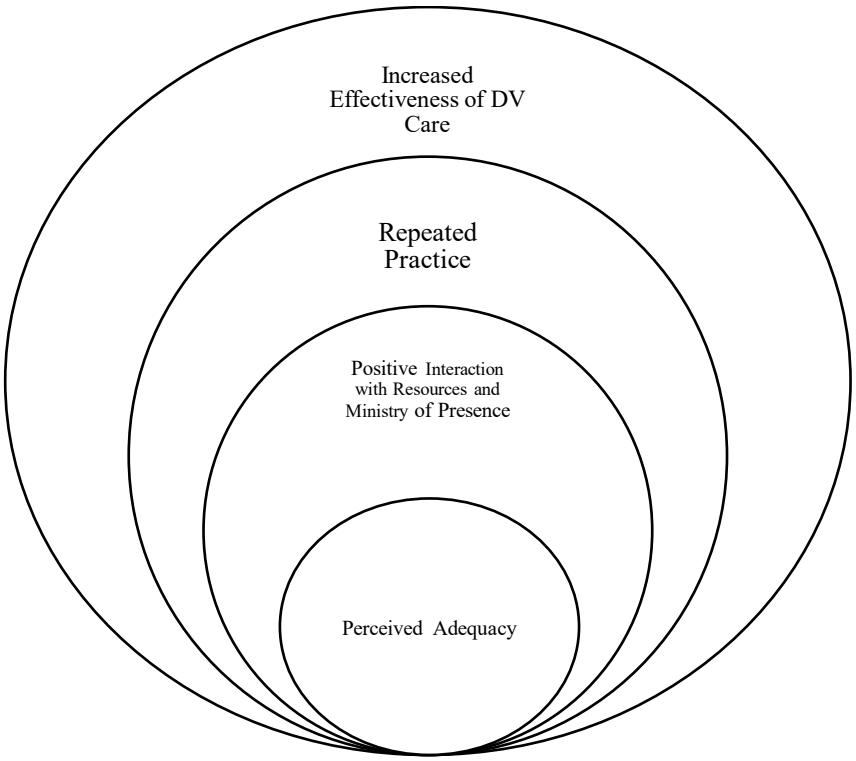
Pastor Two felt adequate and vocalized increased performance as perceptions of confidence and adequacy for ministry grew with each experience. This pastor believed it necessary to refer domestic violence impacted congregants and demonstrated that readiness to refer with a prepared list of contacts retrieved from Jefferson Hospital. This list was included in Appendix K. Pastor Two believed that referring to the appropriate resources encouraged personal perceptions of adequacy and cemented the method for future ministry experiences. In this case, personal perceptions of adequacy improved effectiveness of pastoral care.

Pastor Seven stated consistent use of this ministry of presence produced good outcomes for congregants and that each time the method was used successfully “it really solidified the just

being there mentality." When asked how that perception of adequacy was formed, Pastor Seven reminisced about a mentor that said "the number one rule of ministry is love the people that you are called to love. And the rest will follow." This became a guiding principle for Pastor Seven in all areas of life and ministry. These pastors reported perceived adequacy for ministry to DV impacted congregants. Successful use of referral system and ministry of presence on multiple occasions increased perceived effectiveness for pastoral care of this population, as demonstrated in Figure 24,

**Figure 24**

*Subthemes Involved That Caused Adequacy to Positively Impact Pastoral Care*



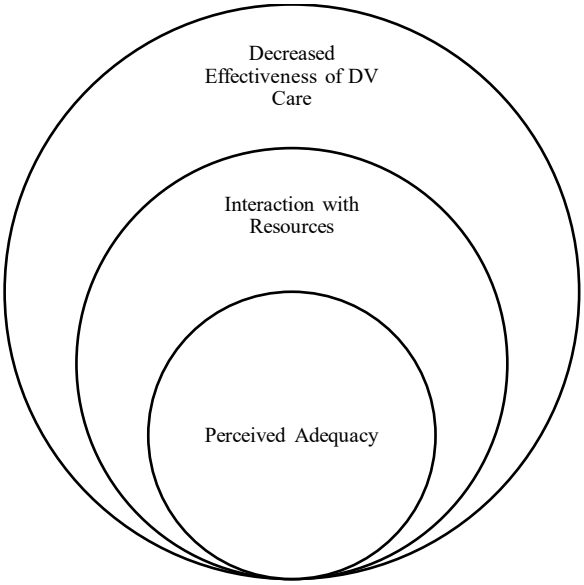

***Adequate Negative***

Although Pastor Eight expressed perceptions of inadequacy and maintained those perceptions positively impacted pastoral care, this was the first pastor that mentioned how perceptions of adequacy could impact pastoral care negatively. This pastor, as well as Pastor

Nine, warned that perceptions of adequacy could be a possible hindrance if that adequacy made one respond in a rote way that was not sufficient for the situation at hand or caused the pastor to lead people astray. Perceived inadequacy, to Pastor Nine, was equivalent to theological humility and dependence upon the Lord. Both pastors expressed perceived inadequacy for ministry to domestic violence impacted congregants and championed speedy referral to outside resources. Figure 25 represented the relationship of perceptions of adequacy yielding negative pastoral care.

**Figure 25**

*Subthemes Involved That Cause Adequacy to Negatively Impact Pastoral Care*




**Boundary**

Seven of the nine pastors interviewed spoke about necessary boundaries with the opposite sex, strategies for maintaining proper boundaries in ministering to the opposite sex and children, and the required trainings through the denominations in these areas. Six out of seven maintained necessity of these boundaries to protect the pastors, the pastors' families, and the church. Only two of the eight talked about the need for these boundaries to protect the congregant from

possible transference of emotions onto the pastor which caused more hurt and shame for the congregant.

Pastor Two spoke about culture shifts that had rendered pastors unable to just stop by people's homes. When asked why the pastor thought this shift occurred, he attributed it to people being fearful of opening their houses to drop-in guests or feeling inconvenienced by the pastor's visit. This pastor credited privacy, and even secrecy, in the home as being boundaries that were usually good to maintain. Pastor Five mentioned the threat of physical violence for the abused and the helper when the boundary of the home was crossed. Only two other pastors acknowledged this threat.

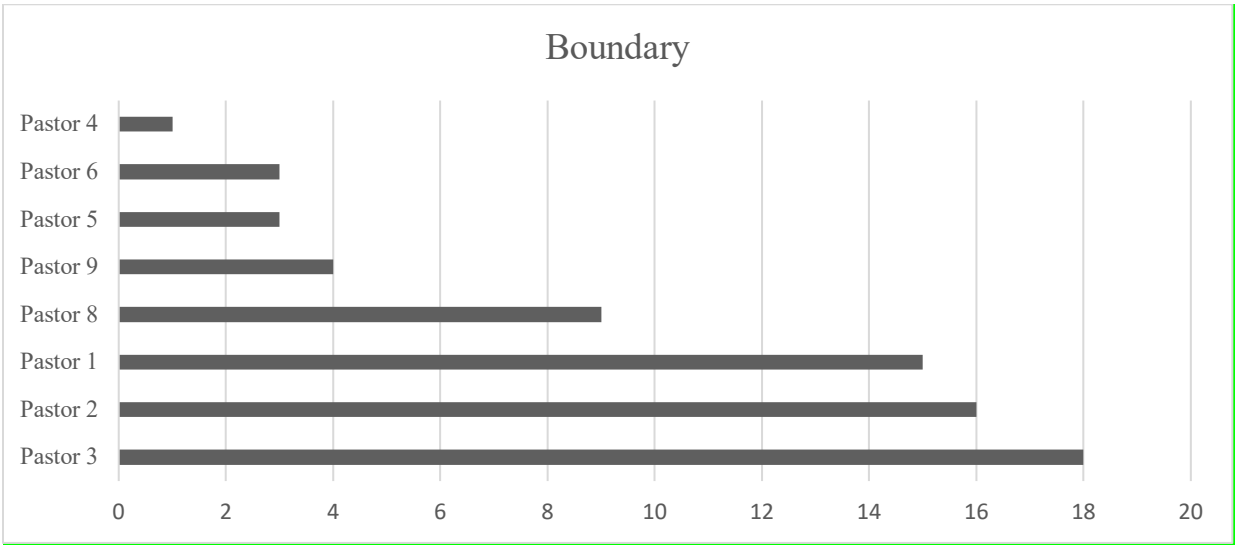
Pastor Three brought to light another facet of boundary discussion. This pastor talked about the personal boundaries of the pastor in relation to the congregation. Pastor Nine also talked about this, but the two approached it differently. Pastor Three maintained that people overran pastor boundaries and even expected pastors to not have any personal boundaries of space, communication, and relationship. This pastor relayed that when these boundaries are crossed, perceptions of inadequacy tied to being taken off guard and unprepared kicked in. Pastor Nine maintained that he had no boundaries and felt that made him a better servant to his congregation. Pastor Six agreed with the boundary of being prepared to handle things and information as a precursor for perceived adequacy.

Only Pastor Four exclusively spoke of boundaries in relation to preset boundaries that limit the scope of counseling that the pastor performed. These preset boundaries gave a framework in which the pastor presented in the initial contact with the congregant at which point the congregant and the pastor decided whether the pastor could counsel this issue or if the congregant needed to be referred. Pastor Four maintained if the congregant felt it was an issue

that could be solved in just a few sessions, then the pastor counseled. If it was determined that the issue would need longer-termed care, then the congregant was referred immediately. This was double coded with Resources. Pastor Two expressed preset boundaries of care as well. This pastor related these boundaries to the three guiding principles of the denomination and maintained these rules of life applied to all things and served as guardrails for all situations. These were "do no harm, do all the good you can, and stay in love with God" (Pastor Two, 2021). Pastor Two maintained these were good boundaries for everyone and everything. These were double coded with theology. Rankings of number of occurrences among pastors was represented by Figure 26.

**Figure 26**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Boundary Subtheme*




## Research Question Three Findings

RQ3 asked, "Was there sufficient opportunity for personal learning and growth in DV ministry while in seminary?" The answer was a resounding no. Pastor Seven was the only pastor that had dedicated education in domestic violence. Two classes in seminary covered this topic. One class was on ministering to the mentally ill. That class covered how to de-escalate and

maneuver life and ministry with people that have violent tendencies due to mental illness. In the congregational care class that was taught by the professor that did her dissertation in domestic violence. Pastor Seven also learned

> the perspective of how do I minister to these people who are in the situation, but cannot escape the situation because culture dictates that you can't escape that situation. And then also the United States culture of that, you know, the cycle of the abuse, the apology, the reconciliation, followed by the abuse again, and how do we recognize those stages and allow the person to have the time to recognize for themselves? Because, I mean, her big thing was you can't force anyone to leave. But how do we allow them to recognize safely, while not putting themselves in any more harm?

These nuances of domestic violence discussed by Pastor Seven were taught by this professor that was Latina. Because of the professor's unique understanding of domestic violence from the perspective of another culture, this was the only pastor that recognized the cultural nuance as well as the fact that no one can make the abused leave. Pastor Seven was also the only pastor that mentioned the cycles of abuse, the responsibility of clergy to recognize the signs and stages, and the importance of carefully guiding the abused to safety. This pastor also had the unique experience of a criminal justice degree.

Of the other eight pastors, only Pastors Four, Five, and Eight had any experience with domestic violence during seminary. Pastor Four stated, "there was not like a class I took at seminary or anything, except maybe a pastoral leadership class that we had, which was actually a sequence of two classes that taught about these kinds of situations when it came up and the experience of other pastors and how they handle these things." Other than two classes that mentioned the concepts "when they came up" and spoke about "the experiences of other pastors" there was no formal education in the matter experienced by Pastor Four. This pastor experienced some domestic violence education while in seminary through a girlfriend that volunteered in a shelter and was a survivor.

Although there was no discussion of domestic violence in classes, Pastor Five's seminary addressed the subject in a memorable way. Pastor Five recounted,

> a big machismo culture existed in some Latin American areas, and on seminary campus there. We started to see some of the wives of seminarians walking around with black eyes. Somehow or other the administration found out about that. And I do remember, one day we had chapel and our theology prof stood up on behalf, and he was also the dean, stood up on behalf of the seminary. [He said] we know what these situations are and where this is going on. And I don't remember exactly what scriptures he brought to bear. Like I said, it's been a very, very long time ago. But you know, he was very clear and forcefully stated from scripture why that was wrong, and how if you were doing this, this was disqualifying you for ministry. And that, basically, we know who some of you are. And we're going to be talking to you soon. And if you are not already making steps to get some counseling on this and get this turned around, you will be gone. From here, we will tolerate none of this here, you know.

Pastor Five was the only pastor to remember a stance on the subject by seminary administration. This pastor confessed that this public address of the issue made an impact on his thinking in the area as before these incidences he did not believe it could happen in church and especially not in those in ministry. This pastor spoke about nuances of DV that are linked to wrong theologies of submission, the secrecy involved, and shame or stigmatism in the community. Pastor Five credited limited understanding of domestic violence and its effects on people to an experience ministering to a woman in the congregation he used to serve. This woman, by Pastor Five's description, was once a vibrant, friendly person. Due to years of verbal abuse, the pastor described her as "a shell of her former self." Pastor Five equated that shift with the on-going abuse.

Pastor Eight shared about a sister that was in an abusive marriage. Pastor Eight recounted how the sister would make excuses for the husband based on a diagnosis of bipolar disorder compounded by drug and alcohol abuse. Pastor Eight talked about the difficulty of watching a loved one go through the abuse and was conflicted about the situation and where the boundaries

were supposed to lie. Both pastors credited the relationships with teaching the complexities of the issue and the importance of referring.

**Table 5**

*Questions and Answers Related to RQ3*

| Interview Question | Pastor Answers |
|---|---|
| Tell me about your experience with domestic violence education. | "Not in seminary" (Pastor One, 60).<br>"Zero" (Pastor Six, 54).<br>"Yeah, I had two classes that taught about domestic violence" (Pastor Seven, 26).<br>"None" (Pastor Eight, 34). |
| Tell me about your experience with domestic violence. | "I lived in a rough neighborhood and had to step in with my landlord, but not domestic violence. I probably knew somehow in my head that it happened or existed. But would not have been surprised that it happened somewhere, you know? Then when I did, they were very wealthy. So, then I had the stereotype that it wouldn't happen there." (Pastor Two, 63).<br>"I've never actually been faced with a domestic violence situation. No parishioner in either church that I've been at, has come to me and said, Pastor, I feel that I'm in danger" (Pastor Three, 44).<br>"Um, not that I can think of specifically. There was a couple that I was doing some marriage counseling with, and I don't know this is quite a domestic violence, maybe domestic abuse. Definitely alcoholism was in play" (Pastor Four, 61).<br>"And I can tell you…I would have been the recipient of abuse …by today's standards. And that that leads to the self-confidence issues and the self-consciousness issues that I have. And of course, I was bullied a lot as a kid too. So…I do not like abuse of any sort. It just really kind of gets my Irish up." (Pastor Five, 50).<br>"So haven't dealt with domestic violence very directly at all. I've really never had it reported to me by anybody" (Pastor Nine, 58). |

## Research Question Three Analysis

Conversation regarding RQ3 brought Parent Code Abuse to the forefront. Subthemes Domestic Violence and Verbal Abuse emerged through discussed experience in seminary and in life. Subtheme Seminary assigned to the parent code Adequacy was the focus of answers to these questions. Occurrences coded under Seminary included formal education and personal experiences that occurred during seminary. Other Adequacy subthemes that reoccurred were Resources and Government through discussion about seminary administration. Parent Code Theology was woven into conversation on this RQ and subthemes Motivation, Ministry of Presence, The Lord Does These Things, and Men Are Geared this Way re-emerged.

### Abuse

Parent code abuse also came up in answers related to RQ1. This was expected due to the nature of the study. General abuse related to alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental illness were discussed and coded as abuse. Those references were not included except when related to underlying meanings that maintained domestic violence was a symptom of mental illness or addiction issues. Subthemes of Domestic Violence and Verbal Abuse emerged, were coded, and included.

**Table 19**

*Abuse Subthemes and Their Frequencies*

| Subthemes by Parent Code: Abuse | Number of Pastor Interviews Where Code is Found | Number of References to Subtheme |
|---|---|---|
| Verbal Abuse | 6 | 27 |
| Domestic Violence | 9 | 110 |

### *Domestic Violence*

Within the subtheme Domestic Violence there were various ways in which this subtheme was referred to during the pastor interviews. Some of these included verbal or emotional abuse, men are geared this way, and sexual abuse within the church. The researcher considered making these subthemes of domestic violence but decided Men Are Geared This Way belonged under Theology/Beliefs. References to sexual abuse within the church were usually in context of continuing education discussions, so those occurrences were incorporated into the continuing education subtheme. Although these potential subthemes were not present in many pastors, the researcher felt it necessary to highlight them as themes indicative of underlying meanings that contributed to understandings of domestic violence and particularly male-female roles. The second coder identified these as points of interest beyond subtheme context and in doing so concurred with the researcher apart from collaboration.

Five of the nine pastors spoke about personal experience with domestic violence. Two confessed to domestic violence in childhood homes while they were growing up and both attributed this abuse to authoritarian fathers. One of these maintained the father did not know the Lord and was an alcoholic that did come to know the Lord. The pastor lamented that even though his father came to the Lord, those underlying patterns of coercive control and rage still surface from time to time based on triggers associated with his father feeling out of control. The other pastor that experienced abuse in the home, reported watching his brothers be abused by a father and attributed that to being in a fundamental evangelical church that the pastor called "legalistic." This pastor attributed the twisting of theological concepts like submission for being the underlying meaning that allowed his father to abuse and still be in church every Sunday. These references were double coded with theology.

Five of the nine pastors interviewed reported at least one experience ministerially with domestic violence. Only two of the nine recounted situations of known physical violence and only one of the two were permitted by the parties to help or intervene in any way. All nine pastors referenced the secrecy involved in domestic violence and posited that secrecy was one of the underlying reasons they had no more knowledge than they did of its occurrence. Eight pastors expressed some stereotyped underlying cause for domestic violence. Six attributed it to mental illness and believed alcohol and/or drugs were involved. One suggested accusations could be outright lies.

Pastor One proposed a link between domestic violence and pornography which he established by teachings received from a one-time popular fundamentalist evangelical pastor named Bill Gotthard. More detailed information about Mr. Gotthard was shared in the interview synopsis below. Two accounted it to couples "falling off the rails" in their relationship. Three pastors admitted they believed domestic violence did not happen in the church or among the wealthy. Pastor Six believed domestic violence happened after the marriage had fizzled out or tempers flared.

Nine out of nine agreed that domestic violence did give congregants grounds for biblical divorce, but four of the nine maintained it should only be after a generous attempt to mend the marriage. This was double coded under domestic violence and theology. Seven out of nine pastors interviewed stated that "women can be violent against men too" even though the researcher never mentioned violence against women specifically. This, along with other statements, made the researcher and second coder note an underlying theological theme about gender roles. For this reason, some of the comments made in this context were double coded with theology. Of the nine pastors interviewed, one pastor said that God puts people through

things like this [domestic violence] to grow them and prepare them to minister to others. Although only this one pastor said it outright, another pastor implied it. This underlying meaning was coded as domestic violence but is also linked to theology that maintained the Lord does these things to people. Figure 28 demonstrated the interconnectedness of Domestic Violence with other themes and subthemes, and Figure 29 showed pastor rankings by frequency of occurrence.

**Figure 27**

*Overlapping Occurrences of Domestic Violence Subtheme Related to RQ3*

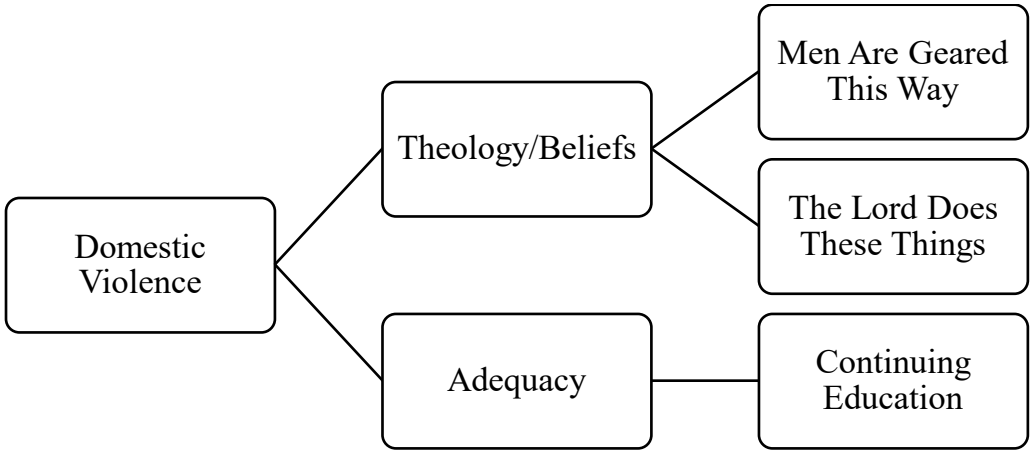
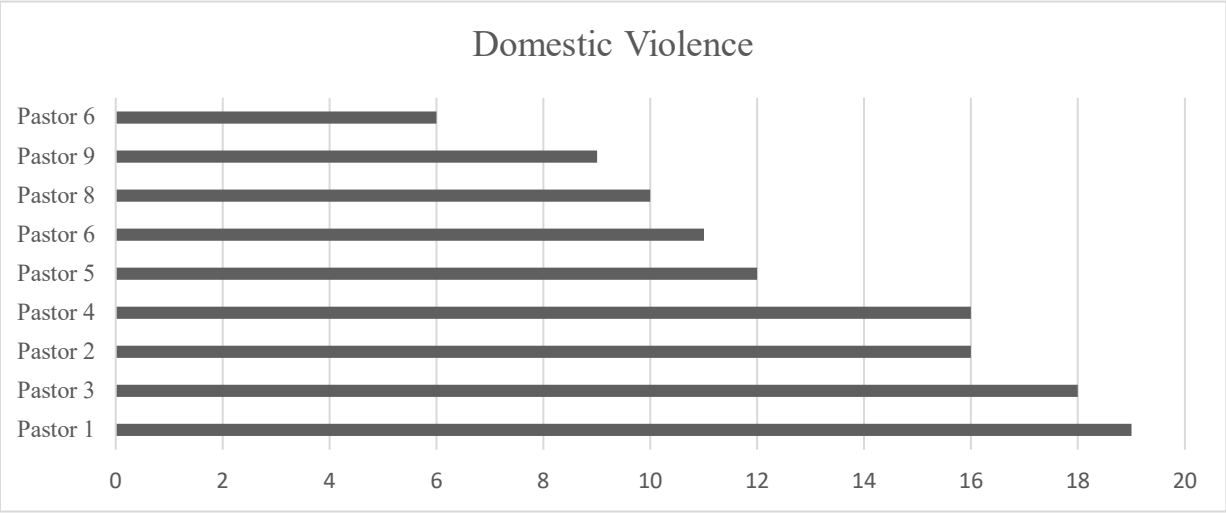



**Figure 28**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Domestic Violence Subtheme*



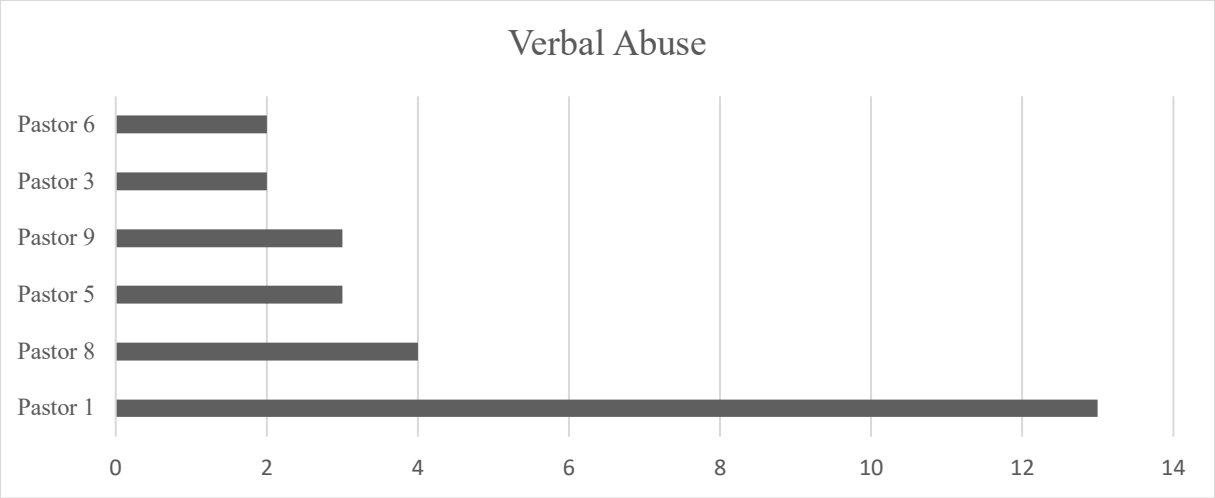
***Verbal Abuse***

Six pastors spoke about verbal abuse. Pastor One stated multiple times that verbal abuse was more common than physical, that "rough people" might not know they are being abusive, that alcohol and drugs were part and participle of domestic violence, and that a rise in environmental stressors creates physical abuse where there used to be "only verbal abuse." Pastor Three admitted watching his father verbally and physically abuse his brothers when they were younger. As the pastor recounted this, he shared that his brothers were still having significant issues that they claimed were linked to the constant verbal abuse in childhood. This pastor explained that he got beatings too but he "was smart enough to learn from them." Pastor Eight also spoke about verbal abuse from the perspective of a family member of an abused individual. This pastor expressed meekness as he explained how hard it was to be silent as the pastor watched his loved one fall deeper into despair over the verbal and physical torment. Pastor Six maintained that "in an issue of verbal abuse, I would try to bring them together…So, I hear both sides separately, and then bring them together and have a conversation so that first I can understand and hear both of their stories and see where they're coming from or they will just throw the other person under the bus."

Figure 30 demonstrates pastor rankings in occurrences of references to verbal abuse.

**Figure 29**

*Pastor Rankings for Frequency of Occurrences of Verbal Abuse Subtheme*




## Research Question Four Findings

RQ4 asked, "Were there measurable learning outcomes and/or evaluation in areas relatable to DV care and ministry?" Pastors One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, and Eight had no practical training relatable to domestic violence ministry. Of these pastors, all but two had internships, clinical pastoral education, or a practicum; but all were completed in churches and saw no reported domestic violence. Unlike the other pastors, Pastor Eight had taught in an alternative education school that received and taught "kids who are struggling with regular public school…challenging kids" before entering the pastorate. This pastor credited care for troubled youth and personally experienced childhood sexual abuse in church for an uncommon understanding of the nuances of trauma from abuse. While these were not directly measurable outcomes with supervisory evaluation, this researcher believed them to be sufficient practical life experience that equipped Pastor Eight to offer pastoral care to domestic violence impacted congregants.

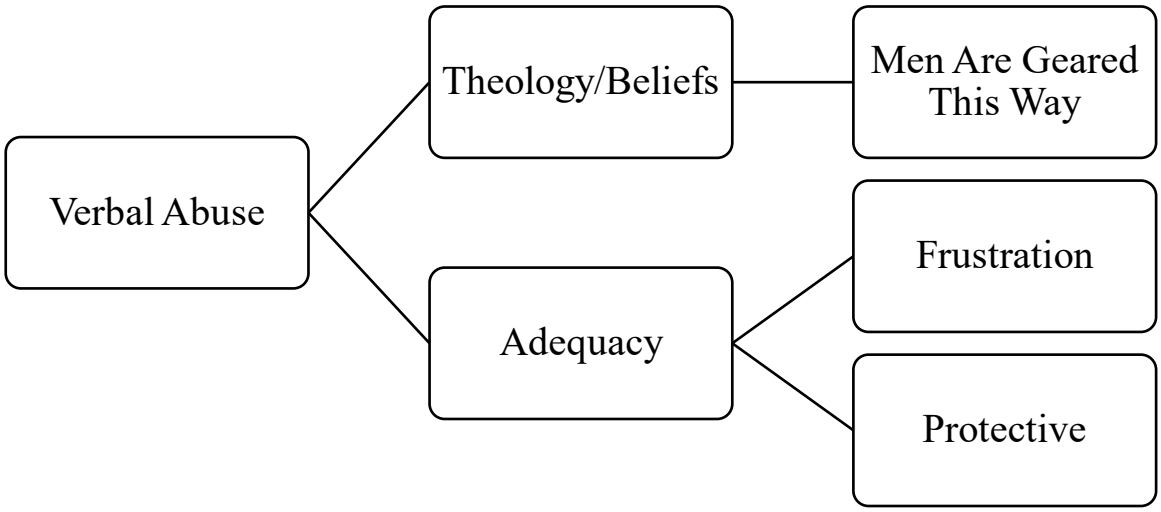
Pastor Seven had CPE, Clinical Pastoral Education, which provided measurable learning outcomes in high stress emergency room and hospital situations. This practical experience was supervised and taught the pastor the importance of debriefing and self-care during ministry. While this experience is not domestic violence specific, it did have enough elements of practical application in high stress crisis care that would be applicable in domestic violence ministry. That combined with work this pastor did in the criminal justice degree satisfied RQ4 positively. The researcher found that, like Pastor Seven, Pastor Nine's CPE provided measurable learning outcomes not specific to domestic violence but relatable to it through crisis care in a hospital setting.

## Research Question Four Analysis

No new subthemes or parent codes emerged. Underlying meanings such as Men Are Geared This Way, Frustration, and Protective re-emerged as did subtheme Beliefs. Parent code Adequacy was the main crux of conversation generated by questions related to RQ4. Abuse was also assigned references from questions related to RQ4. Some instances were double coded with subtheme domestic violence. Pastors that had life and/or ministry experience maintained that it impacted perceptions of adequacy positively. Those that had no life experience or measurable learning outcome activities in a supervised environment admitted the lack of experience hindered pastoral care to the abused.

**Figure 30**

*Overlapping Occurrences of Verbal Abuse Subtheme Related to RQ4*




## Research Question Five Findings

RQ5 asked, "Do pastors believe continuing education in DV training is needed?" All nine pastors responded yes to this question, however, not all said they would seek it out.

### Do Need but Will Not Seek It Out

Pastor One indicated that domestic violence training is needed but would not be pursued unless required by the denomination. An underlying meaning for this lack of desire to seek out DV training might be Pastor One's admitted desire to retire from pastoral ministry and do traveling humanitarian construction projects on the mission field. Pastor Two admitted reluctance to seek out this training although noted as needed. The pastor gave no reason except, "I'm not big on continuing education."

When asked if Pastor Nine felt continuing education was needed for domestic violence ministry, he responded, "it's not that those opportunities aren't there, I've just never taken them, taken advantage of them. Hospitals here do things, you know, classes, day long seminars. Part of

me. I'll just say it this way. Part of me doesn't want to be adequate in clinical stuff so that I don't feel responsible, because my capacity is limited, right? That's the honest truth about that." Pastor Nine admitted a need for it but lamented over time and capacity constraints which required enlistment of other people resources like government, hospitals, and outside agencies.

**Do Need and Will Seek It Out**

Pastor Three acknowledged that pastors need more education in domestic violence ministry and maintained a personal decision to do so but agonized over the closest center being 17 miles away. Pastor Four expressed no desire to seek out continuing education in domestic violence. The pastor said, "No, just in general, I mean I think continuing education is important but generally there's nothing available in the community." By the end of the interview, however, Pastor Four expressed the need to do some type of awareness training for DV for the congregation and that maybe the church would have someone in during Women's History Month in March. Pastor Four said "because, if you look around, pretty much everybody has dealt with this in their own family or their neighbors or somebodies. It's, it's all around us, if we open our eyes and are willing to talk about it."

Pastors Five, Seven, and Eight all admitted that continuing education was needed, but stated unawareness of options for that locally. All were inspired to investigate it due to the interview. Pastors Seven and Eight indicated a strong desire and intention to participate in continuing education with a focus on mental illness care and pastoral leadership respectively. All pastors that mentioned not being aware of resources were emailed a resource list by the researcher. Pastor Six also acknowledged the need for more education in domestic violence ministry but was unique in the method chosen for continued education in the area. This pastor's plan was to buy some books, read them, develop a program, and teach it. Continuing education

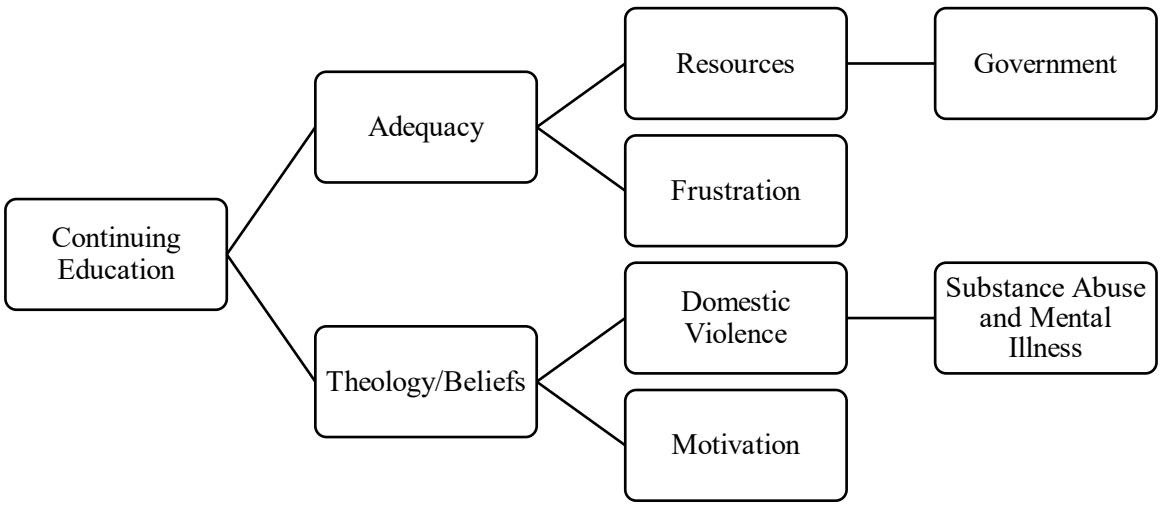
was spoken of often by Pastor Six, but always in the form of personal education through reading and possibly online classes for the purpose of counseling.

## Research Question Five Analysis

Responses to questions related to RQ5 did not produce any new parent codes, subthemes, or underlying meanings. Subthemes Motivation, Frustration, Government, Resources, and Continuing Education had coded references assigned during conversation related to RQ5. Underlying belief systems that domestic violence was related to substance abuse and mental illness re-emerged as well. These references were double coded.

**Figure 31**

*Overlapping Occurrences of Continuing Education Subtheme Related to RQ5*




## Evaluation of the Research Design

The interpretive phenomenological method of analysis (IPA) revealed underlying meanings and subthemes that might not have come forward without the lengthy interviews, the semi-structured questions that allowed for exploration, and the iterative process of analyzing while collecting data. It was the iterative process that helped the researcher dig deeper through

non-structured questions that emerged during the interviews. This method also helped build rapport with the sample as many of the pastors relaxed enough to share deep personal beliefs and experiences. The study produced findings like those of the Zust et al (2017) and Spencer-Sandolph (2020) that utilized the van Manen (1997, 2004) IPA method. These studies found that evangelical pastors in the Midwest United States and Texas self-reported perceptions of inadequacy for ministering to domestic violence impacted congregants. The same held true for the nine evangelical pastors interviewed in the ten counties of SW PA.

The NVivo software was challenging but served to strengthen the credibility of the study as it caused the researcher to look at the data differently. After interviews were analyzed through NVivo, the researcher went back through, examined references coded by NVivo, and found that many of the references had the same sentiment as the codes the researcher had chosen, but used different words. Discrepancies between hand coded data and NVivo were minor but noted. These codes were found in most instances to include the coded occurrences by NVivo but added more references that NVivo did not code. Upon examination, the researcher found that general language that alluded to subthemes but did not use specific language were not coded by NVivo. The researcher verified that NVivo codes were included in hand coding.

Examples of these minor discrepancies included NVivo theme Small Group which the researcher coded under the parent code Theology as it was based on a theological understanding of pastoral care and was not mentioned by any other pastors. Another example was the NVivo theme coded People. People references were coded by the researcher as Resources because they were discussed in reference to people outside the church that could or did help pastors better serve congregants. These discrepancies caused pastor rankings within each parent code and

subtheme to be ordered differently in NVivo coding than in hand coding, but Parent Codes yielded very similar results. It was the subthemes and attributions that were different.

Once all coding was incorporated and analyzed, it was verified through the second coder independently of the researcher. While few and resolved, the discrepancies found while using this software supported Van Manen's (1997, 2004) belief that hand coding was the best approach in the interpretive phenomenological method because of nuances of speech and communication that were sometimes missed by computerized programs. However, the researcher recognized the benefit of utilizing this coding and analyzing software as it served to increase study credibility and forced the researcher to reorganize and recode as needed.

# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

## Overview

The research purpose was to discover seminary educated evangelical pastor perceptions of adequacy for ministering to domestic violence survivors. Summarized in this chapter are the conclusions of the researcher based on analysis of the data. The research purpose and questions that guided that study were restated, and research conclusions, implications, and applications were discussed. Research limitations existed and were acknowledged, and areas of future study were posited.

## Research Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of adequacy experienced by seminary educated evangelical pastors in the SW region of PA when ministering to those impacted by domestic violence (DV). At the beginning of the research, feelings of adequacy were generally defined as a pastoral perception of preparedness for ministering to those affected by domestic violence. The theory guiding this study was put forth by Zust et al (2017) as it found that the seven evangelical pastors interviewed in the urban Midwest reported feelings of inadequacy in ministering to congregants affected by DV. This study utilized van Manen's (1997, 2014) method of phenomenological narrative interpretation used by Zust et al (2017) and explored perceptions of adequacy when ministering to congregants experiencing DV among evangelical pastors in SW PA and how these pastors perceived the impact of seminary training on adequacy for this ministry.

## Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

**RQ1:** How do pastors define adequacy for ministering to DV impacted congregants?

**RQ2:** How do perceptions of adequacy impact the ability to effectively perform pastoral care for survivors of DV?

**RQ3:** Was there sufficient opportunity for personal learning and growth in DV ministry while in seminary?

**RQ4:** Were there measurable learning outcomes and/or evaluation in areas relatable to DV care and ministry?

**RQ5:** Do pastors believe continuing education in DV training is needed?

## Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

As presented in Chapter Four, data showed that seven out of nine pastors perceived inadequacy for ministering to domestic violence impacted congregants and that most of these pastors defined adequacy as a combination of education, experience, knowing when to refer and who to refer to, and the qualifying grace of the Holy Spirit. The researcher also found that pastors had varying views about how perceptions of adequacy impacted pastoral care effectiveness. Underlying themes that contributed to perceived adequacy emerged and were noted by the researcher, second coder, and NVivo software. These themes included parent themes of adequacy, theology, and abuse with subthemes of resources, boundaries, beliefs, and domestic violence. Conclusions drawn by the researcher in relation to empirical and theoretical literature, the implications of the findings, and practical implications were posited in this chapter.

### Summary of Findings

The findings indicated that seven out of nine pastors interviewed reported perceptions of inadequacy in ministering to DV impacted congregants which supported findings of Zust et al (2017). Distinct underlying meanings and subthemes in all nine pastor interviews emerged and demonstrated the complexity of both adequacy and domestic violence as topics. Parent themes identified included Adequacy, Abuse, and Theology. Subthemes under these categories also emerged with each RQ. This complexity and robust nature of discussion about adequacy

confirmed empirical research on the theme (Buikema, 2001; Firmin & Tedford, 2007; Gustafson, 2005; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Zust et al, 2017).

RQ1 asked how pastors defined adequacy and found that definitions of adequacy varied and that seven of nine pastors confessed perceived inadequacy for ministering to DV impacted congregants. Two of the seven pastors concluded that they had no personal adequacy, and that adequacy was defined as the sufficiency of the Lord alone. Two of seven pastors maintained that adequacy was a combination of education, experience, and knowing when to refer. These pastors expressed perceptions of inadequacy in DV ministry due to lack of education and experience, but all said they had a referral list for shelters and counselors. One pastor said that adequacy was not being blindsided. This pastor maintained it had never been reported to him in his churches. This pastor reported perceptions of inadequacy. One pastor maintained that adequacy was a combination of education, experience, and efficacy, a belief that enough basic knowledge and confidence existed to make a reasonable attempt at the situation. This pastor had personal experience but disclosed perceptions of inadequacy in domestic violence ministry. Only two out of nine pastors interviewed had no experience with domestic violence at all. These two had no educational experience, no personal experience, and no ministerial experience. Both reported perceived inadequacy for ministry to DV impacted congregants.

Personal experiences were discussed throughout the interview and found to contribute to perceptions of adequacy in these nine pastors. Pastors reported childhood events including authoritarian fathers, bullies, and rough neighborhoods as contributing to perceptions of adequacy. One pastor remarked that due to growing up in a rough neighborhood and being a bigger guy, he felt adequate anytime things got physical but experienced perceptions of inadequacy most of the time otherwise. Two other pastors attributed perceptions of inadequacy

to verbally abusive fathers and yet another to being bullied. All pastors that perceived inadequacy for this ministry contributed that to lack of education, experience, and confidence due to the complexities of the issue.

Two pastors perceived adequacy for DV ministry and defined adequacy as a combination of all previously given definitions. These pastors maintained that adequacy was made up of education, experience, knowing when to refer, efficacy, and dependence upon the Lord for His grace defined adequacy for these pastors. The robustness of the definition allowed the pastors to feel adequate about decisions to refer quickly, boundaries set by resources including government agencies, and personal abilities in spiritual and pastoral care without feeling responsible for every area of the congregant's life. This definition encompassed the definition of adequacy that the researcher built from literature (Commission, 2020; Mijares & Liedtke, 2008) and expanded upon it to include areas of life rather than simply education. These pastors believed in utilizing community resources which confirmed other studies (Jones & Fowler, 2009; McMullin et al, 2015; Moran et al, 2005) and leaned on the Lord for direction when it was needed.

RQ2 asked what impact perceptions of adequacy had on effectiveness of pastoral care. One reported that perceived inadequacy hindered effectiveness of pastoral care and one said he was unsure how perceptions of adequacy would impact ministry because he has not had any experience with this. The remaining seven reported that repeated practice of referral to government and outside resources increased effectiveness of pastoral care when faced with similar circumstances. Six pastors maintained that perceptions of adequacy had made them more effective at times and less effective at others. One thing that was divergent from other empirical research found was that two of the pastors warned against allowing perceptions of adequacy to negatively impact effectiveness of pastoral care. Examples of this ranged from a pastor

misreading the danger in a situation with a mentally ill congregant to possibly leading the flock astray and away from Jesus due to arrogance and misrepresentation of Christ. These same pastors maintained that the ministry of presence could be a bad thing if the presence offered did not emulate Christ.

RQ3 and RQ4 found that pastors with greater levels of education on the subject and more exposure experientially perceived personal adequacy for this type of ministry. Pastors that lacked education and experience, or felt that the amount they had was insufficient, had perceived inadequacy for this type of ministry. These pastors remarked that it would have helped if seminary taught more practical things but lamented over the need for the scholarly things that were taught in seminary. Five pastors out of nine reported some personal experience with DV. These experiences included childhood abuse, witnessing or hearing about the abuse of others, and walking with family members through abusive relationships. The researcher realized during the interviews that personal experience in crisis, although it does not include supervised, measurable learning outcomes, increased perceptions of adequacy for some, but not for others.

RQ5 revealed that all but three pastors maintained that this interview sparked interest and that they would be seeking out continuing education on the matter. They also admitted training of this sort would take a back seat to more pressing issues like addiction and mental illness. Some pastors expressed beliefs that domestic violence was a symptom of substance abuse, mental illness, or both. Others maintained it was a marital issue where the spouses had fallen out of love and just needed to work things out together. Those that believed this also maintained long-time marriage counseling as part of their ministry and that no instances of domestic violence in their congregations had come to their attention. Still others spoke about theological views that have been used to keep women subjugated to abusive husbands yet demonstrated

similar usage of those same Scriptural texts albeit to a much lesser degree when they spoke about women in ministry and the role of the wife in the marriage. One pastor even spoke and behaved so inappropriately during the interview that he had to be excluded from the study. Understandings about male-female roles included ideas that men were just created with more anger and violence and that they had to be taught not to be harsh and hurtful and that the Lord intentionally does things like assign violence to a person's life to teach them lessons. None of these beliefs were cemented by Scriptural support and one pastor even confessed that they were oral traditions of Scripture passed down from pulpit to pulpit through the fundamental church. While the researcher reported these belief systems under RQ5, they emerged often throughout the entirety of the interviews but culminated as discussion about training in DV ministry ensued.

**Discussion**

This study both confirmed and diverged from empirical and theoretical literature on the subject. It confirmed existing literature that found that most pastors feel inadequate for ministry to people effected by domestic violence. It diverged from the literature by asking the pastors to define adequacy and relate how they believed perceptions of adequacy impacted pastoral care. As pastors answered questions, belief systems emerged that confirmed theoretical literature positing various theories for domestic violence occurrences in society. Empirical literature was also confirmed by the emergence of these belief systems as they have long been touted by researchers as contributing factors to the culture of silence and the stigma associated with DV outcry. Theological underpinnings also emerged and confirmed existing research that maintained the existence of these applications of Scripture among clergy of various faiths, but this researcher focused on those of specifically evangelical Christian denominations.

***Empirical Discussion***

Findings for RQ1 confirmed studies that found pastors self-reported feelings of inadequacy for ministry to domestic violence impacted congregants (Nason-Clark, 1997; Pyles, 2007; Smith-Clark, 2016; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017). Only two pastors reported perceived adequacy for ministry to this population of congregants which was divergent from the Zust et al (2017) study that reported all seven participants perceived inadequacy but confirmed the Spencer-Sandolph (2020) study that found most pastors studied perceived adequacy in this area of ministry. Themes that emerged were Adequacy and Theology. Subthemes included education, motivation, ministry of presence, and resources. Underlying belief systems also emerged in relation to RQ1. Those included the ideas that men are geared toward violence and that the Lord does things like allow violence in people's lives to mature and prepare them for ministry to others in that area. These underlying belief systems confirmed literature that suggested these belief systems as possible aggregates to perceptions of adequacy for this type of ministry (Firmin & Tedford, 2007; Nason-Clark, 2009; Shei, 2004; Smith-Clark, 2016; Ware et al, 2004; Zust et al, 2017).

RQ2 evaluated what impact, if any, these perceptions of adequacy had on the effectiveness of pastoral care. Data found that seven of nine pastors confessed that perceptions of adequacy do impact pastoral care in future ministry. These findings confirmed literature that maintained perceptions of adequacy were a large contributing factor to effectiveness in all areas of professionalism (Mijares & Liedtke, 2008). New subtheme Boundary emerged in relation to RQ2 as participants discussed the concept of boundaries and how they impact perceptions of adequacy. One concept of boundaries that arose was that churches and government agencies could not work together effectively and respectfully. Participants of this study admitted that these

perceptions impeded perceptions of adequacy as well as collaboration of help agencies in the lives of domestic violence survivors. This confirmed findings from other studies (Jones & Fowler, 2009; McMullin et al, 2015).

What was unique to this study was that five of the seven pastors that self-reported feelings of inadequacy in domestic violence ministry believed that inadequacy made them more effective in ministry to this population. The researcher found no other studies that discussed this phenomenon. Pastors that reported it said that perceptions of inadequacy caused them to refer and report to authorities quickly. These pastors maintained that referring to outside agencies for technical and practical care in instances of domestic violence left the pastors free to focus on spiritual care that the congregant needed. This team approach to congregant care was championed by researchers (Cary, 2005; Jones & Fowler, 2009; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013; Weaver et al, 1997; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005

RQ3 sought to discover if these pastors had sufficient education for DV ministry while in seminary. The data showed none of the pastors that expressed perceptions of inadequacy recalled dedicated domestic violence education at all during seminary. Three pastors mentioned that domestic violence was brought up “when it applied” to discussions of pastoral care, but these same three pastors admitted that was rare. This confirmed research that maintained seminarians reported lack of education in seminary where DV care was concerned (Buikema, 2001; Firmin & Tedford, 2007; Gustafson, 2005). All but one pastor believed seminary left them unprepared for the work of pastoral care to DV impacted congregants. That one pastor had a degree in criminal justice and a professor that had done dissertation work in DV. That pastor’s seminary experience was unique from the others interviewed but supported data from (Homiak & Singletary (2007) that found 8% of pastors studied felt adequately prepared by seminary to counsel and refer DV

survivors. Parent theme Abuse became highlighted more and subthemes of domestic violence and verbal abuse emerged. Underlying meanings including theological concepts about domestic violence, power and control, and divorce emerged. These theological concepts confirmed some of the same ones cited by researchers (Gustafson, 2005; Roberts, 2016; Verhey & Harvard 2011).

RQ4 determined whether the pastors had any type of practical application training that was supervised and made up of measurable learning outcomes that would lead to discernable knowledge on the topic. Only one pastor had classroom training in DV that was supervised and evaluated through measurable learning outcomes. That pastor reported perceived adequacy. This question related to research that found 72.5% of seminarians interviewed reported little to no training on DV (Gustafson, 2005). Those that did report this training stated that it happened in context of pastoral care or marriage counseling classes (Buikema, 2001; Gustafson, 2005). Complexities of domestic violence continued to emerge as conversation continued. They revealed underlying subthemes of frustration and protection and theological beliefs that men are geared a certain way. These underlying subthemes of protection and frustration were noted in theoretical literature about domestic violence causes (Lawson, 2012), but the belief that men are geared toward violence was unique to this study.

RQ5 sought to discover if these nine pastors interviewed believed continuing education in DV pastoral care was needed. The findings showed that all nine pastors admitted that continuing education in this area is needed. These findings confirmed research that echoed a cry for more training among pastors (Clark, 2005; Clark, 2009; Nason-Clark & Clark Kroeger, 2001; Yoder, 2013). What was unique to this study was that three pastors confessed that although continuing education in this area was needed, they would not seek it out unless it was made mandatory by

governing denominations. Complexity of the issue continued to be confirmed as interconnectedness of subthemes and underlying belief systems that were already discussed merged in the answering of this final RQ.

One thing that repeatedly came up during the study was pastor perceptions on why domestic violence occurs. At the beginning of this study, the researcher did not realize how much these underlying beliefs impacted perceptions of adequacy among pastors. One of the beliefs that arose was that DV did not occur in the church. Shared experiences of these pastors were that only one of the nine had experienced domestic violence within their churches. Comments such as "I didn't think it could happen in the church, so I never looked for it" (Pastor Two, 63) and "That doesn't happen here because we are very family oriented" (Pastor Nine, 58) confirmed empirical research conducted by Ware et al (2015) that maintained clergy from various faith groups denied the existence of domestic violence within the church. While the pastors in this study did not deny its existence in the worldwide church, they believed that it had not happened in their churches.

One belief system that emerged was that domestic violence was a symptom of men that are geared toward violence being put in stressful situations and then responding badly to the relational stressors. This belief system confirmed that strain theory and social disorganization theory were at work in those pastors' minds. Strain theory, as discussed in theoretical literature of this dissertation, maintained that violence of this sort comes from people that are frustrated with circumstances within relationships (Lawson, 2012). Social disorganization theory maintained that environmental circumstances such as the loss of a job, financial crisis, or traffic caused people to commit crime. Pastor Six demonstrated that thought process when the way he suggested DV be handled was to call both parties together to "figure out where the wheels came

off the bus" (54). Pastor Six, 54, said, "You know, you guys obviously saw something each other years ago, you were googly eyed with each other? Your wedding day, I'm assuming. So, what's happened? What's happened since then?" Pastor Six presented this statement as a possible counseling conversation he would have if DV ever did present in his church. The statement implied that some relational or environmental conflict had led to the abuse and that the problem could be solved with open communication and counseling.

***Theoretical Discussion***

Adequacy is defined in this study as having had sufficient opportunity to experience personal growth through instruction that used measurable learning outcomes in evaluating retention of knowledge that yielded professional preparedness and dedication to lifelong learning (Commission, 2020; Mijares & Liedtke, 2008). The nine pastors interviewed had different definitions of adequacy, but most included all aspects of the researcher's definition. What the researcher left out of the definition of adequacy was the dependence upon the sufficiency and grace of the Lord. The researcher believed that to be a foundational prerequisite for pastoral ministry. Theoretical literature on Christian leadership confirmed the researcher's stance (Bredfeldt, 2006; Malphurs, 2003; Pettit, 2008; Sanders, 1994). Nevertheless, some pastors felt that dependency on the Lord was the only adequacy possible for the believer. While that might have merit theologically, so do themes of stewardship, leadership, and diligence in study. Biblical pastoral leadership requires all these principles (Malphurs, 2003; Sanders 1994).

Beliefs that men are geared to be violent, aggressive, and pornographers emerged during this study. This was divergent from other research found as these concepts were not discussed by those researchers. What was noted for this study was that all four pastors that spoke in this way also reported perceived inadequacy and acknowledged a lack of understanding and education

about the phenomenon. This confirmed literature that theorized that education could be utilized to improve effectiveness of pastoral care for DV impacted congregants (Binford-Weaver, 2005, Holtmann & Nason-Clark, 2018; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013; Zust et al, 2017). It also confirmed that underlying belief systems and meanings impact perceptions of adequacy and effectiveness in ministry (Spencer-Sandolph, 2020; Zust et al, 2017).

Another finding of this study was that personal growth and learning opportunities do not always occur in seminary. Sometimes they occur in life experiences. They are effective no matter where they occur and regardless of perceived adequacy (Bennis, 1989; Petit, 2008). What has been confirmed by this study and other research is that traditional seminary education does not prepare individuals for the daily work of the ministry in practical ways. It does provide a robust understanding of Scriptural text for the seminary graduate to utilize as a foundation for all ministerial interaction (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013). Because Scriptural understandings are the basis of pastoral care, one must strive to properly exegete texts to ensure understandings that do not cause more harm to the already victimized (Bredfeldt, 2006; Malphurs, 2003; Petit, 2008; Sanders, 1994). Seminary education was acknowledged as key to that for all pastors except for two.

**Implications**

The findings of this study confirmed the researcher's belief that findings of this study would be like those in the Zust et al (2017) study, which found seven evangelical pastors reported perceptions of inadequacy in DV care. Findings of this study had theoretical, empirical, and practical implications. Those implications are as follows.

### *Theoretical Implications*

While there were many theoretical options for how to collect and analyze data for this study, the researcher chose the van Manen (1997, 2004) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. That method was chosen because it was utilized in other studies (Zust et al, 2017; Spencer-Sandolph, 2020) that sought to discover pastoral perceptions of adequacy in other geographical regions. This method proved to be a good method for deep diving into large topics, but it also generated tons of data. The semi-structured interview questions were good because they left the pastors feeling more comfortable and prepared while still giving freedom to ask supplemental questions as needed to go further into the meanings of what pastors were saying. This method allowed these deeper meanings to emerge organically through conversation as the pastors got more comfortable as the interview progressed. The researcher believes this to be an excellent method for discovering underlying concepts, meanings, and principles by which people live. Knowing what these underlying belief systems are, how they interact with the truth of Scripture, and how they impact care of others is the first step toward personal reflection and growth for the leader (Bennis, 1994; Pettit, 2003).

It is important to note that one underlying belief that was expressed during this study was a belief that governmental authorities and outside agencies do not want to work with the church and believe negative things about churches and pastors. This underlying meaning was the number one reason this pastor listed for perceived inadequacy and ineffectiveness in DV pastoral care. This study, along with others, found that the opposite is true and that pastors that work with outside agencies and resources experience increased effectiveness regardless of adequacy (Cary, 2005; Jones & Fowler, 2009; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2001; Pyles, 2007; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005). Resources are of paramount importance to effective

domestic violence ministry. Pastors that reported effectiveness credited the art of referring. Knowing local resources such as domestic violence agencies, counselors, and attorneys and having a list of those available was noted as a key to effective ministry in this area (Cary, 2005; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013; Weaver et al, 1997; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005).

***Empirical Implications***

This study contributes to the literature and fills one small gap in the research. Studies done in Canada (Nason-Clark, 1997), Midwest America (Zust et al, 2017), Wyoming (Pyles, 2007), New York & Connecticut (Smith-Clark, 2016), and other areas of the world (Ware et al, 2004) all found that pastors perceived inadequacy for ministering to survivors of domestic violence. Spencer-Sandolph (2020) found pastors in Texas that were studied perceived adequacy in this area of ministry. They cited experience for that adequacy. No literature existed on this topic for the Southwestern region of Pennsylvania until now.

This research found that 22% of pastors interviewed perceived adequacy for ministering to domestic violence impacted persons. That number is higher than the percentage found by Nason-Clark (1997) that said 8% perceived this adequacy. That study utilized a sample pool of 332 and this study only utilized nine. The researcher believes that with a larger sample pool, the percentage of perceived adequacy for this type of ministry would change. Nonetheless, what emerged from this study supported empirical research that found that pastors are not fully equipped for the day-to-day work of the ministry through seminary alone (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011). Continuing education in fields outside of seminary training will always be necessary. As one of the pastors interviewed said, “seminary just tells you what questions to ask.” Continuing education might be based on denominational requirements or congregational

need, but it will be necessary. It can take many forms including formal degrees through accredited institutions, online certificates, workshops, relationships, and other resources like books and media. The need exists to do more to incorporate education about practical life matters into seminary (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011).

Domestic violence is happening all around us as Pastor Four stated. And, while it is certainly true that domestic violence is found in the Bible, there seems to be no real mention of it in relation to godly marriage, living, and pastoring throughout seminary education. To the pastors interviewed, it seemed as though it would be covered by basic tenets of loving one another and doing unto others what you would have them do unto you. Unfortunately, those topics are broad enough to be overshadowed by misuses of submission Scriptures. Researchers found that underlying meanings exist in relation to male-female relationships of power and control, what constitutes appropriate gender roles, and theologies of forgiveness that encourage the abused to pray, fast, and submit more to see change come to the abusive spouse (Braken, 2008; Gerger et al, 2007; Ware et al, 2004).

Pastors expressed beliefs that domestic violence does not occur in the church or among the wealthy (Gustafson, 2005; Jankowski et al, 2018; Shei, 2004; Ware et al, 2004) and that when it does occur its due to some relational or environmental stressor (Lawson, 2012). One pastor in this study expressed the belief that women are in ministry to fill some politically correct cause rather than because they were called of God (Pastor Three, 2021). That same pastor suggested the women could be lying against their husbands for spite. Ideations like these have been cited by researchers as contributing to women staying in the abuse and feeling further victimized by the pastor (Barnett, 2000; Kim, 2014). Evangelical understanding of God's stance on divorce has also contributed historically to women staying in abusive homes even unto death

(McMullin et al, 2015). Flawed ideations about suffering of this type being relatable to the sufferings of Christ (Gerger et al, 2015) were echoed through pastor conversations that spoke about the Lord doing these things to people as a way for them to help others, yet all of them maintained domestic violence, if it really was domestic violence one pastor stated, did give the person biblical grounds for divorce.

Pastor One expressed the mindset that agencies outside of the church do not want to work with pastors and are somehow against them. Other pastors expressed that they would work with outside agencies and were quick to refer to such but did not speak about inter-agency collaboration in domestic violence. They spoke about these agencies more as filling needs that were beyond the scope or boundaries of pastoral care. The Ephesians 4 theology of each different part of the whole body serving its function in the life of the believer to ensure that the congregant was best cared for was the crux of their ideation. This inter-agency collaboration is supported and championed by researchers (Cary, 2005; Jones & Fowler, 2009; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2001; Pyles, 2007; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005).

***Practical Implications***

McMullin & Nason-Clark (2011) found that seminarians studied expected the education received during seminary to prepare them for the work of the ministry. When surveyed close to the end of the degree programs, these seminarians reported surprise that they still felt inadequate for the work of the ministry (McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011). This research found seminary educated pastors, even after sometimes 30 or more years of service, still felt inadequately prepared to handle the complexities involved with this type of ministry. While seminaries may not be able to incorporate the type of training that would benefit students and pastors due to the already existing demands of the degree programs, other things could be done to increase

awareness and understanding. Outside agencies could be brought in for workshops and Domestic Violence Awareness Fairs. Administration could add the institution's stance on the matter to honor codes and student handbooks. Faculty, staff, and administration could publicize the university's stance during public events such as convocation and use those opportunities to call in experts to give seminars and lectures. Although these changes would require time and effort, they would enrich the ability of graduating seminarians to identify and respond to DV in their congregations. That would help to yield more perceptions of adequacy, better relationships with outside resources, and more effective pastoral care for those impacted by DV (Buikema, 2001; Firmin & Tedford, 2007; Gustafson, 2005; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2011; McMullin & Nason-Clark, 2013.

The truth is that no one person can be adequately prepared to handle every situation. Attempting to be prepared for every situation that could possible happen could leave one overburdened and spread too thin. What is true is that one can rely on foundational truths of the Word for guidance in every area. One can also lean into Jesus through prayer and fasting to seek answers and direction. One can also reach out to the resources that exist within the community. DV impacted persons need a whole team of helpers to get to a place of safety, healing, and victory (Cary, 2005; McMullin et al, 2015; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005). Allowing personal perceptions of adequacy to impede collaboration with these agencies and resources could mean death for the DV impacted congregant (Cary, 2005).

Likewise, allowing personal belief systems to cloud the lens by which the pastor views the abused and the situation could mean further harm and possibly death for the abused (Cary, 2005; Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013; Weaver et al, 1997; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005). Pastor Six's idea of call both spouses in together in the presence of the pastor to discuss the issue will

cause an escalation of the violence once the offender leaves with the offended and the two are once again in private, according to Nason-Clark (1997). Characteristic traits of the abuser often allow them to mask the power and control issues and cause them to appear compliant and obedient to the pastor, and sometimes allows them to escape unpunished by diminishing or dismissing the claim as the woman being crazy or hormonal Francis et al, 2017; Kim, 2014; Mahoney et al, 2015).

## Applications

The findings of this study indicate that a need for collaboration and education exists within church leadership. Certain applications could be adopted by pastors, denominations, seminaries, and prospective pastors and seminarians to improve pastoral perceptions of adequacy and ensure more effective pastoral care for DV impacted congregants. Recommendations for some of those possible applications were made here.

### *Pastors and Seminarians*

For the pastor and aspiring pastors, remember that a love relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ must be maintained. Christian leadership theorists agreed that the person's relationship with the Lord through worship, prayer, and study of the Word of God is foundational to being an adequate pastor (Clinton, 2012; Harris, 1999; Laniak, 2006; Malphurs, 2003; Pettit, 2008; Sanders, 1994). This truth echoed through all the pastor interviews performed for this study and was one theme that all nine agreed on. It is only through abiding faith in Christ that one could hope to help others be transformed into His image. No pastor could ever possibly be prepared for every situation life would throw at them. That would be an unrealistic expectation for a person to have of themselves. Instead, for the pastor to perceive adequacy, that adequacy and confidence must spring from the truth that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. All things must be

examined and reacted to through that lens. The Word of God must be the foundation for all teaching, admonition, and care. The nine pastors interviewed all made some Scriptural reference that anchored them in times of uncertainty, and all nine made the case for the sufficiency of Christ and the surety of the call. In times of uncertainty, remember to "trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding but in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path" (NKJV, 1982, Proverbs 3:5-6). Also remember that the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (NKJV, 1982, 2 Corinthians 12:9) and the advice given by James, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (NKJV, 1982, 1:5).

While studying biblical text and approaching situations pastorally, the pastor could utilize a self-reflective manner that helps to evaluate and regulate personal belief systems through the lens of Scripture. Some things that people believe are biblical are not, yet they contribute to the lens through which the person sees situations and people. Apart from a willingness to self-reflect and make changes, the leader will not grow, and followers will be poorly served (Malphurs, 2003; Sanders, 1994). Self-evaluation and reflection are imperative for one that wishes to render effective pastoral care (Bennis, 1994; Petit, 2008). As Bennis (1994) said, "Know thyself, then, means separating who you are and who you want to be from what the world thinks you are and want to be" (p. 54). Pastors should seek the Lord on the issues and ask through prayer for Him to allow His image to be revealed in each person. Remember that, as Pastor Three mentioned, oral tradition and culture have perpetuated understandings of scriptural text that veer far from the original intent of the writer. Maintain a commitment to exegesis of Scriptural texts rather than eisegesis so that biblical foundations of truth can reign through pastoral care and Christ will be

glorified (Bredfeldt, 2006). Also, maintain a mentor, peer, or accountability group. Avoid the trap that one pastor fell into that left him with feelings of inadequacy and increasing feelings of ineffectiveness because of perceived condescension from government and social agencies. Accountability partners, mentors, and other peers must be allowed to speak correctively into one's life if areas of burnout, anxiety, or sin are noted (Petit, 2008).

One should enter seminary with the understanding that it will help increase adequacy and effectiveness in ministry, but that it will just be the foundation from which one continues to build knowledge and education for a lifetime. Clinton (2012) maintained that the second characteristic of a godly leader was "they maintain a learning posture and can learn from various kinds of sources—life especially" (p. 204). The seminarian and pastor alike should be prepared to seek out resources and collaborate. Volunteering with a ministry or agency that is geared toward DV could be one of the greatest contributors to increased perceptions of adequacy for ministry to DV impacted congregants. The pastors from this study that had personal and practical experience in this area were the ones that perceived adequacy for rendering effective pastoral care in this area. Bennis (1994) maintained that life experience was one of the single most important contributors to being an effective leader. This leadership theorist also worked to show that collaborative efforts among groups that recognized personal weaknesses and strengths and then staffed among themselves accordingly to fill the need was most effective (Bennis, 1994). This sentiment was echoed by pastor three and others that maintained the importance of the people resources around them. Researchers maintained that collaboration with outside agency increased effectiveness of pastoral care to the recipient (Cary, 2005; Jones & Fowler, 2009; Mahoney et al, 2015; McMullin et al, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2001; Pyles, 2007; Yoshioka & Choi, 2005).

Pastors could invite these outside agencies, ministries, and authorities in to teach a basic workshop to leadership and the congregation and seminarians could volunteer or invite these groups in to speak at student events or groups. Preaching sermons on DV as sin has been shown to increase awareness among congregations. Preparing for such sermons will help the minister grow in understanding while setting a standard for the church that states the sin of domestic violence and its ravaging hardship on those impacted. This type of public acknowledgement of DV, along with the posting of hotline numbers and bulletins that teach the warning signs, have been shown through research to help create an atmosphere that encourages outcry from the victims. That outcry could lead to safety and help for a desperate family that might not have otherwise reached out for help (Houston-Kolnik & Todd, 2016; Houston-Kolnik et al, 2019).

***Seminary Faculty and Staff***

Changes in how seminaries address the topic of domestic violence would go a long way toward better preparing seminarians for pastoral service. This might be as simple as choosing textbooks and materials that include discussion about domestic violence in marriage and family, pastoral care, or even biblical studies. It might not be something than can be figured out on the widescale, but each educator and student could try to bring it up in discussions. There are schools that have classes offered as electives on the topic, but those are up to the student. Integrating DV discussion into other classes might be the most doable option. Public acknowledgement of the seminary's stance on domestic violence would also help tremendously. This study demonstrated the power of that kind of administrative stance. One pastor interviewed spoke about a time when the dean of the school stood and renounced domestic violence as sin and informed the lot that it was sin that disqualified one from ministry. This experience branded this pastor and informed his

views on DV since. Taking such a public stand during convocation or writing policy for honor code or student manuals are also viable applications.

**Research Limitations**

This study is not generalizable to a larger population due to the population size and the scope of the study. The study was limited to discovering the views of only these nine seminary educated evangelical pastors in SW PA. For the sake of a homogenous sample which is suggested by researchers for the IPA method (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1999; van Manen, 1997; van Manen 2004), women were excluded as non-Caucasians. While Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) maintain that a cumulation of studies such as these might become generalizable over time, for now there is still not enough data.

## Further Research

The researcher recognized numerous future studies that could come from this research. Possibilities include but are not limited to:

1- A case study from several of the pastors that participated in which the researcher would re-interview them to see what, if any, impact this study had on the motivation to seek continuing education on the matter.

2- A replication study using the same methods, questions, and analysis tools among female seminary educated evangelical pastors.

3- Yet another possible study would be to replicate the study among pastors that did not identify as evangelical.

4- Another future study would be to survey the congregations of these pastors to gauge the peoples' perceptions of the pastors' adequacy.

5- Yet another study might be to survey the women of these churches to discover how many, if any, had experienced what happened to me during the one interview in meetings with male pastors.

6- A correlational study to determine what, if any, impact underlying belief systems have on pastoral care of women in general.

7- A phenomenological study to discover what the men of these churches believe about male-female roles, domestic violence, and the idea posed in this study that God geared men to be more violent.

Because of the vastness of each topic, domestic violence and adequacy, there are many avenues yet to be explored.

## Summary

This interpretive phenomenological study discovered that seven out of nine seminary educated evangelical pastors in Southwestern Pennsylvania self-reported perceived inadequacy for ministering to domestic violence impacted persons. It also discovered parent code themes, and subthemes that ran like ribbons through the conversations with all nine pastors. The researcher discovered that these nine pastors combined various subjects into definitions of adequacy which satisfied RQ1. Within conversation about adequacy there were references to resources in general and resources that were governmental in nature. There were also references to education including seminary and continuing education as well as references to boundaries of pastoral care and personal privacy. Theology was found to contribute greatly to adequacy for these pastors interviewed. Various discussions about theological and personal belief systems yielded subtheme beliefs, ministry of presence, and motivation. Underlying meanings that emerged were that the Lord does these things to people and that men are geared towards violence by nature and nurture. Perceptions of adequacy were found to effect pastoral ministry in various ways. In one case, the pastor admitted that perceived inadequacy yielded more ineffective ministry. In one case the pastor was unsure how his perceptions of inadequacy would impact this type of ministry because he had not had many cases. Six pastors believed that personal perceptions of inadequacy improved pastoral care because it encouraged referral and collaboration with outside agencies. These findings satisfied RQ2. RQ3 and RQ4 were satisfied

in that only two of nine pastors had any significant DV education personally or educationally. Only two pastors had learning opportunities that were supervised and yielded applicable knowledge for future situations. And RQ5 was answered in that all nine pastors admitted a need for continuing education in this area of ministry.

The study confirmed research on leadership, domestic violence, and the use of IPA in qualitative studies developed for the purpose of discovering perceptions of people. It also confirmed the need for seminaries, pastors, and aspiring pastors and seminarians to understand that adequacy can be improved through education, experience, and development of efficacy, but for the Christian leader it is ultimately founded upon the rock of Jesus Christ and His sufficiency as we yield to His will and guidance. From that foundation of Christ, any pastor can reach out to the world around to form relationships with the people that know how to help in these types of situations. Friendships can be formed that not only inform the pastors but yield more effective pastoral care so that people can find safety, healing, and transformation in Christ. This approach also gives pastors the opportunity to grow and develop spiritually and as leaders while affording the opportunity to be salt and light in the world.

Even though this was a study that dove into hard the hard topics of adequacy and DV, all nine pastors were genuinely helpful and enjoyable to interact with as the interviews were conducted. It is the belief of this researcher that all nine were also genuine in their love for God and people and served out of a desire to give the absolute best of themselves. While there was one outlier in the original group of ten, the remaining nine spoke of being motivated by love and feeling called of God for the work of pastoring and conducted themselves in an upstanding and godly way. They also all expressed the enormity of the work at hand and the absolute need for the abiding work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and ministries. While the results from this study

cannot necessarily be generalizable for larger groups or outside of the SW PA region, the researcher believes that these pastors demonstrated the true heart of evangelicalism—Bible inerrancy, the necessity of being born again for salvation, that Jesus is the only way to the Father, and the Great Commission—and the loving heart of the Father for those they serve.

## REFERENCES


Abramsky, T., Watts, C. H., Garcia-Moreno, C., Devries, K., Kiss, L., Ellsberg, M., Jansen, H. A., & Heise, L. (2011). What factors are associated with recent intimate partner violence? findings from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence. *BMC Public Health, 11*, 109.

Association of Religious Data Archives (2020). Evangelical protestants: congregations (2010) (Pennsylvania). https://www.thearda.com/mapsreports/maps/2010/PA_TOTEVGCONG.asp#lists.

Association of Theological Schools. (2020). Bylaws. *The Association of Theological Schools*. https://www.ats.edu/uploads/about-ats/documents/association-bylaws.pdf.

Aune, K. & Barnes, R. (2018). *In churches too: church responses to domestic abuse – A case study of Cumbria, Coventry*: Coventry University and Leicester: University of Leicester.

Barna Group. (2017). *Barna trends 2018: What's new and what's next at the intersection of faith and culture* (2018 ed.). Baker Books. ISBN: 9780801018640.

Barnett, O. W. (2000). Why battered women do not leave, part 1: External inhibiting factors within society. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *1*(4), 343–372. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838000001004003.

*Beacon Bible Commentary, Volume 9: Galatians through Philemon*, The Foundry Publishing, 2011.

Bennis, W. (1989). *On Becoming a Leader*. Ashley Wesley.

Bennis, W. (2010). *Still Surprised: A memoir of a life in leadership*.

Bent-Goodley, T. B. (2005). Culture and domestic violence: Transforming knowledge development. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20(2), 195–203. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260504269050.

Bergant, D. (2013). *Genesis: In the Beginning*, Liturgical Press.

Berry, D. B. (1998). *The domestic violence sourcebook: Everything you need to know*. NTC Contemporary.

Binford-Weaver, R. (2005). *Factors that influence seminary student response to women victims of domestic violence: An empirical investigation.*

Bracken, M. (2008). *Leaving an abusive relationship: A hermeneutic phenomenological study of lifetime experiences of women who have left abusive relationships.*

Bredfeldt, G. (2006). *Great Leader Great Teacher*. Moody.

Buikema, J. K. (1999). *Pastors and premarital counseling: A Descriptive Study of Covenant Theological Seminary Graduates from 1975-1995*. (Doctoral Dissertation, Covenant Theological Seminary, 1999).

Buikema, J. K. (2001). *The preparation of pastors in premarital counseling.*

Buzawa, E. S. and Buzawa C. G. (2017). Introduction: The evolution of efforts to combat domestic violence. In *Global Responses to Domestic Violence*. Edited by Buzawa, E. S. and Buzawa, C. G. Springer International Publishing. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-56721-1.

Cary, K. M. (2005). *Domestic violence: Defining a social problem. the response of helping professionals*.

Choi, Y. J., Orpinas, P., Kim, I., & Ko, K. S. (2019). Korean clergy for healthy families: Online intervention for preventing intimate partner violence. *Global Health Promotion*, 26(4), 25-32.

Clark Kroeger, C., and Nason-Clark, N. (2001). *No place for abuse: Biblical & practical resources to counteract domestic violence*. InterVarsity Press.

Clark, R. (2009). *Freeing the oppressed: A call to Christians concerning domestic abuse*. Cascade Books.

Clark, R. (2005). *Setting the captives free: A Christian theology for domestic violence*. Cascade Books.

Clato-Day, S. (2020). *Examining clergy responses to parishioners who experience domestic violence: A phenomenological study.*

Clinton, J. R. (2012). *The making of a leader*. NavPress.

Clinton, T. and Hawkins, R. (2009). *The Quick Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling: 40 Topics, Spiritual Insights & Easy-to-use Action Steps*. Baker Books.

Collins, P. M., & Ensign-George, B. A. (Eds.). (2013). *Denomination: Assessing an ecclesiological category*. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Commission. (2020). Standards of Accreditation for The Commission on Accrediting of The Association of Theological Schools. *The Association of Theological Schools*. https://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/standards-of-accreditation.pdf#pagemode=bookmarks.

Cooper-White, P. (2012). *The cry of Tamar. Violence against women and the church's response*. (2nd ed). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Court, D., Abbas, R., Riecken, T., Seymour, J., & Le Tran, M.-A. (2017). *Qualitative research and intercultural understanding: Conducting qualitative research in multicultural settings* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. and Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design*. Sage Publications. ISBN 978-1-5063-8670-6.

Danielson, T., Lucas, P., Malinowski, R., & Pittman, S. (2009). Set free ministries: A comprehensive model for domestic violence congregational interventions. *Social Work and Christianity, 36*(4), 480-493.

DataUSA. (2020). Data by county. https://datausa.io/.

Drumm, R. D., Popescu, M., & Riggs, M. L. (2009). Gender variation in partner abuse: Findings from a conservative Christian denomination. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 24(1), 56–68.

Durose, M. R., Harlow, C. W., Langan, P. A., Motivans, M., Rantala, R. R., and Smith, E. L. (2005). Family violence statistics. *US Department of Justice: Bureau of Justice Statistics*.

Easton, M. G. "Entry for Idolatry". "Easton's Bible Dictionary". https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/idolatry/.

Erickson, M. J. (2015). *Introducing Christian doctrine*. 3rd ed. Baker Book House.

Fink, M. (1991). Butler, T. C. (Ed.) Entry for 'Apostasy'. Holman Bible Dictionary. https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/hbd/a/apostasy.html.

Firmin, M. W., & Tedford, M. (2007). An assessment of pastoral counseling courses in seminaries serving evangelical Baptist students. *Review of Religious Research, 48*(4), 420-427.

Francis, L., Loxton, D., & James, C. (2017). The culture of pretense: A hidden barrier to recognizing, disclosing, and ending domestic violence. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 26*(15-16), 2202-2214. doi:10.1111/jocn.13501.

Gallet, W. (2017). Domestic violence and the church community. *Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association*, *27*(1), 16.

Garcia-Moreno, C., Henrica, A. F. M. J., Ellsberg, M., Heise, L., & al, e. (2006). Prevalence of intimate partner violence: findings from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence. *The Lancet, 368*(9543), 1260-9.

Gatobu, A. K. (2006). *Towards an interpretive understanding of survivors of domestic violence: A psychosocial and religious study of the understandings held by female survivors of domestic violence in Kenya.*

Gerger, H., Kley, H., Bohner, G., & Siebler, F. (2007). The acceptance of modern myths about sexual aggression scale: Development and validation in German and English. *Aggressive Behavior*, *33*, 422–440.

Gibbs, A., Dunkle, K., & Jewkes, R. (2018). Emotional and economic intimate partner violence as key drivers of depression and suicidal ideation: A cross-sectional study among young women in informal settlements in South Africa. *PLoS One, 13*(4).

Green, J. (2004). Evangelicals vs. mainline protestants. *Frontline*. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/evangelicals/evmain.html.

Green, L. (2015). Assisting religious institutions in creating a domestic violence policy. In *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*. Ed. A. J. Johnson. Springer, pp. 443-451.

Grudem, W. (1994). Systematic theology. Baker Books.

Gustafson, A. L. (2005). *Seminarians' response to domestic violence: Sex -role attitudes, just world beliefs, and formal training.*

Hegarty, K., & Roberts, G. (1998). How common is domestic violence against women? The definition of partner abuse in prevalence studies. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 22*(1), 49-54.

Heidegger, M. (1927/2011). *Being and time*. (Macquarrie, J., Robinson, E., Trans.). Harper & Row.

Hiebert, P. G. (2008). *Transforming worldviews*. Baker Academic.

Holtmann, C., & Nason-Clark, N. (Eds.). (2018). *Religion, gender, and family violence: When prayers are not enough*.

Homiak, K. B., & Singletary, J. E. (2007). Family Violence in Congregations: An exploratory Study of Clergy's Needs. *Social Work & Christianity*, *34*(1), 18–46.

Horrigan-Kelly, M., Millar, M., & Dowling, M. (2016). Understanding the key tenets of Heidegger's philosophy for interpretive phenomenological research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406916680634.

Houston-Kolnik, J., & Todd, N. R. (2016). Examining the presence of congregational programs focused on violence against women. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 57*(3), 459-472.

Houston-Kolnik, J. D., Todd, N. R., & Greeson, M. R. (2019), Overcoming the "holy hush": A qualitative examination of Protestant Christian leaders' responses to intimate partner violence. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 63, 135-152.

Howard, L. M., Trevillion, K., Khalifeh, H., Woodall, A., Agnew-Davies, R., & Feder, G. (2010). Domestic violence and severe psychiatric disorders: Prevalence and interventions. *Psychological Medicine, 40*(6), 881-893.

Howard, L. M., Trevillion, K., & Agnew-Davies, R. (2010). Domestic violence and mental health. *International Review of Psychiatry, 22*(5), 525.

Jankowski, P. J., Sandage, S. J., Cornell, M. W., Bissonette, C., Johnson, A. J., Crabtree, S. A., & Jensen, M. L. (2018). Religious beliefs and domestic violence myths. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 10*(4), 386-397.

Jewkes, R. (2010). Emotional abuse: a neglected dimension of partner violence. *Lancet (London, England), 376*(9744), 851-852.

Jones, A. S., & Fowler, T. S. (2009). A faith community-domestic violence partnership. *Social Work and Christianity, 36*(4), 415-429.

Keener, C. S. (2014). *The IVP Bible background commentary - New Testament: New Testament*.

Kelly, P. E. (2010). *Transforming ministry model: Case study for spiritual healing for women who are victims of domestic violence.*

Kim, H. (2014). *Being abused by our Christian husbands: Violence against Korean American women.*

Kollar, C. A. (2011). *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling* (Updated and Expanded Version). Zondervan.

Korstjens, I., and Moser, A. (05 Dec 2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*. *24*(1). 120-124. https: doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092.

Knickmeyer, N., Levitt, H., & Horne, S. G. (2010). Putting on Sunday best: The silencing of battered women within Christian faith communities. Feminism & Psychology, 20(1), 94–113.

Kurian, G. T., & Day, S. C. (Eds.). (2017). *The essential handbook of denominations and ministries*. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Laniak, T. S. (2006). *Shepherds after my own heart*. InterVarsity Press.

Last, J. M. Ed. (2001). *A dictionary of epidemiology*, 4th edition. Oxford University Press.

Lawson, J. (2012). Sociological theories of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 22:5, 572-590, DOI: 10.1080/10911359.2011.598748.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2016). *Practical research: Planning and design* (11th ed.). Pearson. *ISBN: 978-9-3528-6194-1.*

Levitt, H. M., & Ware, K. N. (2006). Religious leaders' perspectives on marriage, divorce, and intimate partner violence. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30(2), 212–222.

Levitt, H. M., Swanger, R. T., & Butler, J. B. (2008). Male perpetrators' perspectives on intimate partner violence, religion, and masculinity. *Sex Roles*, 58(5–6), 435–448.

Livermore, D. (2015). *Leading with cultural intelligence*. AMACOM.

Mahoney, A., Abadi, L., and Pargament, K. I. (2015). Exploring women's spiritual struggles and resources to cope with intimate partner aggression. In *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*. Ed. A. J. Johnson. Springer, pp. 45-59.

Malphurs, A. (2003). *Being leaders*. Baker Books.

Malphurs, A. (2016). *Ministry nuts and bolts: What they don't teach pastors in seminary*. Kregel Publications.

McGregor, S. (2018). Reporting quantitative methods and mixed methods research. In *Understanding and evaluating research* (pp. 255-281). SAGE Publications, Inc. DOI: 10.4135/9781071802656.n10.

McMinn, M. R. (2011). *Psychology, theology, and spirituality in Christian counseling* (Revised and Updated Edition). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

McMullin, S. and N. Nason-Clark, (2011). Seminary students and domestic violence: Applying sociological research. In N. Nason-Clark, C. Clark Kroeger, and B. Fisher Townsend (Eds.) *Responding to abuse in Christian homes* (pp. 231– 246). Wipf and Stock.

McMullin, S. and N. Nason-Clark, (2013). Preparing seminaries for collaborative work. In N. Nason-Clark, B. Fisher-Townsend, and V. Fahlberg (Eds.) *Strengthening families and ending abuse*. Wipf and Stock.

McMullin, S., Nason-Clark, N., Fisher-Townsend, B., and Holtmann, C. (2015). When violence hits the religious home: Raising awareness about domestic violence in seminaries and among religious leaders. *Pastoral Care & Counseling*, 69(2), 113-124. DOI: 10.1177/1542305015586776.

Melick, R. R., Melick, S. and Melik, R. R., Jr. (2010). *Teaching That Transforms*. B&H Publishing Group.

Merkle, B. L. (2016). *Ephesians*.

Merriam, S. B., and Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Mijares, T. C. & Liedtke, R. (2007). Sager v. Woodland Park, *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, 7:1, 113-117, DOI: 10.1300/J173v07n01_07.

Miller, M. (1994). *Family violence: The compassionate church responds*. Herald Press.

Mogford, E., & Lyons, C. J. (2014). Village tolerance of abuse, women's status, and the ecology of intimate partner violence in rural Uttar Pradesh, India. *The Sociological Quarterly, 55*(4), 705-731. doi: http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/tsq.12067.

Moran, M., Flannelly, K. J., Weaver, A. J., Overvold, J. A., Hess, W., & Wilson, J. C. (2005). A study of pastoral care, referral, and consultation practices among clergy in four settings in the New York city area. *Pastoral Psychology, 53*(3), 255-266.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.

Nason-Clark, N. (1997). *The battered wife: How Christians confront family violence*. Knox.

Nason-Clark, N. (2004). When terror strikes at home: The interface between religion and domestic violence. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 43*(3), 303-310.

Nason-Clark, N. (2009). Christianity and the experience of domestic violence: What does faith have to do with it? *Social Work and Christianity, 36*(4), 379-393.

Nason-Clark, N. (2017). Last Sunday, domestic violence came to church. *Religion News Service*. Retrieved from https://religionnews.com/2017/11/10/last-sunday-domestic-violence-came-to-church/.

Nason-Clark, N., and Holtmann, C. (2013) Enlarging the sandbox: Thinking about cooperation and collaboration between diverse religious and secular community responses to domestic violence. In: Beaman, L., Sullivan, W. (eds) *Varieties of religious establishment*. Ashgate Press.

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). (2021). Domestic violence statistics. https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS.

National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2021). Retrieved from www.hotline.org.

Noll, M. A., Bebbington, D. W., & Marsden, G. M. (2019). *Evangelicals: Who they have been, are now, and could be: who they have been, are now, and could be*. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Pack, S. M. (2020). *Equipping Evangelical Leaders to Address Domestic Abuse in the Local Church*.

Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research 34*(5) Part II. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1089059/.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Petit, P. (2008). *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*. Kregel.

Pew Research Center. (2015). *America's changing religious landscape*. Demographic Study. Retrieved from https://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/.

Pietkiewicz, I. & Smith, J.A. (2012). A practical guide to using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Psychological Journal. 18*(2), 361-369.

Popescu, M., Drumm, R., Mayer, S., Cooper, L., Foster, T., & Dewan, S. (2009). "Because of my beliefs that I had acquired from the church…": Religious belief-based barriers for Adventist women in domestic violence relationships. Social Work & Christianity, 36(4), 394–414.

Pyles, L. (2007). The complexities of the religious response to domestic violence implications for Faith-Based Initiatives. *Affilia-journal of Women and Social Work*, 22. 281-291. 10.1177/0886109907302271.

Raufu, A. (2019). *The perception of religious leaders on intimate partner violence among Nigerian citizens in Houston, Texas*.

Reid, B. E. (2008). Women and Paul: Was Paul an egalitarian or a chauvinist? *American Magazine*. https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/675/article/women-and-paul.

Richards, L. O. and Bredfeldt, G. J. (1998). *Creative Bible Teaching*. Moody.

Roberts, M. D. (2016). *Ephesians*, edited by Scot McKnight, HarperCollins Christian Publishing.

Rupp, I. D. (1846). *Early history of western Pennsylvania: and of the West, and of western expeditions and campaigns, from MDCCLIV to MDCCCXXXIII*. Hickock & Kaufman. DOI: 31735054854686.

Safe Horizon. (2021). Domestic violence statistics and facts. https://www.safehorizon.org/get-informed/domestic-violence-statistics-facts/.

Sampson, S. J. (2011). *Leaders without titles: The six powerful attributes of those who influence without authority*. HRD Press. ISBN: 9781599962504.

Sanders, B. J. (2016). *Domestic violence training program among African American pastors and its effectiveness of promoting domestic violence awareness in the church.*

Sanders, J. O. (1994). *Spiritual Leadership*. Moody Press.

Schamp, L. (2010). An exploratory study of experiences of Christian therapists working with conservative Christian women experiencing intimate partner violence.

Shei, E. A. (2004). *Persuasion and church ministry as it relates to woman abuse: An evaluation of "No place for abuse" on the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of Asbury theological seminarians.*

Siew, Yau Man. (April 2013). Pastor as shepherd-teacher: Insiders' stories of pastoral and educational imagination. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*. *10*(1), 48-70. DOI: 10.1177/073989131301000104.

Smietana, B. (2018). Pastors more likely to address domestic violence, still lack training. LifeWay Research. https://lifewayresearch.com/2018/09/18/pastors-more-likely-to-address-domestic-violence-still-lack-training/.

Smith-Clark, D. (2016). *Beaten, battered, and bruised: A critical analysis of how Christian leaders and laity respond to domestic violence against women*.

Spencer-Sandolph, T. (2020). *African American pastoral response to domestic violence through collaborative relationships.*

Stanton, B. K. (2002). *Difficult decisions: Factors involved in the process of women leaving an abusive relationship.*

Stephens R., Walker D. (2015) Addressing Intimate Partner Violence in White Evangelical and Fundamentalist Churches. In: Johnson A. (eds) *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/978-1-4939-2266-6_13

Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. Falmer.

Thompson, R. S., Bonomi, A. E., Anderson, M., Reid, R. J., Dimer, J. A., Carrell, D., & Rivara, F. P. (2006). Intimate partner violence: prevalence, types, and chronicity in adult women. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 30*(6), 447-457.

Towns, E. (2007). *Core Christianity.* AMG Publishers.

Turpin, G., Barley, V., Beail, N., Scaife, J., Slade, P., Smith, J.A., Walsh, S. (1997). Standards for research projects and theses involving qualitative methods: suggested guidelines for trainees and courses. *Clinical Psychology Forum*, 108, 3-7.

van Manen, M. (2014). Phenomenology of practice. Routledge.

van Manen, M. (1997). Researching lived experience. Routledge.

Verhey, A., & Harvard, J. (2012). *Ephesians* (First edition.). Westminster John Knox Press.

Violence Prevention. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/.

Vos, H. F. (2019). *Genesis- Everyday Bible commentary*, Moody Publishers.

Walker, C. D. (2014). *Silence is no longer an option a pastoral response to domestic violence.*

Ware, K. N., Levitt, H. M., & Bayer, G. (2004). May God help you: Faith leaders' perspectives of intimate partner violence within their communities. *Journal of Religion & Abuse, 5*(2), 55-81. doi:10.1300/J154v05n02_04.

Weaver, A. J., Koenig, H. G., & Larson, D. B. (1997). Marriage and family therapists and the clergy: A need for clinical collaboration, training, and research. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *23*(1), 13-25.

Whitaker, M. P. (2013). Centrality of control-seeking in men's intimate partner violence perpetration. *Prevention Science, 14*(5), 513-523.

Whitaker, D. J., Baker, C. K., Pratt, C., Reed, E., Suri, S., Pavlos, C., Nagv, B. J., and Silverman, J. (2007). A network model for providing culturally competent services for intimate partner violence and sexual violence. *Violence Against Women, 13*(2), 190-209.

Wilhoit, J. C. and Dettoni, J. M. (1995). *Nurture that is Christian*. Victor Books.

Wise, A. (1983). Educational Adequacy: A Concept in Search of Meaning. *Journal of Education Finance, 8*(3), 300-315.

Woodruff, W. J. (1997). Elwell, W. A. (Ed.). "Entry for 'Covetousness'". "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology".

Yoder, K. (2013). *Churches addressing domestic violence: The spaces between discourse and identity* (Doctoral dissertation).

Yoshioka, M. R., & Choi, D. Y. (2005). Culture and interpersonal violence research: Paradigm shift to create a full continuum of domestic violence services. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 20*(4), 513-519. doi:10.1177/0886260504267758.

Zust, B. L., Housley, J., & Klatke, A. (2017). Evangelical Christian pastors' lived experience of counseling Victims/Survivors of domestic violence. *Pastoral Psychology, 66*(5), 675-687. doi:10.1007/s11089-017-0781-1.

## APPENDIX A: SCREENING SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Name:
2. Contact Information:
3. Do you identify as evangelical?
4. Did you complete seminary training?
5. If so, what seminary did you attend?
6. What did you attain your degree in?
7. How many years have you pastored?
8. How many years have you pastored in southwestern Pennsylvania?
9. Do you recall having any training in ministering to domestic violence survivors while in seminary?
10. Would you be willing to talk further about that training?
11. Would you be willing to share with the researcher what experience, if any, you have had with ministering to congregants impacted by domestic violence?
12. Would you be willing to share with the researcher written or electronic documents that outline your church's domestic violence prevention/treatment program or policies?
13. Race
14. Age
15. Denomination
16. Size of congregation being pastored.
17. Gender
18. County of pastoral service.

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

1. Participants will be notified about confidentiality measures, asked to sign agreeing to terms, and asked to submit those releases via email prior to the interview.
2. Release forms agreeing to video recording of the interviews will also sent, signed, and collected before the interview process.
3. Participants will be asked to have this interview in a place that is comfortable for them where there will little to no outside interference for the duration. If the participant chooses to do interviews via Zoom, the participants and the interviewer must agree to do so in an atmosphere free of distraction.
4. The researcher will maintain professionalism and will be sensitive to the demeanor and responses of the participants, watching for cues of uneasiness, frustration, trauma, etc.
5. The goal of this researcher is to cause no harm to the participant in the process of this research. Domestic violence is a sensitive subject that can sometimes elicit harsh feelings and responses. The researcher must be diligent to ensure that any trauma responses that come from the participants are dealt with in the moment and interviewing stopped if it becomes clear that the participant is being negatively affected by the questions.
6. Interviews will be open-ended and conversational and will last an hour and a half to two hours.

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain what adequacy means.
2. Tell me about a time when you dealt with a situation with a congregant and felt adequate to handle it well.
    a. Prompt 1: what kind of situation was it?
    b. Prompt 2: explain the situation including your personal thoughts and feelings about the situation, the outcome, and the long-term impact for the congregant.
    c. Prompt 3: what was adequate about your performance in this ministry opportunity?
    d. Prompt 4: did you have specified training in this area of ministry?
3. Tell me about a time when you dealt with a situation with a congregant and felt inadequate to handle it well.
    a. Prompt 1: what kind of situation was it?
    b. Prompt 2: explain the situation including your personal thoughts and feelings about the situation, the outcome, and the long-term impact for the congregant.
    c. Prompt 3: what was adequate about your performance in this ministry opportunity?
    d. Prompt 4: what specified training in this area of ministry had you previously received?
4. What effect, if any, do you think your own perceptions of adequacy have impacted your ministry to others?
5. How do you believe the situation you shared in which you felt adequate for the ministry affected your future ministry in that area?

   a. Prompt 1: how did that perception of adequacy increase or decrease future feelings of adequacy?
   b. Prompt 2: were there sermons developed on the topic?
   c. Prompt 3: what, if any, educational opportunities for others came from this experience? Where other leaders educated? Congregants?
   d. Prompt 4: how did the experience impact specialized care in that area of ministry? What, if any, programs, and policies developed from this experience?
6. How do you believe the situation you shared in which you felt inadequate for the ministry affected your future ministry in that area?
   a. Prompt 1: how did that perception of inadequacy increase or decrease future feelings of inadequacy?
   b. Prompt 2: were there sermons developed on the topic?
   c. Prompt 3: what, if any, educational opportunities for others came from this experience? Where other leaders educated? Congregants?
   d. Prompt 4: how did the experience impact specialized care in that area of ministry? What, if any, programs, and policies developed from this experience?
7. Tell me about your experiences with domestic violence education.
   a. Prompt 1: What, if anything, do you remember learning in seminary about this topic?
   b. Prompt 2: How much time do you remember spending in coursework on this topic?
   c. Prompt 3: How many classes do you remember taking that dealt with the subject of domestic violence?

   d. Prompt 4: What, if anything, do you remember from those classes?
   e. Prompt 5: What do you believe the Bible says about domestic violence?

8. Tell me about your experience with domestic violence.
   a. Prompt 1: Can you share a personal experience with DV?
   b. Prompt 2: Tell me about a situation you have faced ministerially that involved DV without giving real names of the people involved.
   c. Prompt 3: What feelings of adequacy do you remember dealing with in that scenario?
   d. Prompt 4: What biblical guidance did you give during that experience?
9. Describe any practical application you have had in your training.
   a. Prompt 1: What kind of education was this?
   b. Prompt 2: What school or training program did you attend?
   c. Prompt 3: Tell me anything else you remember about this educational experience, including personal perceptions of adequacy in this area of training.
10. Describe any practical application training you had that was specific to domestic violence.
   a. Prompt 1: What kind of education was this?
   b. Prompt 2: What school or training program did you attend?
   c. Prompt 3: Tell me anything else you remember about this educational experience, including personal perceptions of adequacy in this area of training.
11. Explain your thoughts on continuing education.
   a. Prompt 1: How do you feel about it?
   b. Prompt 2: Where would you go for it?

   c. Prompt 3: What other resources exist in your community that might offer solutions for continuing education needs?

12. Explain resources available in your community to service the needs of congregants impacted by DV.
    a. Prompt 1: What are your feelings about these programs?
    b. Prompt 2: What are your feelings about collaborating with these agencies and community programs?
    c. Prompt 3: Who is on your list for referring congregants?

## APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

1. Confidentiality is vital, so only the researcher, the respondent, and the respondent's staff (if deemed appropriate and necessary to the comfort and every-day working style of the respondent) will have access to information about interview date, time, and location.
2. Interruptions must be avoided. Of course, emergencies do arise, but uninterrupted interviewing is desired.
3. The researcher will be gregarious and comforting to the participant.
4. Facial expressions, body language, and verbal responses to participant answers or stories will be kept to a minimum to avoid positive or negative affirmations that might impact participant responses.
5. Field notes will be taken, but only minimally as the researcher will be intent on listening to and engaging in conversational type interviewing while watching for observable facial and bodily cues from the participant.
6. The researcher will also be sensitive to any observable cues that suggest the participant is having a trauma response to the questioning or the re-telling of the lived experience. If noted, the researcher will stop the interview and refer the participant to counseling resources.

## APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT REFERRALS

Participants of this study will be offered follow-up support should any issues result from the study itself. A list of local resources including domestic violence agencies, counselors, and other support services will be made available to each participant. The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides hotline services 24 hours a day and seven days a week. This agency can connect participants with resources, refer to counselors in the immediate area of the caller, and offer a listening ear to those in crisis. The number for that agency is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or they can be reached through www.thehotline.org. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is also available for those that might be negatively impacted through this study. Their number is 1-800-273-8255. This group is also available 24 hours a day seven days a week for anyone having suicidal thoughts or ideations. Prior to interviewing, the researcher will locate counseling services for referral purposes that are local to the pastors participating. Those services cannot be identified until after the final sample pool is chosen. This researcher, Paula King Millsaps, will have no affiliation with any of the recommended service providers on either a personal or professional basis.

## APPENDIX F: TEN CHARACTERISTICS FOR ACCREDITATION OF SEMINARIES

1. “theological missions that are achieved with institutional integrity” (p. 1).
2. “institutional visions that inform thoughtful planning grounded in ongoing evaluation” (p. 2).
3. “student learning and formation [that is] [c]onsistent with their missions and religious identities” (p. 3).
4. “offering master’s degrees that are appropriate to their missions, constituencies, and capacities and that meet all applicable degree program requirements” (p. 5).
5. “doctoral degrees appropriate to their missions, constituencies, and capacities and that meet all applicable degree program requirements” (p. 7).
6. Being “grounded in the historical resources of the tradition, the scholarship of the academic disciplines, and the wisdom of communities of practice” (p. 10).
7. “students and on serving them well” (p. 11).
8. “a qualified, supported, and effective faculty of sufficient size and diversity to achieve schools’ educational missions and support student learning and formation” (p. 13).
9. Being “governed by those with authority to ensure schools meet their missions with educational quality and financial sustainability” (p. 15).
10. Being “reliant upon sufficient and stable resources to achieve their missions” (p. 17).

## APPENDIX G: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR TEN COUNTIES IN SW PA

1. Allegheny county has a population of 1.22 million people with a median age of 40.5 years old and a median household income of $59,899. This southwestern Pennsylvania county has a poverty rate of 12.1%. The population consists of 78.2% White (Non-Hispanics), 12.8% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 3.95% Asian (Non-Hispanics), and 2.18% Hispanics. Of these people groups, there were 93.5 thousand students graduating from universities that are 73% White, 9.03% Black or African American, 6.71% Asian, and 4.98% Unknown with females getting degrees 0.816 times more often than men. Homeownership is at 65.1% while the national average is at 63.9% (DataUSA, 2020).
2. Armstrong county has a population of 64.4 thousand people. 99.9% are US citizens that are made up of 97.2% White (Non-Hispanics), 0.742% Hispanic, 1.1% Black or African American (non-Hispanics), and 1% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics). This county has a median household income of $49,032 with a median age of 46.3 and a poverty rating of 11.7%. There are 176 students in 2018 made up of 90.3% women and 9.7% men of which 95.1% are White (Non-Hispanics), 2.91% are Black (Non-Hispanics), and 1.94% are Multiracial (Non-Hispanics). Homeownership is at 76.3% (DataUSA, 2020).
3. Beaver county has a population of 166.9 thousand people with a median age of 45.1 and a median household income of $55,828. The poverty rate is 10.9%. The population is 89.6% White (Non-Hispanic), 5.83 Black or African American (Non-Hispanic), 2.34% Multiracial (Non-Hispanic), 1.52% Hispanic, and 0.51% Asian (Non-Hispanic). There are 5,018 students in Beaver County with 53.2% female and 46.8% male that are 83.3% White (Non-Hispanics), 8.73% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 2.66% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics), and 2.37% Unknowns. Homeownership is 73.3% (Data USA, 2020).

4. Cambria county has a population of 134,550 comprised of 92.8% White (Non-Hispanics), 3.15% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 1.72% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics), and 1.58% Hispanics. The median age is 45.1, the median household income is $45,901, and the poverty rate is 15.4%. There are 10,618 students comprised of 57.7% females and 42.3% males which are 83.9% Whit (Non-Hispanics), 7.15% Unknowns, 3.63% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics) and 2.44% Hispanics or Latinos. Homeownership is 74% (DataUSA, 2020).
5. Fayette county has a population of 132,289 people. There is a median age of 44.8 years old in this county, a poverty rate of 17.7%, and a median household income of $44,476. The population is made up of 91.9% White (Non-Hispanics), 3.87% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 2.44% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics), and 1.14% Hispanics. There are 1,058 students with 63.5% being women and 36.5% being men and 90.7% of them being White (Non-Hispanics), 5.29% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 1.85% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics), and 1.06% Hispanics or Latinos. Homeownership in is 73.9% (DataUSA, 2020).
6. Greene county is populated by 37.1 thousand people that are 93.5% White (Non-Hispanics), 3.03% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 1.48% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics), 1.51% Hispanics, and 0.334% Asian (Non-Hispanics). They have a median age of 42 and a median income of $54,121 with a poverty rate of 14.2%. There are 1,761 students with 39.1% men and 60.9% women comprised of 94.6% White (Non-Hispanics), 3.35% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 0.559% Hispanics, and 0.559% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics). Homeownership is 74.1% (DataUSA, 2020).

7. Indiana county is populated by 85,755 people that are 93.9% White (Non-Hispanics), 2.12% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 1.34% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics), 1.29% Hispanics, and 0.98% Asian (Non-Hispanics). They have a median age of 39.8 and a median income of $46.877 with a poverty rate of 16.8%. There are 13,025 students with 43.9% men and 56.1% women comprised of 82.6% White (Non-Hispanics), 7.17% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), 3.22% Hispanics, and 2.9% Multiracial (Non-Hispanics). Homeownership is 70.3% (DataUSA, 2020).
8. Somerset county has a population of 74,949 people with a median age of 45.9 and a median household income of $48,224. The poverty rate is 12.4%. The population is 94.4% White (Non-Hispanic), 2.47% Black or African American (Non-Hispanic), 1.12% Multiracial (Non-Hispanic), 1.47% Hispanic, and 0.4% Asian (Non-Hispanic). There are 70 students with 75.7% female and 24.3% male that are 100% White (Non-Hispanics). Homeownership is 78.2% (Data USA, 2020).
9. Washington county has a population of 207,547 people with a median age of 44.5 and a median household income of $61,567. The poverty rate is 9.27%. The population is 92.3% White (Non-Hispanic), 3.01% Black or African American (Non-Hispanic), 1.94% Multiracial (Non-Hispanic), 1.65% Hispanic, and 0.88% Asian (Non-Hispanic). There are 9,593 university students with 55.9% female and 44.1% male that are 83.2% White (Non-Hispanics), 7.74% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), and 2.89% Hispanics. Homeownership is 75.6% (Data USA, 2020).
10. Westmoreland county has a population of 350,611 people with a median age of 47.4 and a median household income of $58,471. The poverty rate is 10%. The population is 94.3% White (Non-Hispanic), 2.24% Black or African American (Non-Hispanic), 1.45%

Multiracial (Non-Hispanic), and 0.85% Asian (Non-Hispanic). There are 12,222 university students with 57.8% female and 42.2% male that are 89.8% White (Non-Hispanics), 3.41% Black or African American (Non-Hispanics), and 1.7% Multiracial (Non-Hispanic). Homeownership is 76.6% (Data USA, 2020).

# APPENDIX H: RESOURCES FOR PASTORS AND LEADERS

## Tools for Creating Programs

Connecting to those resources, knowing what resources are available and how to refer congregants, and establishing relationship with a group of professionals outside of the church can be daunting for pastors that may not know where to start looking. In rural communities, there may be little access to resources and even less to resources that are Christian in nature. Many researchers and writers have produced excellent materials that will help pastors navigate these uncomfortable waters by giving pointers about how to access local DV agencies, find posters and other resources that can be displayed to give potential survivors the opportunity to connect to resources without anyone else knowing, and tools to help pastors develop plans of action and programs within the church that can be used when needed to help people experiencing family abuse trauma. This section will present some of those resources that pastors can look to for help.

### *Resource Materials*

Clark Kroeger and Nason-Clark (2001) released a book titled, *No Place for Abuse*. In it the authors dive into theological misconceptions that feed the monster of DV. These writers, after years of research in the field, put together this resource manual that assists pastors in evaluating personal biases and preconceived ideologies that might contribute to an abuse perpetuation. These authors also provide appendices full of scriptural principles that forbid abuse, Scriptures that can be utilized to comfort survivors, sermon possibilities, intervention tips and pointers, and educational resources for classes and small Bible study groups. This book would be an excellent resource for pastors of all levels of understanding about DV issues.

Another excellent book that will help pastors by giving an easily accessible guide that explains everything from signs and symptoms of abuse to ways to begin to build referral

connections with outside agencies that can help is *The Domestic Violence Sourcebook: Everything You Need to Know* (Berry, 1998). While this source is a little older than most other sources referenced in this work, this sourcebook was found to be a wonderful wealth of knowledge about DV issues, ways to build bridges in the community, and methods for how pastors can develop programs specific to the needs of each individual congregation (Berry, 1998).

Gallet (2017) created a bulletin for use in Australian churches. While her bulletin is only usable in Australia, a pastor could use it as a template for developing a flyer or bulletin with demographics according to nation, state, county, or city of origin. These types of flyers can be folded and passed out with church programs. They can also be put up in restrooms, lobbies, and other areas of the church to bring awareness and acknowledgement of the problem. Congregants can all look at them and learn the warning signs to look for, steps for dealing with possible abuse, and resource lists for who to call can be posted. Researchers suggest that congregational support is crucial in the success of healing for DV survivors. A community of love can ease some of the difficulties associated with this circumstance of life (Gallet, 2017).

### *Ministry Models*

There are a few models that this research found that could serve as a source of inspiration or replication in any congregation anywhere in the world if cultural intelligence questions are considered while adapting them. Highlighted are two such models that showed promise.

**Set Free Ministries.** Danielson, Lucas, Malinowski, and Pittman (2009) agree with Gallet (2017) about the importance of congregational support to the success of families transitioning out of and those currently living in DV households. These researchers developed a comprehensive ministry model, applied it at a church in Chicago, IL, and reported testimonies of

the successes. This program, *Set Free Ministries*, began by receiving instruction from another nonprofit ministry, Focus Ministries, which specializes in domestic violence training in church settings. Focus Ministries domestic violence training is a two-day training seminar that presents basic facts, signs, and procedures for DV care. Once the pastors were educated, congregants were brought in and educated as well. Prayer was offered as was a hotline among other services including physical safety protocols, spiritual counseling guidelines, and more. This program is one that could be easily tailored to an individual congregation and flourish (Danielson et al, 2009).

**Transforming Ministry Model.** Kelly (2010) takes a different approach homing in on the emotional and spiritual healing of those impacted by domestic abuse. In this model, community still plays a vital role but in the context of an 8-week long small group meeting that can be likened to group pastoral counseling. Sharing of testimonies in group settings and daily devotionals that culminate in small teachings each weekly meeting worked together to produce tremendous healing in the lives of participants. Pastors could use this model and easily adapt it to the needs of the congregation being served as questions and methods are explained and followable (Kelly, 2010).

**Development of Policies.** Green (2015) suggests the importance of pastors developing, establishing, and implementing domestic violence policies specific to the congregational needs of each pastor. In Assisting Religious Institutions in Creating a Domestic Violence Policy, Green (2015) delves into several policies addressing domestic violence that exist in the marketplace. The author postulates that the church should policies in place as well so that everyone in the church knows what to look for and how to respond. Green (2015) suggests taking the templates of marketplace policies and crafting them to fit the needs of the church. This is a wonderful tool

for pastors as every church should have its own policies tailored to its own needs in place (Green, 2015).

## APPENDIX I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PASTORS SURVEYED FOR THE TEN COUNTIES OF SW PA

**Table 6**

*Sampling Results for Allegheny County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assemblies Of God | 1 | 1 | 1 | 38 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Baptist | 2 | 1 | 2 | 63 | 2-Male | 1-African American 1-Caucasian |
| Christian Missionary Alliance | 2 | 1 | 1 | 49 | 2-Male | 2-Caucasian |
| Lutheran | 3 | 3 | 2 | 41 | 2-Male 1-Female | 3-Caucasian |
| Methodist | 4 | 3 | 1 | 48.25 | 3-Male 1-Female | 4-Caucasian |
| Non-Denominational | 1 | 0 | 1 | 66 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 12 | 10 | 2 | 48.67 | 6-Male 6-Female | 12-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 25 | 19 | 10 | 50.56 | 17-Male 8-Female | 1-African American 24-Caucasian |

**Table 7**

*Sampling Results for Armstrong County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baptist | 1 | 1 | 1 | 63 | 1-Male | 1-African American |
| Methodist | 2 | 2 | 2 | 52.5 | 1-Male 1-Female | 2-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 2 | 2 | 0 | 49.5 | 1-Male 1-Female | 2-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 5 | 5 | 3 | 55 | 3-Male 2-Female | 1-African American 4-Caucasian |

**Table 8**

*Sampling Results for Beaver County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christian Missionary Alliance | 1 | 1 | 1 | 58 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Methodist | 4 | 4 | 4 | 55.25 | 3-Male 1-Female | 4-Caucasian |
| Non-Denominational | 1 | 0 | 1 | 55 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 6 | 5 | 6 | 56.083 | 5-Male 1-Female | 6-Caucasian |

**Table 9**

*Sampling Results for Cambria County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lutheran | 1 | 1 | 0 | 70 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Methodist | 2 | 2 | 2 | 60.5 | 2-Male | 2-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 3 | 3 | 0 | 57 | 3-Male | 3-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 6 | 5 | 6 | 56.083 | 6-Male | 6-Caucasian |

**Table 10**

*Sampling Results for Fayette County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assemblies Of God | 1 | 1 | 1 | 49 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Baptist | 2 | 1 | 2 | 59.5 | 2-Male | 2-Caucasian |
| Church of God | 1 | 0 | 1 | 71 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Community of Christ | 1 | 1 | 0 | 64 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Lutheran | 2 | 2 | 2 | 43 | 2-Male | 2-Caucasian |
| Methodist | 3 | 3 | 2 | 64.67 | 3-Male | 3-Caucasian |
| Non-Denominational | 1 | 0 | 1 | 59 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 1 | 1 | 0 | 39 | 1-Female | 1-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 12 | 9 | 9 | 56.146 | 11-Male 1-Female | 12-Caucasian |

**Table 11**

*Sampling Results for Greene County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Denominational | 2 | 0 | 2 | 46 | 2-Male | 2-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 3 | 3 | 0 | 49.33 | 1-Male 2-Female | 3-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 5 | 3 | 2 | 47.665 | 3-Male 2-Female | 5-Caucasian |

**Table 12**

*Sampling Results for Indiana County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lutheran | 1 | 1 | 0 | 31 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 2 | 2 | 0 | 53.5 | 2-Male | 1-Latino<br>1-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 3 | 3 | 0 | 42.25 | 3-Male | 1-Latino<br>2-Caucasian |

**Table 13**

*Sampling Results for Somerset County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baptist | 1 | 1 | 1 | 69 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Lutheran | 3 | 3 | 3 | 47.33 | 1-Male<br>2-Female | 3-Caucasian |
| Methodist | 3 | 3 | 3 | 44.5 | 3-Male | 3-Caucasian |
| Nazarene | 1 | 1 | 1 | 45 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 2 | 2 | 0 | 60 | 2-Male | 2-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 10 | 10 | 8 | 53.166 | 8-Male<br>2-Female | 10-<br>Caucasian |

**Table 14**

*Sampling Results for Washington County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assemblies Of God | 2 | 0 | 2 | 47 | 2-Male | 2-Caucasian |
| Baptist | 3 | 2 | 3 | 53.67 | 3-Male | 3-Caucasian |
| Lutheran | 1 | 1 | 0 | 37 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Non-Denominational | 6 | 0 | 6 | 34 | 5-Male 1-Female | 1-African American 5-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 3 | 2 | 1 | 53.33 | 3-Male | 3-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 15 | 5 | 12 | 45 | 14-Male 1-Female | 1-African American 14-Caucasian |

**Table 15**

*Sampling Results for Westmoreland County*

| Denomination | Respondents | Seminary | Evangelical | Age | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baptist | 1 | 1 | 1 | 62 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Church of God | 1 | 0 | 1 | 68 | 1-Male | 1-Caucasian |
| Lutheran | 2 | 2 | 2 | 59 | 2-Male | 2-Caucasian |
| Methodist | 3 | 2 | 3 | 44.67 | 3-Male | 3-Caucasian |
| Non-Denominational | 2 | 0 | 2 | 60.5 | 2-Male | 1-African American 1-Caucasian |
| Presbyterian | 7 | 3 | 2 | 60.429 | 6-Male 1-Female | 7-Caucasian |
| TOTALS | 16 | 8 | 11 | 56.146 | 15-Male 1-Female | 1-African American 15-Caucasian |

## APPENDIX J: TABLES 14-16 SHOWING SUBTHEME OCCURRENCE FREQUENCIES AMONG PASTORS

**Table 16**

*Adequacy Subthemes and Their Frequencies Verified by Researcher, Second Coder, and NVivo*

| Subthemes by Parent Code: Adequacy | Number of Pastor Interviews Where Code is Found | Number of References to Subtheme |
|---|---|---|
| Protective | 8 | 30 |
| Frustration | 4 | 31 |
| Boundaries | 8 | 69 |
| Government | 4 | 16 |
| General Adequacy | 9 | 69 |
| Seminary | 9 | 4 |
| Continuing Education | 9 | 50 |

**Table 17**

*Theology Subthemes and Their Frequencies Verified by Researcher, Second Coder and NVivo*

| Subthemes by Parent Code Theology and Beliefs | Number of Pastor Interviews Where Code is Found | Number of References to Subtheme |
|---|---|---|
| The Lord Does These Things | 7 | 17 |
| Motivation | 9 | 29 |
| Ministry of Presence | 9 | 57 |
| Theology/Beliefs | 9 | 110 |
| Men Are Geared This Way | 5 | 20 |

**Table 18**

*Abuse Subthemes and Their Frequencies Verified by Researcher, Second Coder and NVivo*

| Subthemes by Parent Code Abuse | Number of Pastor Interviews Where Code is Found | Number of References to Subtheme |
|---|---|---|
| Verbal Abuse | 5 | 27 |
| Domestic Violence | 9 | 110 |
| Abuse | 9 | 137 |

## APPENDIX K: COMMUNITY RESOURCE LIST FROM JEFFERSON HOSPITAL

https://jeffersonrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/JeffersonCommunityDirectory2018_Interactive.pdf

# APPENDIX L: DENOMINATIONAL LITERATURE ON DV

## United Methodist Denomination

1- https://www.umc.org/en/content/domestic-violence-we-want-our-churches-to-be-talking-about-it

2- UMC Justice: https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/12

3- The Nurturing Community: https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/the-nurturing-community-161/the-nurturing-community-family-violence-and-abuse-161-h

4- Methodist UK taking action against domestic violence: https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1125/safe-update-6-1110-domestic-abuse-guidelines.pdf

5- Domestic Violence Awareness Month: https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/domestic-violence-awareness-month

6- Articulating Our Theology: Domestic Violence Webinar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-BJNugdQqo

7- Conference Personal Conduct/Sexual Ethics Policy: https://ntcumc.org/Sexual_Ethics_Policy_9-2019.pdf

8- Amend Together curriculum: https://www.umnews.org/en/news/united-methodist-men-takes-on-domestic-violence

9- https://www.gcumm.org/files/uploads/AmendingthroughFaithFlyer2018.pdf

10- https://www.gcumm.org/gender-based-violence

11- United Methodist Women: includes poster for Domestic Violence: https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/domestic-violence

12- Resources for Shedding Light on Domestic Violence: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/resources-for-shedding-light-on-domestic-violence

**Presbyterian Church USA**

1- Study Paper on Domestic Violence: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/phewa/pdfs/9bpadvn-2013_packet-litany_&_worship_aids-rebecca_booth_lawson-092013-10.pdf

2- Service Outlines Addressing Domestic Violence: https://www.pcusa.org/resource/study-paper-family-violence/

3- Sermon: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/domestic-violence-sermon1.pdf

**Evangelical Lutheran Church Association**

1- http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Violence_Theology_Booklet.pdf

**American Baptist Denomination**

1- Policy Statement on Violence: https://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/VIOLENCE.pdf

2- Policy on Family Life: https://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Family-Life.pdf

3- Resolution on Family Violence: https://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Family-Violence.pdf. Note: This includes an action plan that urges churches to educate themselves as to prevent family violence.

4- The ABWM (American Baptist Women's Ministries) did a virtual training in Sept. 2020 as part of their work to bring awareness about Domestic Violence. Article about training: https://www.abc-usa.org/2020/09/american-baptist-womens-ministries-hosts-a-virtual-domestic-violence-prevention-and-education-training/