

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Counseling by Default: A Study of Pastoral Burnout Among Liberian Pastors**

A Thesis Project Submitted to  
the Faculty of the School of Divinity  
In fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of  
the Doctor of Ministry Degree

Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries

by  
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**Thesis Project Approval Sheet**

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Many Liberians turn to their pastors for help before considering going to a professional counselor. Pastoral counseling in Africa, especially in Liberia, is framed within African life and thought based on appropriate backgrounds that are evident in cultural assumptions and practices. Hence, pastoral counseling in Liberia assumes a cultural background central to the holistic Christian life that connects all dimensions of one's social and spiritual life. Thus, the Liberian view of pastoral counseling is distinctly African, with a unique blend of noticeable Liberian values, traditions, and cultural practices based on a combination of its American and indigenous African heritage. The researcher used Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) and an anonymous pastoral counseling survey to perform a research study of 12 pastors from Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Kakata, Liberia. The study found that Liberian pastors, who counsel by default, at UCC, believe it takes too much time to do pastoral counseling in addition to other pastoral duties. This study concluded that Liberian pastors, who perform counseling by default are not educated in counseling, adequately trained, or equipped to conduct pastoral counseling and are more likely to experience burnout.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Over the years, the role of pastors (the clergy), like any other profession, has been changing; the church's work is endless.<sup>1</sup> Hence, most pastors have fallen into a messiah complex; the pastor who has this complex belief firmly "I can do anything better than anybody else or "I must be the one to do it."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, a pastor's work is not only an endless task, but it is also repetitive.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, pastors may experience stress and burnout. However, pastors, like all other human services workers, can stave off burnout.<sup>4</sup>

Mindfulness and Christian spirituality are useful tools for preventing or coping with burnout and compassion fatigue.<sup>5</sup> As such, one of the things that happen when pastors experience burnout is that they have a diminished sense of personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization.<sup>6</sup> Most pastors exercise their ministry in congregations; many pastors also work as chaplains or administrators in a variety of settings such as schools, aged care, prisons, and church or community agencies; therefore, many pastors are involved in networks of working relationships with individuals, families, communities, and institutional church hierarchy.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William H. Willimon, *Clergy and Laity Burnout*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Yong Won Lee, "Pastor and Stress," *Ministry and Theology* (November 1993), 116.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Short. *The Time Management for Minister*. Park, Doo Heon Tran. Seoul: Togijangi Publishers, 1994, 32-34.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas V. Frederick. Scott Dunbar, and Yvonne Thai. "Burnout in Christian Perspective." *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (06, 2018): 267-76.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Fallon, Barry, Simon Rice, and Joan Wright Howie. "Factors that Precipitate and Mitigate Crises in Ministry." *Pastoral Psychology* 62, no. 1 (02, 2013): 27-40.



Deeply rooted within each of the relationships mentioned above are “complex expectations about how the role will be fulfilled encompassing denominational, community, divine, and self-expectations; thus, the pastor’s theological framework, training, styles of operating, and priorities often determine how they fulfill their pastoral ministry.”<sup>8</sup> Predictably the expectations will not always be in accord, and conflict will arise.<sup>9</sup> However, pastors must consider the aforementioned complex expectations to prevent burnout in successfully fulfilling their pastoral ministry.

Burnout is a global problem that has been attributed to perceived high workloads, inadequate communication, demanding physical conditions, lack of managerial support, conflicting values, absence of fairness, low financial compensation, a decline of the available workforce, and breakdown of community.<sup>10</sup> Even though many studies have found a high rate of depression in the clergy, the degree of work-related burnout in pastors (clergy) compared to other occupations is unknown.<sup>11</sup> Pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) work long hours and can experience stress and burnout. The daily pressures of ministry can sometimes overwhelm pastors because a pastor’s work is an endless and repetitive task.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Fallon et al., Barry. “*Crises in Ministry*.”

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas V. Frederick, Scott Dunbar, and Yvonne Thai. “Burnout in Christian Perspective.” *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (06, 2018): 267-76.

<sup>11</sup> Adams, Christopher J., Holly Hough, Rae Proeschold-bell, Jia Yao, and Melanie Kolkin. “Clergy Burnout: A Comparison Study with Other Helping Professions.” *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 2 (04, 2017): 147-75.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Short, *Time Management for Ministers* (Seoul: Togijangi Publishers, 1994)32-34.

Pastors are much more likely to find joy and capacity in counseling and emotional care when they have a sense of calling to those portions of their careers.<sup>13</sup> Pastoral ministry is a lot of work. A large part of the challenge is that pastors carry a great deal of responsibility in congregations where there are multiple competing expectations of the pastor's role.<sup>14</sup> As such, the pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) may need to avoid occupational stress to reduce the possibility of burnout.

Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) pastors have multiple roles and must do counseling for their church members and local communities because of necessity.<sup>15</sup> There is often no professional counseling in these local communities. Hence, these pastors feel a sense of calling in their roles as counselors.<sup>16</sup> Pastors who counsel by default sometimes address the spiritual and their congregations' natural or emotional needs.<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding, there is real joy in ministry, not mere job satisfaction.<sup>18</sup> According to Herbert J. Freudenberger, burnout is the state of weariness and frustration experienced when someone did not get the expected results despite his self-sacrifice in some thought, related to life's journey.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson. *That Their Work May Be a Joy: Understanding and Coping with Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers), 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Unity Light Ministries, International website. <https://www.unitylightministries.org/Pastoral-Counseling>. (Accessed October 10, 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson. *That Their Work May Be a Joy: Understanding and Coping with Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers), 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Payne, Jennifer Shepard. "it's Kind of a Dichotomy": Thoughts Related to Calling and Purpose from Pastors Working and Counseling in Urban Resource-Poor Communities." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 4 (08, 2017): 1419-35.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Herbert J. Freudenberger, *Burnout: The High Cost of High Achievement*. (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1980), 13.

Chronic excessive stress can become the cause of burnout.<sup>20</sup> If pastors do not take an appropriate countermeasure, it will lead to sickly melancholia.<sup>21</sup> Pastors comprise one of the helping groups that are especially prone to burnout due to excessive time demands, unrealistic expectations, isolation, and loneliness.<sup>22</sup> Clergy experienced many stressors in their work, including role overload and emotional labor.<sup>23</sup> Clergy that suffered from burnout faced personal and professional complications.<sup>24</sup>

Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) pastors perform pastoral counseling for church members and their local communities.<sup>25</sup> Thus, pastors serving as counselors by default may be exposed to higher levels of stress on their jobs because of regularity and stress-related physiological arousal.<sup>26</sup> Clergy members suffering from burnout will potentially diminish their capacity to lead their congregation, for which they may experience decreased motivation and desire to serve.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Frank Minirth, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flournoy, *How to Beat Burnout*, Hyeo Joo Choi, trans. (Seoul: logos Co., 1997), 15-16.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Diane J. Chandler. "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support System Practices," *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (06, 2009): 273-87, 273.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher J Adams, Holly Hough, Rae Proeschold-bell, Jia Yao, and Melanie Kolkin, "Clergy Burnout: A Comparison Study with Other Helping Professions." *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 2 (04, 2017): 147-75, 147.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph D. Visker, Taylor Rider, and Anastasia Humphers-Ginther, "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 3 (06, 2017): 951-61.

<sup>25</sup> Unity Light Ministries, International website. <https://www.unitylightministries.org/Pastoral-Counseling>. (Accessed October 10, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Visker, "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress".

Pastors (Clergy) may drain their emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical energy reserves, which impairs their overall effectiveness.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the pressure to meet the church's needs may cause the clergy member to push aside their families' needs, consequently causing possible family conflicts.<sup>29</sup> For some pastors, burnout becomes a sense of lost interest, respect, or sympathy for those responsible.<sup>30</sup> The consequences of burnout are potentially severe for the workers and recipients of the intended care.<sup>31</sup> Burnout has a significant impact on the professional satisfaction of pastors.<sup>32</sup> Having a variety of interests and activists outside of one's vocation may protect against burnout.<sup>33</sup> Pastors (Clergy) also suffer occupational burnout and stress. Occupational burnout is "a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job."<sup>34</sup> According to Visker, Rider, and Humphers-Ginther, the job's chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors are defined by three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Chandler. *Pastoral Burnout*, 273.

<sup>29</sup> Visker, "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress".

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Adams et al., "Clergy Burnout".

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle. "The Impact of Behaviors upon Burnout among Parish-Based Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 49, no. 1 (03, 2010): 88-95.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph D. Visker, Taylor Rider, and Anastasia Humphers-Ginther. "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 3 (06, 2017): 951-61.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Clergy members, who are not only responsible for fulfilling their spiritual responsibilities as heads of congregations but who are frequently called upon for a variety of duties necessary for the well beings of the general public, are likely to experience higher levels of burnout.<sup>36</sup>

For many years, job satisfaction as employees' affective reactions to their jobs has been widely studied in organizational research. The consequences of burnout are potentially severe not only for the pastor but also for recipients of the intended care.<sup>37</sup>

Some consequences associated with professional burnout include "impaired job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, decreased productivity, reduced organizational commitment, impaired physical health, reduced quality of life, loss of purpose, emotional problems, loneliness, lower self-esteem, marital conflict, and a substantial loss of closeness and enjoyment in relationships both personally and professionally."<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, burnout can also lead to changing jobs or leaving the profession altogether.<sup>39</sup> Many pastors appeared to be leaving pastoral ministry prematurely.<sup>40</sup> An increasing number of pastors may be leaving the church due to burnout.<sup>41</sup> Even though it is challenging to determine the clergy attrition rate, an extensive study of clergy across five sizeable denominations found that burnout was among the top seven reasons for clergy attrition reported by clergy.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Joseph D. Visker, Taylor Rider, and Anastasia Humphers-Ginther. "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 3 (06, 2017): 951-61.

<sup>37</sup> Adams et al., "Clergy Burnout", 148.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

Clergy and their parishioners uniquely attribute sacredness to ministry work, which may drive pastors to work harder and longer than others helping professionals avoid perceived failures.<sup>43</sup> Simply put, pastors are vital community leaders who interact with large numbers of people regularly in a variety of ways, including personal counseling, religious celebrations, and issues of social justice.<sup>44</sup> Clergy experiencing chronic stress suffer adverse health consequences.<sup>45</sup> There are many complications to chronic stress, including sleep deprivation, sickness, irritability, increased blood pressure, elevated heart rate, inflammation, inhibition of the immune system, and appetite disturbance.<sup>46</sup>

Over time, high blood pressure and heart rate can increase heart attack susceptibility and stroke, and mental issues such as depression and anxiety.<sup>47</sup> Hence, chronic stress among pastors promotes personal health risks and negatively impinges on the pastors' relationships with family members and parishioners.<sup>48</sup> Pastors risk burnout because of unrealistic expectations, a sense of inadequacy, and spiritual dryness.<sup>49</sup> According to Diane J. Chandler, pastors experience spiritual dryness as spiritual fatigue, a lack of spiritual encounters with God, and an absence of spiritual resources.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Adams et al., "*Clergy Burnout*"

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Annette Heck, Rene Drumm, Duane McBride, and David Sedlacek. "Seventh-Day Adventist Clergy: Understanding Stressors and Coping Mechanisms." *Review of Religious Research* 60, no. 1 (03, 2018): 115-32.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Diane J. Chandler. "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support System Practices." *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (06, 2009): 273-87, 273.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Multiple factors make pastoral and ministry workers at risk of burnout.<sup>51</sup> Prolonged stress and fatigue are inherent in ministry and pastoral work because of high relational pressure, limited social support, isolation, unhealthy expectations, and role ambiguity.<sup>52</sup> The unfortunate side effect of burnout among the pastorate is increased attrition.<sup>53</sup> The health of pastors is compelling, although it often does not get the attention it deserves. A growing literature on stress and burnout among the clergy has reported difficulty with stress, inadequacy, and frustration in meeting ministry goals.<sup>54</sup> Thus, stress among pastors' families has received theoretical attention.<sup>55</sup>

Most of the literature on pastors' families has attempted to identify pastoral ministry stressors to neglect coping resources and perceptions.<sup>56</sup> Numerous studies suggest that pastors (clergy) are not immune to depression and anxiety.<sup>57</sup> Hence, burnout among ministers occurs due to a gap between current expectations and some "real-time" feedback.<sup>58</sup> Christina Maslach asserts, "the burnout syndrome appears to be a response to chronic, everyday stress rather than to occasional crises; the emotional pressure of working closely with people is a constant part of the daily job routine, but what changes over time is one's tolerance for this continual stress that gradually wears away under the never-ending onslaught of emotional tension."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Luisa J. Gallagher. "A Theology of Rest: Sabbath Principles for Ministry." *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 134-49.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Rae Proeschold-Bell, "Holistic Health"

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Rediger, G. L., *Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations Under Attack*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, 9

<sup>59</sup> Maslach, Christina. *Burnout: The Cost of Caring*. New York: Malor Books, 1982, 3.

## Ministry Context

Unity Light Ministries, International and Ministry Network, is a non-denominational Christian ministry headquartered in Fredericksburg, Virginia (USA).<sup>60</sup> Unity Light Ministry sponsors mission work in other countries, especially in the Republic of Liberia, West Africa.<sup>61</sup> In Liberia, Unity Light Ministries, International has partnered with other churches and Christian organizations to plant a non-denominational ministry (church) called Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church).<sup>62</sup>

Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) is an indigenous Liberian church founded by Unity Light Ministries, International.<sup>63</sup> Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) has a wide range of Christian views and cultural practices that indigenous African Christians follow, including “neo-Pentecostal” Charismatic worship and some evangelical elements worship.<sup>64</sup> Unity Light Mission in Liberia is a growing Christian Ministry Network (Church) that is a combination of evangelical and African Indigenous Charismatic church based on its American Evangelical heritage and its African heritage.<sup>65</sup> Pastors of Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Liberia, generally work in low-income communities.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Unity Light Ministries, International website. <https://www.unitylightministries.org/Community-Church>. (Access October 10, 2020).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



The Republic of Liberia is black Africa's oldest independent nation; unlike the rest of Africa, Liberia was never colonized.<sup>67</sup> Liberia was a land that was deeply entrenched with African traditions, native religions, and institutionalized secret societies characterized by spirituality and rituals before the arrival of the freed slaves from the United States (Americo-Liberians) who introduced Christianity to Liberia in the nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup> Even though Liberia was founded as a Christian nation by the American settlers, numerous indigenous peoples do not yet have a viable church-planting movement.<sup>69</sup>

Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) pastors provide prayerful, skillful, practical application of the Word of God.<sup>70</sup> Unity Light Ministry Network (Community Church) pastors also offer biblical counseling that seeks to carefully discover those areas in which a Christian may be obedient to scripture's principles and commands.<sup>71</sup> Pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Kakata take their pastoral duties seriously.<sup>72</sup> Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) pastors see their counseling role as an opportunity to solve their church members' problems, show care by listening to them, and discuss the Bible concerning the member's situation.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Lausanne World Pulse [http:// www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles-php/1064/12-2008](http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles-php/1064/12-2008) (accessed October 22, 2019).

<sup>68</sup> Eric Gbotoe and Selaelo T. Kgatla. "The Role of Christianity in Mending Societal Fragility and Quelling Violence in Liberia." *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1 (2017), 5.

<sup>69</sup> The Unreached Peoples Prayer Profiles-Liberia website. <http://www.prayway.com/unreached/countries/liberia.html> (accessed August 10, 2019).

<sup>70</sup> Unity Light Ministries, International website. <https://www.unitylightministries.org/Pastoral-Counseling>. (Accessed October 10, 2020).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Unity Light Ministries, International website. <https://www.unitylightministries.org/Pastoral-Counseling>. (Accessed October 10, 2020).

These pastors often work as counselors by default because there are limited public health facilities available to their church members, and pastoral counseling is also a big part of their duties.<sup>74</sup>

Many individuals turn to their pastors for help before considering going to a mental health professional such as a psychiatrist for counseling.<sup>75</sup> Turning to pastors for emotional help occurs more often for underrepresented populations and those from low-income areas.<sup>76</sup> In low-income areas, like Liberia, pastors may be sought out for counseling due to necessity since pastors usually do not charge a fee, while professional counselors require mental health insurance or financial compensation.<sup>77</sup> There are often fewer public mental health centers available per square mile in low-income urban communities than in suburban or wealthier communities.<sup>78</sup> One's pastor may be one of the few individuals that a person can turn to during times of crisis in resource-poor communities.<sup>79</sup>

Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) pastors deal with chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job. Pastors also experience burnout like every other human service professional; pastors also experience a lack of sense of personal accomplishments, are generally dissatisfied with their jobs, and can even have a lessened purpose of positively influencing people's lives through their work.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Unity Light website.

<sup>75</sup> Payne. *"It's kind of a dichotomy"*

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas V. Frederick. Scott Dunbar, and Yvonne Thai. "Burnout in Christian Perspective." *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (06, 2018): 267-76.

Every Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) pastor can experience stress and burnout. Thus, many pastors experience burnout because they cannot “turn off” work in their minds; even on their days off, they are still thinking about work about work (anticipating the next phone call or next crisis); they never relax.<sup>81</sup>

If burnout is left untreated or unaddressed, it tends to worsen and can cause long-term physical, mental, and emotional damage.<sup>82</sup> Ruth Luban posits that physically, “burnout can up a person’s chance of medical issues such as heart problems, strokes, digestive disorders, fertility problems, diabetes, weight gain, tooth grinding, and problems with the bones and muscles among other things.”<sup>83</sup> Ruth Luban further asserts that mentally and emotionally, “long-term burnout can lead to depression and anxiety, forgetfulness, nightmares, mental breakdowns, and risk of suicide.”<sup>84</sup>

Pastors experiencing burnout often do not see any hope of progressive change in their situations because burnout leaves one feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring.<sup>85</sup> Indigenous Liberian pastors, in Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church), who perform pastoral counseling by default, need to overcome stress and burnout in their lives for successful pastoral ministry. Unity Light Ministry Network church needs to be proactive in addressing stress and burnout among its pastoral staff.

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<sup>81</sup> Thom Rainer, 5 Reason a Pastor’s Sabbatical Blesses Everyone. Retrieved from <http://thomrainer.com/2013/09/seven-reasons-pastor-burn-out/> (accessed June 12, 2020).

<sup>82</sup> Luban, Ruth. *Keeping the Fire: From Burnout to Balance*. (Laguna Beach, CA:UK Press), 1994.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) pastors can experience stress and burnout, and more pastors will continue to experience burnout if they do not recognize the warning sign or red flags of burnout. If burnout is left untreated or unaddressed, it tends to get more severe and can cause long-term physical, mental, and emotional damage.<sup>86</sup>

### **Problem Presented**

Many Liberians turn to their pastors for help before considering going to a counselor, such as a mental health professional for counseling.<sup>87</sup> The problem is that Liberian pastors in Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church), who perform pastoral counseling by default, lack the skills to deal with high levels of stress and burnout in their lives for successful pastoral ministry.<sup>88</sup>

All Unity Light Ministry Network pastors have multiple roles, with counseling being one of them.<sup>89</sup> When considering the pastoral portion of a pastor's call, no part of a pastor's call can be regarded as unimportant.<sup>90</sup> The counselor is responsible for embodying Christ's love and being with and for the other in the counseling process.<sup>91</sup> Pastors risk burnout because of inordinate ministerial demands, which may drain their emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical energy reserves and impair their overall effectiveness.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Luban, Ruth. *Keeping the Fire: From Burnout to Balance*. Laguna Beach, CA: UK Press, 1994.

<sup>87</sup> Unity Light Ministries, International website. <https://www.unitylightministries.org/Pastoral-Counseling>. (Accessed October 10, 2020).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Payne. "It's kind of a dichotomy"

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas V. Frederick, Scott Dunbar, and Yvonne Thai. "Burnout in Christian Perspective." *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (06, 2018): 267-76.

<sup>92</sup> Diane J. Chandler. "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support System Practices." *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (06, 2009): 273-87.

Unity Light Ministry Network church needs to be proactive in addressing the problem of stress and burnout among its pastoral staff. According to Jennifer Shepherd Payne, “No researchers have published empirical studies about counseling service provision in the pastoral context. Furthermore, no researcher has discussed the concept of calling as they relate to pastors who counsel low-income urban populations.”<sup>93</sup> Rural pastors suffer an appreciable degree of loneliness and isolation.<sup>94</sup> Pastors attempt to make their lives better by reaching inside themselves rather than connecting with others.<sup>95</sup> Thus, “burnout” is a considerable risk factor associated with the field of social work.<sup>96</sup>

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research is to conduct a study of indigenous pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church), who counsel by default, that helps the researcher critically analyze the study results and suggest ways to improve the ministry situation to prevent stress and burnout. This research contributes to pastoral counseling because there is no academic study on avoiding stress and burnout among Liberian pastors who perform counseling of church members as part of their ministerial duties.

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<sup>93</sup> Payne, Jennifer Shepard. “it’s Kind of a Dichotomy”: Thoughts Related to Calling and Purpose from Pastors Working and Counseling in Urban Resource-Poor Communities.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 4 (08, 2017): 1419-35.

<sup>94</sup> Scott, Greg, and Rachel Lovell. “The Rural Pastors Initiative: Addressing Isolation and Burnout in Rural Ministry.” *Pastoral Psychology* 64, no. 1 (02, 2015): 71-97.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

## **Basic Assumptions**

The first assumption of this thesis project is that the pastors who responded to the survey will answer truthfully.

The second assumption is that the survey's pastors are a representative sample of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) which allows the researcher to use data from the sample to make conclusions representing the population from which the sample is taken.

## **Definitions**

*Burnout* is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors that diminishes personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization.<sup>97</sup>

*Burnout Phenomenon*-extreme fatigue; when one feels helpless and weary enough not to do ordinary daily work.<sup>98</sup>

*Stress*- refers to a reaction that happens as a response to tension and oppression.<sup>99</sup>

## **Limitation and Delimitations**

This project is limited in the following ways:

First, this doctoral thesis project did not include pastors of all denominations in Liberia. It only has a sample of pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network in Kakata, Liberia.

Second, this project included a limited sample pool because it only included pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) who are willing to openly express

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<sup>97</sup> Frederick et al., "*Burnout in Christian Perspective*."

<sup>98</sup> Herbert J. Freudenberger, *Burnout: The High Cost of High Achievement*. (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1980).

<sup>99</sup> Jin, Young Sun. "A Study of Pastoral Burnout Among Korean-American Pastors." DMin diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009.

their honest opinions and attitudes about pastors' stress levels, burnout, and compassionate fatigue of pastors, of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) congregations.

Third, this project was limited by a small number of pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church).

### **Thesis Statement**

The Christian spiritual practices of the Jesus Prayer, the daily examen, and the prayer of consideration are useful tools in assisting Christian human service workers (including pastors) in preventing and coping with burnout or compassion fatigue.<sup>100</sup> Stress symptoms are common among clergy because this group of professional men and women work under pressure.<sup>101</sup> Burnout is more than stress.<sup>102</sup> Burnout is the exhaustion of resources; as such, when one is burnout, his body, mind, and spirit are incapable of functioning effectively. Pastors also experience burnout. One way of preventing and coping with burnout is by reconnecting with God's empowering, living Spirit (spiritual revitalization).<sup>103</sup> If pastors, who counsel in Liberia, do not practice self-care by improving ministry situations to prevent stress and burnout, they will not provide effective counseling.

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<sup>100</sup> Thomas V. Frederick, Scott Dunbar, and Yvonne Thai. "Burnout in Christian Perspective." *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (06, 2018): 267-76.

<sup>101</sup> Amanda Berry, Amanda, Leslie J. Francis, Jenny Rolph, and Paul Rolph. "Ministry and Stress: Listening to Anglican Clergy in Wales." *Pastoral Psychology* 61, no. 2 (04, 2012): 165-78.

<sup>102</sup> Minirth, Frank, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flounoy. *How to Beat Burnout*. Choi, Hyeo Joo trans. Seoul: Logos Publishing Company, 1997.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Summary

Proeschold-Bell, Legrand, James, Wallace, Adams, and Toole assert that clergy health is facilitated by stress, self-care, and coping practices. For both clergy and spouses, spiritual well-being mediated the relationship stress and compassionate fatigue.<sup>104</sup> Thus, clergy are not immune to depression and anxiety, and even their strong spirituals provide some protection.<sup>105</sup> For Christians, a better way to conceptualize burnout and compassion fatigue is to consider them within the categories of calling, apathy, and indifference.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Minirth, Frank, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier and Richard Flounoy. *How to Beat Burnout*. Choi, Hyeo Joo trans. Seoul: Logos Publishing Company, 1997.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.



## Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

The consequences of burnout are potentially severe not only for pastors (workers) and for members of their congregation as recipients of intended care.<sup>107</sup> Pastors are vital community leaders who regularly interact with many people in various ways, including personal counseling, religious celebrations, and often issues of social justice.<sup>108</sup> With the essential roles that pastors perform in churches and their local communities, the link between burnout, increased job impairment, attrition, physical problems, emotional problems, and relational difficulties is critically important to understand the degree of burnout among pastors.<sup>109</sup>

A pastor's role is diverse; it includes leadership roles with constant engagement with others and preaching, counseling, teaching, and delivering rituals and sacraments.<sup>110</sup> Richard DeShon posits that taking together pastors' roles involves highly diverse competencies with numerous stressors.<sup>111</sup> DeShon further asserts that pastors must frequently transition between roles, sometimes often during a single day, resulting in potential role overload.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Proeschold-Bell, et al., 2011.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Richard P. DeShon. *Clergy Effectiveness. National Survey Results Summary. General Board of Higher Education and Ministry*. The United Methodist Church.

[http://www.gbhem.org/sites/default/files/documents/bom/Bom\\_ClergyEffectivenessSummary2012.pdf](http://www.gbhem.org/sites/default/files/documents/bom/Bom_ClergyEffectivenessSummary2012.pdf). Access February 22, 2021.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

Adams et al. posit that pastors' impairment results in reduced effectiveness that negatively affects pastors, their congregations, and their communities.<sup>113</sup> There is a growing literature on stress and burnout among pastors (clergy).<sup>114</sup> According to Ellison and Mattila, many pastors have reported difficulty with stress, feeling of inadequacy, and overall frustration meeting ministry goals.<sup>115</sup> Rowatt has also noted an increase in burnout and dissatisfaction with the ministry.<sup>116</sup> Thomas Frederick affirms that pastors experiencing burnout suffered reduced personal accomplishments.<sup>117</sup>

### **Complex Expectations of Pastors**

Fallon et al. further assert that predictably that the expectations will not always be in accord, and conflict will arise.<sup>118</sup> Hill et al. affirm that the demands created by the clergy's numerous relationships and expectations make an increasingly complex set of issues that have the potential for significant reward and incredible frustration and difficulty.<sup>119</sup> Additionally, Miner et al. 2010 posit that most religious denominations face declining attendance at worship services in Australia.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Adams et al., 2017.

<sup>114</sup> Proeschold-Bell, et al., 2011.

<sup>115</sup> Ellison, C. W., and W.S. Mattila. The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 1983, 11(1), 28-35.

<sup>116</sup> Rowatt, W. Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families. *Review & Expositor*, (2001), 98(4), 523-543.

<sup>117</sup> Thomas V. Frederick, Scott Dunbar, and Yvonne Thai. "Burnout in Christian Perspective." *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (06, 2018): 267-76.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Hill, E. W., Darling, C. A., & Raimondi, N. M. (2003). Understanding Boundary Related Stress in Clergy Families. *Marriage and Family Review* (2003) 35, 147–166.

<sup>120</sup> Miner, M. H., Dowson, M., & Sterland, S. Ministry Orientation, and Ministry Outcomes: Evaluation Of A New Multidimensional Model Of Clergy Burnout And Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (2010) 83, 167–188.

According to Webber et al., many local congregations are struggling financially, and most denominations are dealing with growing numbers of clergy retiring or leaving the ordained ministry early.<sup>121</sup> Barnard and Curry observed that ministers with higher self-compassion levels reported increased job satisfaction levels and lower emotional exhaustion levels in the face of various stressors.<sup>122</sup> Barnard and Curry also found that clergy who succeed in shedding unrealistic expectations of the “messiah complex” and who are patient and understanding of personal failure or disappointment are more resilient and able to overcome emotional exhaustion.<sup>123</sup>

Turton and Francis sampled 1,278 Anglican clergies and found that positive attitudes toward prayer acted as a buffer to decrease clergy’s chances of becoming burned out.<sup>124</sup> Turton and Francis further assert that “people who pray enjoy a range of psychological benefits, including a greater sense of purpose in life, a higher level of satisfaction with life, and better psychological wellbeing.”<sup>125</sup> Hence, Turton and Francis’ research indicates that people pray to enjoy a range of psychological benefits.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Webber, R., Singleton, A., Joyce, M. R., & Dorissa, A. Models of Youth Ministry in Action: The Dynamics of Christian Youth Ministry in an Australian City. *Religious Education*, (2010) 105, 104–215.

<sup>122</sup> Barnard, L. K., & Curry, J. F. The Relationship Of Clergy Burnout To Self-Compassion And Other Personality Dimensions. *Pastoral Psychology*, (2012) 61(2), 149–163.

<sup>123</sup> Barnard & Curry. “*The Relationship of Clergy.*”

<sup>124</sup> Turton, D. W., & Francis, L. J. The Relationship Between Attitude Toward Prayer And Professional Burnout Among Anglican Parochial Clergy In England: Are Praying Clergy Healthier Clergy? *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*. (2007) 10(1), 61–74, 70.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Turton & Francis. “*Professional Burnout.*”

In his study of younger clergy, Randall found that they were more prone to report burnout related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than older clergy.<sup>127</sup> Randall also found that one conclusion behind the difference in the clergy's age and the level of burnout relates to the naïveté of younger clergy seen in other helping professions.<sup>128</sup> Beebe identified role ambiguity and work overload associated with the perception of endless demands amidst unclear professional boundaries as factors related to higher levels of burnout.<sup>129</sup>

Over the years, clergy stress and burnout have gained increasing interest from researchers. Berry et al., using a sample of 1071 male Anglican clergy in England, Rutledge and Francis found that:<sup>130</sup>

With respect to personal accomplishment, four out of five of the clergy gained a lot of personal satisfaction from working with people (82%) and said that if they could have their time all over again, they would still go into parish ministry (80%). Over half of the Clergy felt that they could easily create a relaxed atmosphere with their parishioners (57%), claimed that they felt exhilarated after working closely with their parishioners (52%), and said that in their parish ministry, they dealt with emotional problems very calmly (51%)". Between one-third and half of the clergy felt that they had accomplished many worthwhile things in their ministry (48%), that they were positively influencing other people's lives through their parish ministry (44%), and that they could easily understand how their parishioners felt about things (36%). A quarter of the clergy reported that they felt very energetic (24%). A fifth of the clergy felt that they dealt very effectively with the problems of their parishioners (18%).

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<sup>127</sup> Randall, K. J. Examining The Relationship Between Burnout And Age Among Anglican Clergy In England And Wales. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, (2007) 10(1), 39–46.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Beebe, R. S. Predicting Burnout, Conflict Management Style, And Turnover Among Clergy. *Journal of Career Assessment* (2007) 15(2), 257–275.

<sup>130</sup> Berry, Amanda, Leslie J. Francis, Jenny Rolph, and Paul Rolph. "Ministry and Stress: Listening to Anglican Clergy in Wales." *Pastoral Psychology* 61, no. 2 (04, 2012): 165-78.

Rossetti and Rhoades found the two most significant variables in the low burnout rates among Roman Catholic priests working an average of 63 hours a week were job satisfaction and the inner peace of “feeling personally close to God.”<sup>131</sup> Berry et al. also reported that a sizeable minority of the clergy reported that they worried that parish ministry was hardening them emotionally and that they found it challenging to listen to what some parishioners were saying to them.<sup>132</sup>

Hill et al. affirm the view that in combination with the changes mentioned above within clergy, many clergies assert a lack of personal space and a feeling of being constantly ‘on call.’<sup>133</sup> Clergy is often required to move to a different parish or employment context, which impedes the development and maintenance of lasting relationships.<sup>134</sup> Maslach et al. posit that it is not surprising that these factors can induce burnout in the clergy, a psychological condition that results from chronic stress; thus, Maslach et al. warn that if the mental disorders mentioned above of clergy are left unchecked, the ministers’ most vital factors may contribute to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a low sense of personal accomplishment, which are the hallmarks of burnout.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Rossetti, S. J., & Rhoades, C. J. Burnout in catholic clergy: A predictive model using psychological and spiritual values. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*., (2013) 5(4), 335–341, 340.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Hill, E. W., Darling, C. A., & Raimondi, N. M. (2003). Understanding Boundary Related Stress in Clergy Families. *Marriage and Family Review* (2003) 35, 147–166.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. Job Burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, (2001) 52, 397– 422.

Visker, Rider, and Humphers-Ginther state that clergy members suffering from burnout often face personal and professional complications.<sup>136</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle states that burnout is a common condition among those in the serving profession.<sup>137</sup> Doolittle also notes that while burnout is tightly correlated with depression, burnout is not job-related.<sup>138</sup> Diane J. Chandler also says that burnout advances across three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment.<sup>139</sup>

Many times, clergy get stressed as they perform their job. Adams, Hough, Proeschold-Bell, Yao, and Kolkin state that clergy experiences many stressors in their work, including role overload and emotional labor.<sup>140</sup> Even though many studies have found high-rated depression in the clergy, the degree of work-related burnout in clergy compared to other occupations is unknown.<sup>141</sup> Scott and Lovell found that some of the biggest hurdles in pastors' professional lives were loneliness, isolation, burnout, an imbalance between personal and professional life, and an absence of self-care activities.<sup>142</sup> Scott and Lovell further assert that pastors attempt to make their lives better by reaching inside themselves rather than connecting with others.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Joseph D. Visker, Taylor Rider, and Anastasia Humphers-Ginther. "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 3 (06, 2017): 951-61.

<sup>137</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle. "The Impact of Behaviors upon Burnout among Parish-Based Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 49, no. 1 (03, 2010): 88-95.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Diane J. Chandler. "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support System Practices." *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (06, 2009): 273-87.

<sup>140</sup> Christopher J Adams, Holly Hough, Rae Proeschold-bell, Jia Yao, and Melanie Kolkin. "Clergy Burnout: A Comparison Study with Other Helping Professions." *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 2 (04, 2017): 147-75.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Greg Scott and Rachel Lovell. "The Rural Pastors Initiative: Addressing Isolation and Burnout in Rural Ministry." *Pastoral Psychology* 64, no. 1 (02, 2015): 71-97.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

Adams and Hough assert that “Clergy in the United States generally serve in six diverse roles of or categories: a. preacher, b. deliverer of rituals and sacraments, c. pastor, d. teacher, e. organizer, and f. administrator...taking together, these roles involve highly diverse competencies with numerous stressors”.<sup>144</sup> Clergy frequently transitions between roles, sometimes many times during a single day.<sup>145</sup> Accordingly, these decisions often lack straightforward right or wrong answers and make clergy vulnerable to criticism.<sup>146</sup>

Jennifer Shepherd Payne proclaims that many individuals turned to their pastors for help before considering mental health professionals.<sup>147</sup> Hence it is imperative to understand how pastors serving in urban resource-poor reflect on these counseling roles.<sup>148</sup> Jennifer Shepherd Payne further states that since pastors do not charge fees, professional counselors are required to charge fees because of health insurance and financial compensation.<sup>149</sup> All pastors have multiple roles, with counseling being just one of them. Given that pastors in low-income, urban communities are often first-hand responders to emotional crises, by default, counseling is a significant part of their job as a pastor.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Christopher J Adams, Holly Hough, Rae Proeschold-bell, Jia Yao, and Melanie Kolkin. "Clergy Burnout: A Comparison Study with Other Helping Professions." *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 2 (04, 2017): 147-75.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Jennifer Shepard Payne. “It’s kind of a dichotomy”: Thoughts related to calling and purpose from pastors working and counseling in urban resource-poor communities. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 2017, 56(4), 1419-1435.

<sup>148</sup> Payne. “*It’s kind of a dichotomy*”.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.,

Researchers have found that clergy members suffer from hypertension, depression, and obesity at higher rates than most people.<sup>151</sup> Pickett, Coppinger, Barrett, Eriksson, and Kabiri declare that clergy work is oriented toward serving others and is characterized by a devotion to the Christian faith and a feeling of divine calling.<sup>152</sup> Clergypersons occupy many roles, including teacher, counselor, preacher, administrator, and fundraiser.<sup>153</sup> Thus, religious workers might experience fatigue levels that are similar to those found in healthcare workers.<sup>154</sup>

Hack, Drumm, McBride, and Sedlacek assert that the most commonly reported stressors in order are: <sup>155</sup>

1. Lack of social support
2. Financial stress and
3. Time and workload stress

In terms of coping strategies, pastors sought relief most often through:<sup>156</sup>

1. Reflective growth
2. Social/emotional coping
3. Passive coping
4. Action-oriented coping.

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<sup>151</sup> Candace Pickett, Coppinger, Justin L. Barrett, Cynthia B. Eriksson, and Christina Kabiri. "Social Networks among Ministry Relationships: Relational Capacity, Burnout, & Ministry Effectiveness." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 45, no. 2 (Summer, 2017): 92-105.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Robin John Snelgar, Michelle Renard, and Stacy Shelton. "Preventing Compassion Fatigue Amongst Pastors: The Influence of Spiritual Intelligence and Intrinsic Motivation." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 45, no. 4 (Winter, 2017): 247-60.

<sup>155</sup> Payne. "It's kind of a dichotomy"

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.



Jin, Young Sun, posits that the experience of burnout instilled three strong convictions:<sup>157</sup>

1. The first conviction is pastoral burnout is a serious problem today. Pastors who were filled with enthusiasm and excitement about their ministry become tired and lose their zeal.
2. The second conviction is that a clear biblical perspective is needed to help understand and deal with burnout. It is helpful to realize that God's servants such as Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, and even Jesus Christ experienced burnout.
3. The third conviction is that it is possible to overcome pastoral burnout. Pastors who are serious about overcoming must make self-care a priority and must carefully manage their ministry.

Luisa J. Gallagher states that a theology of rest is an essential component in ministry professionals' training.<sup>158</sup> Gallagher further says that by encountering God in Sabbath rest, ministers and believers alike can gain a balanced perspective on life and ministry.<sup>159</sup>

Adapting a Sabbath rhythm enables ministers to pursue the right relationship with God and others and helps individuals reach holistic health and church longevity.<sup>160</sup> Berry, Francis, Rolph, and Rolph posit that stress symptoms are seen among a minority of clergy but instead, these symptoms are part of the clergy's broader general experience.<sup>161</sup> Accordingly, stress symptoms are common among clergy because this group of professional men and women work under pressure.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Jin, Young Sun. "A Study of Pastoral Burnout Among Korean-American Pastors." DMin diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009.

<sup>158</sup> Luisa J. Gallagher. "A Theology of Rest: Sabbath Principles for Ministry." *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 134-49.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Gallagher. "A Theology of Rest", 2019.

<sup>161</sup> Amanda A. Berry, Leslie J. Francis, Jenny Rolph, and Paul Rolph. "Ministry and Stress: Listening to Anglican Clergy in Wales." *Pastoral Psychology* 61, no. 2 (04, 2012): 165-78.

<sup>162</sup> Berry et al. "*Ministry and Stress*."

Proeschold-Bell, Legrand, James, Wallace, Adams, and Toole assert that clergy health is facilitated by stress, self-care, and coping practices.<sup>163</sup> However, for both clergy and spouses, spiritual well-being mediated the relationship stress and compassionate fatigue.<sup>164</sup> Thus, clergy are not immune to depression and anxiety, and even their strong spirituals provide some protection.<sup>165</sup> Zust, Housley, and Klatke found that the role of pastoral counseling in situations of domestic violence is one of the most understudied aspects of domestic violence literature.<sup>166</sup> Domestic violence is undoubtedly one of the most misunderstood and mismanaged by church leaders of all the church's social problems.<sup>167</sup>

Shannon-Lewy and Dull 2005 studied the response of Christian clergy in domestic violence cases, and they found that even though the clergy was well-respected in the community, their religious beliefs could be detrimental to victims' survival of violence.<sup>168</sup> Homiak and Singletary's exploratory research on clergy perceptions of their efficacy in counseling victims (survivors) of domestic violence found that out of 100 clergies who participated, 8% felt prepared to effectively counsel victims (survivors), 32% were comfortable referring the victims to community resources, and 60% they were not prepared to counsel or to refer.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Proeschold-bell, Rae, Sara Legrand, John James, Amanda Wallace, Christopher Adams, and David Toole. "A Theoretical Model of the Holistic Health of United Methodist Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 50, no. 3 (09, 2011): 700-20.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Barbara L. Zust, Jaelyn Housley, and Anna Klatke. "Evangelical Christian Pastors' Lived Experience of Counseling Victims/Survivors of Domestic Violence." *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 5 (10, 2017): 675-87.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Shannon-Levy, C and V. Dull. The Response of Christian Clergy to Domestic Violence: Help or Hindrance? *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2005, 10 (6), 647-659.

<sup>169</sup> Homiak, K., and J. Singletary. Family Violence in Congregations: An Exploratory Study of Clergy' Needs. *Social Work and Christianity*, 2007, 18-46.

Scott and Lovell also observed that pastors, especially in rural ministry, attempt to make their lives better by reaching inside themselves rather than connecting with others.<sup>170</sup> Scott and Lovell further posit that loneliness, which may be ingrained in itself, remains the most robust explanatory variable, exhibiting a solid relationship with other variables such as burnout and professional excellence.<sup>171</sup> Most small rural churches typically operate under the stewardship of a lone pastor who, in many instances, splits his or her time between or among multiple congregations.<sup>172</sup> In essence, they often must run the church or rather be the church in every respect, and they must carry out the function for which they have never been trained.<sup>173</sup>

Researchers have long identified “burnout” as a considerable risk factor associated with the field of social work.<sup>174</sup> Clergy members suffering from burnout face both personal and professional complications.<sup>175</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle asserts that behaviors that enhance relationships such as seeking mentors and attending retreats and pursuing outside activities such as regular exercise and scholarly reading protect pastors against burnout.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Greg Scott and Rachel Lovell. "The Rural Pastors Initiative: Addressing Isolation and Burnout in Rural Ministry." *Pastoral Psychology* 64, no. 1 (02, 2015): 71-97.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Greg Scott and Rachel Lovell. "The Rural Pastors Initiative: Addressing Isolation and Burnout in Rural Ministry." *Pastoral Psychology* 64, no. 1 (02, 2015): 71-97.

<sup>175</sup> Joseph D. Visker, Taylor Rider, and Anastasia Humphers-Ginther. "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 3 (06, 2017): 951-61.

<sup>176</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle. "The Impact of Behaviors upon Burnout among Parish-Based Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 49, no. 1 (03, 2010): 88-95.

Diane J. Chandler posits that pastors experiencing burnout characterized by energy depletion without commensurate renewal are often a natural outcome of the seemingly unending complexities, demands, and expectancies.<sup>177</sup> Hack, Drumm, McBride, and Sedlacek posit that clergy experiencing chronic stress suffer adverse health consequences; clergy experiencing chronic stress promote personal health risks and negatively impact their relationships with family members.<sup>178</sup> Proeschold-Bell et al. assert that lack of social support, job stress, guilt about not doing enough work, and doubting one's call to ministry are also associated with depression and anxiety.<sup>179</sup> Proeschold-Bell et al. also assert that socio-demographic characteristics involving age, level of education, and race affect clergy health.<sup>180</sup>

Luisa J Gallagher asserts that a study of 726 Deutch Reformed pastors in the Netherlands reveals that 28% experience high levels of stress in ministry roles, while 11% indicated that they frequently suffer from emotional exhaustion.<sup>181</sup> Another 222 United Methodist Church study notes that 13% of the participants considered themselves burnout and 23% were depressed. According to Luisa J Gallagher, a research study project at Duke University Divinity School conducted a large study to determine why pastors leave their churches.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Diane J. Chandler. "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support System Practices." *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (06, 2009): 273-87.

<sup>178</sup> Annete Heck, Rene Drumm, Duane McBride, and David Sedlacek. "Seventh-Day Adventist Clergy: Understanding Stressors and Coping Mechanisms." *Review of Religious Research* 60, no. 1 (03, 2018): 115-32.

<sup>179</sup> Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Luisa J. Gallagher, Luisa J. "A Theology of Rest: Sabbath Principles for Ministry." *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 134-49.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

The study included four denominations in the United States: Presbyterian, United Methodist, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Assemblies of God.<sup>183</sup> The above study found that the third highest reason for clergy to leave the ministry, at 21%, was burnout, discouragement, stress, or overwork.<sup>184</sup> Included in the attrition rate among the clergy was 58% indicating that they left the pastorate because they felt drained by the demands placed on them.<sup>185</sup> Visker et al. found that there are many negative implications associated with long-termed occupational stress and burnout among the clergy, including a strong association between occupational stress and cardiovascular issues; Clergy suffering from occupational exhaustion are less to engage in physical activity and less likely to practice healthy eating.<sup>186</sup>

Visker et al. also found that clergy who experience higher occupational burnout levels are more prone to “long-term sickness absences.”<sup>187</sup> Moreover, Christopher J. Adam et al. posit that the consequences of professional burnout among the clergy are potentially severe for workers and recipients of the intended care.<sup>188</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle found that burnout has a significant impact on the professional satisfaction of clergy.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>183</sup>Luisa J. Gallagher, Luisa J. "A Theology of Rest: Sabbath Principles for Ministry." *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 134-49.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Joseph D. Visker, Taylor Rider, and Anastasia Humphers-Ginther. "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 3 (06, 2017): 951-61.

<sup>187</sup> Visker, “Ministry-Related Burnout”.

<sup>188</sup> Christopher J Adams, Holly Hough, Rae Proeschold-bell, Jia Yao, and Melanie Kolkin. "Clergy Burnout: A Comparison Study with Other Helping Professions." *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 2 (04, 2017): 147-75.

<sup>189</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle. "The Impact of Behaviors upon Burnout among Parish-Based Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 49, no. 1 (03, 2010): 88-95.

In his study of 358 parish-based clergies, Doolittle found that clergy who met the criteria for burnout were younger, identified themselves as depressed, unsatisfied with their spiritual life, and endured a traumatic church placement.<sup>190</sup> Lisa J. Gallagher also found that many factors make pastoral workers at risk of burnout, including prolonged stress and fatigue due to high relational stress, limited social support, isolation, unhealthy expectations, and ambiguity of the role.<sup>191</sup>

Burnout may also thrive in ministry professions because of an “ideological work ethic, aligning work for God with righteousness, meaning, or the desire to become ‘heroic.’”<sup>192</sup> According to Lisa J. Gallagher, a survey of 11,067 participants in helping professions found that pastors experience high levels of prolonged stress compared to employees in other helping professions. Benjamin R. Doolittle found that pastors experience a lower burnout rate than teachers, police officers, and emergency personnel and similar burnout rates like social workers, counselors, and emergency professionals; hence, burnout is a common condition among those in the serving position.<sup>193</sup> Doolittle suggests that clergy who create the space to engage in outside activities have the emotional capacity to disengage from their ministerial demands, thereby re-energizing themselves.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle. "The Impact of Behaviors upon Burnout among Parish-Based Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 49, no. 1 (03, 2010): 88-95.

<sup>191</sup> Luisa J. Gallagher, Luisa J. "A Theology of Rest: Sabbath Principles for Ministry." *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 134-49.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 139

<sup>193</sup> Benjamin R. Doolittle. "The Impact of Behaviors upon Burnout among Parish-Based Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 49, no. 1 (03, 2010): 88-95.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

Golden et al. posit that burnout is often a combination of personality and work environment factors.<sup>195</sup> Like other professions in burnout research, the clergy has been treated with little consideration for what might be unique or vital to the vocation or its adherents.<sup>196</sup> Golden et al. state that due to the increasing recognition of the pastorate's demands, the clergy's growing interest in work-related stressors.<sup>197</sup> Golden et al. also support the view that pastors struggling with burnout often face an increasing sense of cynicism and disillusionment that threaten to undermine the very convictions which define their calling.<sup>198</sup> Hill et al. suggest that pastors change the employment context, which impedes the growth of lasting relationships.<sup>199</sup>

Jackson-Jordan asserts that common factors repeatedly observed in many research studies about burnout in clergy deserve attention by faith groups to support clergy resilience and prevent their departure from ministry.<sup>200</sup> Jackson-Jordan further notes that the quality of interpersonal skills, relationships outside the congregation, peer/mentor relationships, high role expectations, personal spirituality, and the ability to set healthy boundaries as some of the critical variables identified by Jackson-Jordan in the literature.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Golden, Jonathan, Ralph L. Piedmont, Joseph W. Ciarrocchi, and Thomas Rodgeron. "Spirituality And Burnout: An Incremental Validity Study." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 32, no. 2 (Summer, 2004): 115-25.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Hill, E. W., Darling, C. A., & Raimondi, N. M. (2003). Understanding Boundary Related Stress in Clergy Families. *Marriage and Family Review* (2003) 35, 147–166.

<sup>200</sup> Jackson-Jordan, E. I. Clergy Burnout And Resilience: A Review Of The Literature. *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, (2013) 67(1), 1–5.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

Bulka claimed that the solution to burnout among the clergy is in the concept of self-transcendence.<sup>202</sup> Bulka further contended that one of the clergy's fundamental attributes, their spirituality, might serve as an essential variable in buffering burnout's adverse effects.<sup>203</sup> Accordingly, Emmons posits that "the underlying element of spirituality is one's view of 'transcendence.'"<sup>204</sup>

Self-transcendence involves the ability to step beyond oneself, to take a higher opinion of present circumstances. Piedmont defined spiritual transcendence as "the capacity of individuals to stand outside of their immediate sense of time and place to view life from a larger, more objective perspective."<sup>205</sup> Spiritual transcendence involves moving beyond oneself and making connections with an ultimate that is greater than oneself.<sup>206</sup>

Tanner et al. affirm that ministry demands make it difficult to balance work and family.<sup>207</sup> The chronic stress of working with demanding people takes its toll on ministers and may result in ministry burnout.<sup>208</sup> Tanner et al. also affirm that ministers who do not meet a church's demands may face forced termination, which has long-term implications for family wellbeing and physical health.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Bulka, R. P. *Logotherapy As An Answer To Burnout*. International Forum For Logotherapy, (1984) 7(1), 8-17.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Emmons, R. A. *The Psychology Of Ultimate Concerns*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1999, 101.

<sup>206</sup> Piedmont, R. L. Does Spirituality Represent The Sixth Factor Of Personality? Spiritual Transcendence And The Five-Factor Model. *Journal of Personality* (1999) 67(6), 985-1013.

<sup>207</sup> Tanner, Marcus N., Jeffrey N. Wherry, and Anisa M. Zvonkovic. "Clergy Who Experience Trauma as a Result of Forced Termination." *Journal of Religion and Health* 52, no. 4 (12, 2013): 1281-95.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.



Trihub et al. assert that by equipping leadership with increased understanding and awareness of their clergy's mental health needs, it is hoped that denominations will continue to expand their support of mental health services to their clergy.<sup>210</sup> Trihub et al. also assert that with increased access to and use of mental health services, issues such as stress, burnout, and other psychopathology will be reduced in the clergy.<sup>211</sup> Increased access to and use of mental health services is expected to improve clergy wellbeing and have a positive ripple effect throughout church congregations and society.<sup>212</sup> Muse et al. posit that the role perception of stress plays as to how damaging it is in our lives; the power of the Christian faith to reframe the meaning of stress and suffering is surely a significant variable.<sup>213</sup> The Christian understanding of pastoral work as a calling entails a sense of vocation.<sup>214</sup>

In his book "*Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*," Richard A. Swenson describes the importance of ministers and their busy schedules.<sup>215</sup> Swenson's first principle in his book centers around the current conditions of so many people living in the United States living with stress, anxiety, and disease.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Trihub, Bobby L., Mark R. McMinn, Buhrow, William C. Jr, and Thomas F. Johnson. "Denominational Support For Clergy Mental Health." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 38, no. 2 (Summer, 2010): 101-10.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Muse, Stephen, Milton Love, and Kyle Christensen. "Intensive Outpatient Therapy for Clergy Burnout: How Much Difference Can a Week Make?" *Journal of Religion and Health* 55, no. 1 (02, 2016): 147-58.

<sup>214</sup> Thomas V. Frederick. Scott Dunbar, and Yvonne Thai. "Burnout in Christian Perspective." *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (06, 2018): 267-76.

<sup>215</sup> Swenson, Richard, A. *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

The second principle deals with the author's explanation of the reasons for many problems of the United States' illnesses, which he ascribes to what he called "marginless or overworked."<sup>217</sup> Moreover, Swenson asserts helpful steps for creating boundaries such as creating a budget, setting appropriate boundaries, laughing, crying, resting, and following God for success rather than society.<sup>218</sup> Michael T. Wilson and Brad Hoffmann's *Ministry Failure*, the authors study problems that contribute to clergy burnout, moral failures, and some principles for preventing burnout.<sup>219</sup> Wilson and Hoffmann develop the principles above around a set of seven foundational stones as follows:<sup>220</sup>

1. Intimacy-connecting to the heart of successful pastoring.
2. Calling-the power for effectiveness in ministry.
3. Stress Management-avoiding ineffectiveness and burnout.
4. Boundaries-protecting what matters most.
5. Re-creation-the fuel to re-energize ministry.
6. People Skills-managing our most valuable resource.
7. Leadership Skills-setting ministers apart from the rest of the sheep.<sup>221</sup>

Burnout is more than stress; burnout is the exhaustion of resources; when one is burnout, his body, mind, and spirit are incapable of functioning effectively. Pastors also experience burnout.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Swenson, "Margin"

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Wilson et al.,

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Minirth, Frank, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flounoy. *How to Beat Burnout*. Choi, Hyeo Joo trans. Seoul: Logos Publishing Company, 1997.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

Four factors that provoke pastoral burnout are:<sup>223</sup>

1. Unfulfilled expectations
2. Hostile emotions
3. Being a workaholic
4. Failure of sermons and an incompetent feeling toward God.

Candler posits that pastors are one group of helping professionals who are prone to high stress and burnout.<sup>224</sup> Some issues that pastors face include inordinate time demands, unrealistic expectations, isolation, and loneliness.<sup>225</sup> There are a lot of studies that link the aforementioned to pastors' practices and burnout. As a result, pastors' personal life may be severely imbalanced, and their spiritual lives ironically dry; moreover, three practices or behaviors are essential for pastoral health:<sup>226</sup>

1. Spiritual Renewal Practices
2. Rest-taking Practices
3. Support Systems Practices

Even though many studies have found a high rate of depression in the clergy, work-related burnout in clergy compared to other professions is unknown.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Minirth et al.

<sup>224</sup> Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout."

<sup>225</sup> Hands, D. R. and Fehr, W. L. *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self, and Others*. Washington: The Alban Institute, 1993.

<sup>226</sup> Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout."

<sup>227</sup> Adams, Christopher J., Holly Hough, Rae Proeschold-Bell, Jia Yao, and Melanie Kolkin. "Clergy Burnout: A Comparison Study with Other Helping Professions." *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 2 (04, 2017): 147-75.

Maslach describes burnout as “a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.”<sup>228</sup> Adam et al. further posit that the consequences of burnout are potentially severe not only for the workers but also for the intended care recipient.<sup>229</sup> Maslach also asserts that “burnout can lead to changing jobs or leaving the profession altogether.”<sup>230</sup> Adam et al. affirm that there are many studies on burnout using standard measure by Maslach that allows for comparison across occupations.<sup>231</sup> However, no comparison study that includes clergy has been published.<sup>232</sup>

Proeschold-Bell et al. assert that clergy’s health is compelling, even though it is an overlooked topic.<sup>233</sup> Proeschold-Bell et al. further posit that clergy, in their humanity, are also subjected to health science research on exercise, diet, and stress like everyone else.<sup>234</sup> There is growing literature on stress and burnout among the clergy.<sup>235</sup> According to Proeschold-bell et al., stress among families has received a lot of theoretical interest.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Maslach, Christina. *Burnout: The Cost of Caring*. New York: Malor Books, 1982,19.

<sup>229</sup> Adams, Christopher J., Holly Hough, Rae Proeschold-bell, Jia Yao, and Melanie Kolkin. “Clergy Burnout: A Comparison Study with Other Helping Professions.” *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 2 (04, 2017): 147-75.

<sup>230</sup> Maslach, Christina. *Burnout: The Cost of Caring*. New York: Malor Books, 1982,19.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Proeschold-Bell, Rae, Sara Legrand, John James, Amanda Wallace, Christopher Adams, and David Toole. “A Theoretical Model of the Holistic Health of United Methodist Clergy.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 50, no. 3 (09, 2011): 700-20.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Proeschold-Bell et al. “*A Theoretical Model*”.

<sup>236</sup> Proeschold-Bell et al. “*A Theoretical Model*”.

Meisenhelder and Chandler assert that a higher frequency of prayers among pastors has also been found to have higher self-reported mental health and general health.<sup>237</sup> Clergy may be reluctant to admit role strain in their elevated role which may result in more stress and isolation than congregants.<sup>238</sup> In light of many red flags for clergy, the following early warning signs of stress, diabetes, and coronary disease, it is exciting to consider how to tailor public health interventions to the clergy.<sup>239</sup>

### **Ministry Demands**

Tanner et al. assert that pastoral ministry's intensive demands have a detrimental effect on ministers' attitudes and well-being.<sup>240</sup> Ministry demands are significantly associated with the measure of burnout.<sup>241</sup> Tanner et al. further assert that the consequences of ministry work are different than other careers in the way work-related stress for ministers is not only confined to the domain of the workplace; it is more globally impacting and affects other relational areas (other church members, family members, and other clergy members).<sup>242</sup> Christina Maslach states that burnout in ministry is a common problem for those working in caring professions.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Meisenhelder, J.B. and Chandler, E. N. Frequency of Prayer and Functional Health in Presbyterian Pastors. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40(2), 323-329.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Proeschold-Bell, Rae, Sara Legrand, John James, Amanda Wallace, Christopher Adams, and David Toole. "A Theoretical Model of the Holistic Health of United Methodist Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 50, no. 3 (09, 2011): 700-20.

<sup>240</sup> Tanner, Marcus N., Jeffrey N. Wherry, and Anisa M. Zvonkovic. "Clergy Who Experience Trauma as a Result of Forced Termination." *Journal of Religion and Health* 52, no. 4 (12, 2013): 1281-95.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Maslach, Christina. *Burnout: The Cost of Caring*. New York: Malor Books, 1982, p.19.

Randall asserts that pastoral burnout in ministry is characterized by three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.<sup>244</sup> Lee affirms that ministers who experience high levels of ministry demands are more likely to experience burnout.<sup>245</sup> Jennifer Shepherd Payne states that “many individuals turn to their pastors for help before they would consider going to a mental health professional such as a psychiatrist for counseling.”<sup>246</sup> Payne further affirms that shifting to a pastor for emotional help occurs more frequently, especially in underrepresented populations and those from low-income areas.<sup>247</sup> In low-income areas, pastors may be sought out for counseling due to necessity.<sup>248</sup> In low-income areas, people turn to pastors because they often do not charge fees, while professional counselors require mental health insurance or financial compensation.<sup>249</sup> All pastors have multiple roles, with counseling being one of them.<sup>250</sup> Jennifer Shepherd Payne asserts that “no know researchers have published empirical studies about counseling service provision in the pastoral context.

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<sup>244</sup> Randall, K. J. Examining The Relationship Between Burnout And Age Among Anglican Clergy In England And Wales. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, (2007) 10(1), 39–46.

<sup>245</sup> Lee, C. Specifying Intrusive Demands and Their Outcomes in Congregational Ministry: A Report on the Ministry Demands Inventory. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 38(4), 477-489.

<sup>246</sup> Payne, Jennifer Shepard. ““it's Kind of a Dichotomy”: Thoughts Related to Calling and Purpose from Pastors Working and Counseling in Urban Resource-Poor Communities.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 4 (08, 2017): 1419-35.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

Jennifer Shepherd Payne further asserts that no researcher has discussed the concept of calling as they relate to pastors who counsel low-income urban populations.<sup>251</sup> Greg Scott and Rachel Lovell suggest that rural pastors suffer an appreciable degree of loneliness and isolation.<sup>252</sup> Scott and Lovell further assert that pastors attempt to make their lives better by reaching inside themselves rather than connecting with others.<sup>253</sup> Scott and Lovell identified “burnout” as a considerable risk factor associated with the field of social work.<sup>254</sup>

Young Sun Jin proposes unique symptoms of burnout applicable to pastors as follows:<sup>255</sup>

1. Psychological and Emotional Systems

- A. Apt to be irritated.
- B. Apt to be easily excited or angry.
- C. Decrease of concentration ability and patience.
- D. Suffers from severe amnesia.
- E. Apt to gloomy and depressed.
- F. Doing something is troublesome.
- G. Apt to be dubious and hesitant in all matters.
- H. Apt to give up easily and have no confidence.
- I. Cannot be calm without doing something.

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<sup>251</sup> Payne, Jennifer Shepard. ““it’s Kind of a Dichotomy”: Thoughts Related to Calling and Purpose from Pastors Working and Counseling in Urban Resource-Poor Communities.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 4 (08, 2017): 1419-35.

<sup>252</sup> Scott, Greg and Rachel Lovell. “The Rural Pastors Initiative: Addressing Isolation and Burnout in Rural Ministry.” *Pastoral Psychology* 64, no. 1 (02, 2015): 71-97.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

## 2. Physical Symptoms <sup>256</sup>

- A. Choking
- B. Thirsty or Dry Throat
- C. Insomnia
- D. Migraines
- E. Eyes Become Fatigued Easily
- F. Often Feel the Need to Vomit due to the Heart-Stricken
- G. Decrease of Appetite
- H. Suffer from Constipation or Diarrhea

H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman define nine measures of successful ministry trusted that must be as follows:<sup>257</sup>

- 1. Applied truth
- 2. Spiritual intimacy
- 3. Personal integrity
- 4. Biblical identity
- 5. Genuine accountability
- 6. Eternal significance
- 7. Healthy family life
- 8. Indispensable pain
- 9. A captivating call

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<sup>256</sup> Scott, Greg and Rachel Lovell. "The Rural Pastors Initiative: Addressing Isolation and Burnout in Rural Ministry." *Pastoral Psychology* 64, no. 1 (02, 2015): 71-97.

<sup>257</sup> H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Risk: Help for Pastors, Hope for the Church*. Wheaton, IL, USA: Victor books, 1993.



## Pastoral Ministry and Stress

With its exacting influence on modern man in all spheres of life, stress is no respecter of persons. According to Melgosa, very few people escape from stress. It is part of our daily routine. Time and work pressure, relationship problems, noise, pollution, finances, and insecurity are sources of stress. Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused by people's response to pressure from the outside world. Common stress reactions include tension, irritability, inability to concentrate, frustration, and various physical symptoms, including headaches and a fast heartbeat.

According to Ho, the types of stress are eustress, distress, and hyperstress, while the signs of stress include sickness or absence, accident or incident, disciplinary action or compliance, seeking help from fellow employees or counseling, low attitude and esteem for the job, frustration, irritability, and anger. Few studies examine the experiences of stress in the pastoral ministry context. Barry et al. posit that poor work-related psychological health may be reflected in the following three components:<sup>258</sup>

1. High levels of emotional exhaustion
2. High levels of depersonalization
3. Low levels of personal accomplishments

Wells et al. assert that the concept of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict has been studied extensively in recent years.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Berry, Amanda, Leslie J. Francis, Jenny Rolph, and Paul Rolph. "Ministry and Stress: Listening to Anglican Clergy in Wales." *Pastoral Psychology* 61, no. 2 (04, 2012): 165-78.

<sup>259</sup> Wells, Carl, Janice Probst. Robert McKeown. The Relationship Between Work-Related Stress and Boundary-Related Stress Within the Clerical Profession. *Journal of Religion and Health*. 51(1):215-30.

Carl Wells proposes a different means of understanding clergy work and family stressors because boundaries between family and work are blurred within the clerical profession.<sup>260</sup> Wells et al. further posit that stressors associated with ordained ministry can be better analyzed if separated into two distinct categories as follows:

1. Stressors stemming from the demands of the work (work-related stress).<sup>261</sup>
2. Stressors stemming from the way the work impinges upon clerical family boundaries (boundary-related stress).<sup>262</sup>

According to Wells et al., the clergy's role has been evolving over the past several decades.<sup>263</sup> Some of the factors that contribute to today's workplace's increasingly stressful nature stem from the trends of non-standard work hours, the quickening pace of labor, and the constant push for quality and efficiency.<sup>264</sup> Wells et al. assert that many of these stressors stem from the peculiar nature of the clerical work-family conflict; nonetheless, Jennifer Shepherd Payne suggests that pastors are much more likely to find joy and capacity in counseling and emotional care when they have a sense of calling to that portion of their careers.<sup>265</sup> Pastors need to know ways to improve their feelings of calling and purpose.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Wells, Carl, Janice Probst, Robert McKeown. The Relationship Between Work-Related Stress and Boundary-Related Stress Within the Clerical Profession. *Journal of Religion and Health*. 51(1):215-30.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Payne, Jennifer Shepard. "'it's Kind of a Dichotomy': Thoughts Related to Calling and Purpose from Pastors Working and Counseling in Urban Resource-Poor Communities." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 4 (08, 2017): 1419-35.

<sup>266</sup> Payne, Jennifer Shepard. "it's Kind of a Dichotomy."

There have been many studies of forced termination of the clergy. According to Tanner et al., forced termination of the clergy is a demeaning and psychologically distressing experience.<sup>267</sup> Intrusive demands of ministry work have a detrimental effect on the attitude and well-being of ministers.<sup>268</sup> The consequences of ministry work are different from other careers because work-related stress for ministers is not confined to the workplace domain.<sup>269</sup> Thus, burnout is a common problem among ministers.<sup>270</sup>

### **Interviews/Surveys Instruments in Research**

Despite a rapidly growing body of work on the nature of stress and burnout in organizations, relatively little research has been conducted to develop strategies for reducing burnout.<sup>271</sup> The art of asking questions seems simple yet, difficult to master; interviews allow people to describe their situations and put words to their interior lives, personal feelings, opinions, and experiences.<sup>272</sup> On the other hand, surveys are lengthy questionnaires that employ fixed-choice responses to describe the characteristics or understandings of a larger group of people.<sup>273</sup> The researcher uses the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (survey) to understand burnout in the workplace among the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church).

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<sup>267</sup> Tanner, Marcus N., Jeffrey N. Wherry, and Anisa M. Zvonkovic. "Clergy Who Experience Trauma as a Result of Forced Termination." *Journal of Religion and Health* 52, no. 4 (12, 2013): 1281-95.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Jonathon R. B. Halbesleben, Holly K. Osburn, and Michael D. Mumford. "Action Research as a Burnout Intervention: Reducing Burnout in the Federal Fire Service." *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 42, no. 2 (06, 2006): 244-66.

<sup>272</sup> Tim Sensing. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

## **Theological Foundations**

This thesis project's theological foundations are based on several scripture passages dealing with burnout in the Bible. The project researcher intends to determine why pastors in Unity Light Ministry Network (church) in Liberia, serving as pastoral counselors by default, lack the skills to deal with high stress and burnout levels. According to Philippians 4:6, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus". Romans 8:28 states that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Apostle Paul experienced burnout to forsake his ministry in 2 Corinthians 1:8 NIV as follows:

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.

According to 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 NIV:

Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

Leaders of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) pastors need to develop the necessary skills to prevent stress and burnout because many pastors and church leaders experience stress and burnout.

Roy M. Oswald asserts that many leaders in the Bible also suffered burnout crises, but they did their best to overcome it.<sup>274</sup> According to Sanders:

“Apostle Paul has provided the example of ‘a man just like us’(James 5:17), True, he was a man of towering spiritual stature, but he was also a man who knew failure along with his success. Even as he cried out in his despair, ‘What a wretched man am I! Who will rescue me from this body of death?’ he exulted, ‘Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!’” (Roman7: 24-25).<sup>275</sup>

John Maxwell posits:

The Apostle Paul had lots of things going for him; ...he was a bold preacher of the gospel, helping to spread the Word of God to all Asia (Acts 19:10). Furthermore, he had an incredible instrument of healing, and miracles occurred even when people touched an apron he had worn (Acts 19:11-12). However, none of these things can compare to his contribution as a leader. Without the leadership of Apostle Paul, the world would have been a very different place during the first century.<sup>276</sup>

According to Mark 4:19:

... but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

God is seeking pastors, counselors, and church leaders to move His church forward. One of the best ways to learn leadership is to study great leaders like Apostle Paul. Pastors who serve as counselors, by default, need to learn leadership and counseling skills to prevent a high level of stress and burnout.

## **Counseling Others**

The Bible encourages Christians who desire to help others do it through godly counsel (Proverbs 1:5). The Bible does not propose godly counseling to be only for an exclusive group of

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<sup>274</sup> Roy M. Oswald. *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry*. The Alban Institute, 1991,73.

<sup>275</sup> J. Oswald Sanders. *Spiritual Leadership*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980, 11-12.

<sup>276</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day: Revitalize Your Spirit and Empower Your Leadership*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000, xi.

professional counselors, but instead, counseling should be the obligation of all Christians. As such, the book of Proverbs includes counsel as an element of genuine friendship. According to Proverbs 27:5-6: “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wound from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses”. A friend imparts helpful criticism out of love, but an enemy gives kisses with deception in mind. Long-term friendships are, at times, more dependable than relatives (Proverb 27:10). Good friends provide godly counsel to encourage one another to grow in wisdom and godliness, especially when it requires beneficial criticism. Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another (Proverbs 27:17).

Pastoral counselors, as shepherds, counsel the flock. A Psalm of David, Psalm 23:1-6:

“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

The Apostle Paul often describes human beings as slaves by the devil and in need of rescue (2 Cor. 4:4). The servant of the Lord must be qualified in being able to teach (competence) and in personality by being gentle, patient, and not argumentative.

Pastors, who counsel by default, need to exhibit the characteristics mentioned above. 2 Tim.

2:24-26 states:

“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will”.

Stress is a part of life, and often stress leads to burnout; however, stress does not have to lead to burnout. Every Christian, including the pastor who counsels others, needs to know how to deal with stress. Matthew 11:28-30 states:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

In times of high stress, pastors and Christians alike need to cast all of the burdens and anxieties on Jesus Christ:

Psalms 55:25: “Cast your cares on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken”.

Circumstances can sometimes make pastors, who counsel others, to feel anxious or depressed. God knows one’s heart, and He is stronger and can bring clarity to the situation if one seeks his counsel:

1 Peter 5:7: “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you”.

Stress and burnout also happens to great men of God. Even Apostle, Paul admits to suffering burnout to quit his ministry and desire to live. 2 Corinthians 1:8:

“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.”

2 Corinthians 11:23-27:

“Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.”

## Pastoral Burnout

Pastors experience burnout just like any other Christian. Burnout can be experienced in a variety of ways. Because our bodies, souls, minds, and spirits are integrated parts of a greater whole, the following types of burnouts often come together and have a compounding effect on each other:<sup>277</sup>

- **“Physical burnout** can be triggered by a lack of exercise, physical effects of stress, and sleeplessness. The overloaded schedule and stressful lives of many pastors drive them to forget to exercise, eat unhealthy foods, and be sleepless. When speaking on burnout from ministry, John Piper said, “Nothing brought me closer to quitting than sleeplessness.” If left unchecked, physical burnout can cause a weakened immune system, aches and pains, a change in appetite, and feeling tired all the time.
- **Relational burnout** is related to emotional burnout and can be caused by strained relationships with other church leaders and patrons. Day after day, interactions with energy-draining people make the role of a pastor or ministry leader unusually susceptible to this type of burnout.<sup>278</sup> Physical exhaustion and drama between members can make pastors isolate themselves to get a break from relationships that drain their energy.<sup>279</sup>
- **Emotional burnout** can be felt when a shepherd feels that they have no one to shepherd them. This type of burnout can wreak havoc on a minister’s marriage and family life due to the feelings of isolation common in ministry.<sup>280</sup> Emotional burnout can numb your ability to have normal emotions and have a sense of failure and self-doubt.<sup>281</sup>
- **Spiritual burnout** is felt when pastors neglect their own spiritual lives while trying to pour into the lives of others.<sup>282</sup> Many pastors do not have anybody pouring into their lives and do not seek the life and strength of God for spiritual refreshment.<sup>283</sup> If you don’t desire to encounter God through prayer or Scripture reading, you may be suffering from spiritual burnout”!

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<sup>277</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.leadershipresources.org/blog/Christian-ministry-burnout-prevention-signs-stastics-recovery>.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.



“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58)”. Therefore, since through God’s mercy, we have this ministry, we do not lose heart (2 Corinthians 4).”

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The Bible deals with the theme of burnout in both the Old and New Testaments. Unfortunately, burnout is widespread among pastors in resource-poor communities. Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30)”.

Many leaders in the Bible have experienced stress and burnout. Jeremiah, Moses, Paul, and Elijah are good examples of leaders who experience stress or burnout in ministry. Jesus also experienced stress. According to Luke 12:50, “But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on, there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three”. We cannot adequately serve God if we are under stress. In John 16:33, Jesus said, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” There is no need to worry about stress. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matt. 6:33).

Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do ‘people work’ of some kind.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Christina Maslach. *Burnout: The Cost of Caring*. New York: Malor Books, 1982, 3.

Burnout is also “to cause to fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, and resources.”<sup>285</sup> It is essential to study the effect of stress and burnout on pastors who counsel; however, stress and burnout affect everyone.

### **Some Signs and Symptoms of Burnout**

Pastors, who counsel by default, may experience some of the psychological factors of stress and burnout. According to Ruth Luban, Burnout is a gradual process that occurs over an extended period of time.<sup>286</sup> Burnout doesn’t happen overnight, but it can creep up on you if you ignore the warning signs of burnout.<sup>287</sup>

According to Ronald Strong, some signs and symptoms of burnout include:

1. Behavior Signs and Symptoms<sup>288</sup>
  - A. Separating yourself from others.
  - B. Deferring, taking longer to get things done.
  - C. Withdrawing from responsibilities.
  - D. Avoiding work or coming in later and leaving earlier.
  - E. Using foodstuff, medicines, or spirits to manage.
  - F. Compelling to take out your anxiety.
2. Emotional Signs Symptoms<sup>289</sup>
  - A. Increasingly cynical and negative outlook
  - B. Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment
  - C. Loss of motivation
  - D. Feeling abandoned, confined, and overpowered
  - E. Disinterestedness, feeling by yourself in the world
  - F. Sense of failure and self-doubt.

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<sup>285</sup> Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, “Burnout”.

<sup>286</sup> Ruth Luban. *Keeping the Fire: From Burnout to Balance*. Laguna Beach, California: UK Press, 1994. Retrieve December 2, 2015 <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/preventing-burnout.htm>.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ronald Strong

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Physical Signs and Symptoms<sup>290</sup>

- A. “Frequent headaches, back pain, muscle aches
- B. Feeling tired and drained most of the time.
- C. Lowered immunity, feeling sick.
- D. Change in appetite or sleep habits”.

## **Burnout Domains**

Burnout can be divided into three primary domains.<sup>291</sup>

1. Physical Domain-Constant stress or burnout can cause the following physical symptoms:<sup>292</sup>
  - A. Backache,
  - B. Sore throat,
  - C. Migraine headache,
  - D. Insomnia,
  - E. Loss of appetite
  - F. Gastric ulcer,
  - G. Hypertension,
  - H. Frequent cough,
  - I. Indigestion
  - J. Allergy
2. Mental Domain- may mentally appear as a form of disillusion or defeat in a person or worker as follows:<sup>293</sup>
  - A. Symptoms of anger,
  - B. Cynical thought,
  - C. Negative attitude or impatience
  - D. Frustration
  - E. Helplessness and Hopelessness
  - F. Self-doubt

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<sup>290</sup> Ronald Strong

<sup>291</sup> Minirth, Frank, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flounoy. *How to Beat Burnout*. Choi, Hyeo Joo trans. Seoul: Kyujang publishing company, 1997.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Minirth, Frank, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flounoy. *How to Beat Burnout*. Choi, Hyeo Joo trans. Seoul: Kyujang publishing company, 1997.

3. Spiritual Domain-Some people may experience exhaustion with burnout and lose their ability to recognize their limitations as follows:<sup>294</sup>
  - A. People may have a strong feeling that God is incompetent and opt to manage their own situation.
  - B. People may reject relying on God and try to do His role, consciously or unconsciously.
  - C. People may feel a spiritual vacuum that no one can help them.
  - D. People may feel disillusion, and they think of abandoning life.

### **Pastors and Burnout**

Burnout is widespread in high-stressed jobs like pastoral counselors. Many pastors, who counsel by default, may experience burnout. Burnout may be prevalent in vocational Christian ministries, especially pastors because some pastors are compelled or may be compelled to be productive. In Genesis 1:28, “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” Even though work is a part of the human calling, the Bible does not tolerate working to the extent of burnout. God demonstrated the importance of rest on the seventh day of creation (Gen. 2:2-3). Jesus also demonstrated the need for humans to rest in Mark 6:31 as follows: “Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.””

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<sup>294</sup> Minirth, Frank, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flounoy. *How to Beat Burnout*. Choi, Hyeo Joo trans. Seoul: Kyujang publishing company, 1997.

Moses would have suffered burnout if he did not have the wise counsel of his father-in-law, Jethro:

“When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.” Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied (Exodus 18:14-23).”

Pastors serving as counselors suffer emotional pressures; over time, one’s tolerance for continual stress gradually wears away under a never-ending onslaught of emotional tensions.<sup>295</sup>

Aaronson and Pines posit that at home, “burnout may be noticeable in strain relationships with family members which can develop vices such as alcohol abuse and overeating; moreover, one’s constant irritability, loss of motivation, and decreased work performance can sometimes lead to turnover or attrition; the former symptoms may even have a more negative impact than the latter, as decreased work performance in human service means individuals who need assistance are being poorly supported.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Christina Maslach. *Burnout: The Cost of Caring*. New York: Malor Books, 1982, 3.

<sup>296</sup> Ayala Malakh Pines and Elliott Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*. New York: Free Press London: Collier McMillian, 1998, 55-60.

## Studies Using Copenhagen Burnout Inventory

The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) is a public domain questionnaire measuring the degree of physical and psychological fatigue experienced in three sub-dimensions of burnout: personal, work-related, and client-related burnout.<sup>297</sup> Mifont et al. used to examine the CBI's reliability and validity and then the relationship between burnout and wellbeing.<sup>298</sup> The researchers found that the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) is a reliable and valid measure to assess burnout and that burnout is negatively related to clients' wellbeing. The CBI consists of three scales measuring personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout for use in different domains. According, CBI has been used in many countries, and translations into eight languages are available.<sup>299</sup> Accordingly, CBI can be used in the ongoing prospective study of burnout in employees in the human service sector.<sup>300</sup> Kristensen et al. analyzed the validity & reliability of the CBI. All three scales were found to have very high internal reliability, & non-response rates were small.<sup>301</sup> Furthermore, Kristensen et al. found that analyses of changes over time showed substantial proportions of the employees changed with regard to burnout levels; the study concluded that the analyses indicate very satisfactory reliability & validity for the CBI instrument.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Taciano L. Milfont, Simon Denny, Shanthi Ameratunga, Elizabeth Robinson, and Sally Merry. "Burnout and Wellbeing: Testing the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory in New Zealand Teachers." *Social Indicators Research* 89, no. 1 (10, 2008): 169-77.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Tage S. Kristensen, Marianne Borritz, Ebbe Villadsen, and Karl B. Christensen. "The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory: A New Tool for the Assessment of Burnout." *Work & Stress* 19, no. 3 (07, 2005): 192-207.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Summary

Kristiansen et al. assert that the three separate parts of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (questionnaire) were designed to be applied in different domains: “the questions on personal burnout were formulated in a way so that all human beings can answer them (a truly generic scale). The work-related burnout questions assume that the respondent has paid work of some kind; finally, the client-related burnout questions include the term “client” (or a similar term when appropriate such as patient, student, inmate, etc.).”<sup>303</sup>

The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) is a new tool for the assessment of burnout. The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory represents a new way of measuring burnout because it consists of three scales measuring personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout for use in different domains.<sup>304</sup> Based on those described above, the researcher uses the term counselee as “client.” Hence, the researcher will use the Copenhagen Burnout (CBI) Inventory to assess pastoral burnout in the workplace of pastors who counsel church members by default. The researcher will critically analyze the CBI results (questionnaire) to build a report on the current ministry and suggest ways to improve the ministry’s situation. This paper uses CBI to measure stress levels in the workplace of pastors who counsel by default in Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church).

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<sup>303</sup> Kristensen et al.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The health of pastors (clergy) is undeniable, although somewhat overlooked in many churches or Christian ministries.<sup>305</sup> There is a growing literature on stress and burnout among pastors who have reported pastors' difficulties with stress, inadequacy, and frustration in meeting ministry goals.<sup>306</sup> Moreover, data indicate that there is an increase in burnout and dissatisfaction with ministry among clergy families.<sup>307</sup> However, stress among clergy families has also been overlooked and only received theoretical attention.<sup>308</sup>

For most pastors and their spouses, spiritual well-being is high, and studies have found that a higher frequency of prayer has been found to relate to higher self-reported health issues.<sup>309</sup> Much research on pastors' mental and general health has found that pastors are not immune to depression and anxiety, even though their strong spiritual resources provide some protection.<sup>310</sup> Notwithstanding, congregants often rightly perceive the strong spiritual resources that clergy possess and put them on a pedestal; in this elevated role, pastors may be reluctant to admit stress and burnout.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Proeschold-Bell, Rae, Sara Legrand, John James, Amanda Wallace, Christopher Adams, and David Toole. "A Theoretical Model of the Holistic Health of United Methodist Clergy." *Journal of Religion and Health* 50, no. 3 (09, 2011): 700-20.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.



This doctoral thesis project determined how indigenous Liberian pastors in Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church), who perform pastoral counseling, can overcome stress and burnout in their lives for successful pastoral ministry. The highlighting thesis for this research is pastors who counsel in Liberia need to practice self-care to prevent stress and burnout to provide effective counseling. This methodology section includes considering the subjects involved in the study, data collection, setting, and analysis techniques for this study.<sup>312</sup>

This doctoral thesis research paper focused on surveying pastors to build a report on the current ministry situation of stress and burnout of Liberian pastors at Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church). The first two chapters of this research discussed the problem of work-related burnout of pastors (clergy), particularly those who counsel by default, in the context of the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church). The literature review in chapter two offers extensive evidence demonstrating a correlation between pastors' lifestyles and burnout. Hence, the researcher used the survey to get the pastors' perception of stress and burnout in the pastors' working conditions and a standardized burnout inventory (Copenhagen Burnout Inventory) to get specific details of pastors' burnout from the survey described above.

Using the literature review in Chapter Two as a background, a survey instrument, and a burnout inventory based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory, the researcher, critically analyzed statistical information from the survey and burnout inventory and suggested ways to improve the ministry situation. An overview of the survey and burnout inventory findings was presented in tables highlighting frequencies and percentages.

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<sup>312</sup> Tim Sensing. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011.

## **Description of Sample and Procedures**

### **Sample**

This research study included 12 pastors, who counsel, of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Republic of Liberia.

### **Participants**

The participants of this doctoral thesis project were a purposive sample of 12 pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Liberia, which is a reasonable representation of the Unity Light Ministry Network Church's clergy in the Republic of Liberia.

The 12 pastors who participated in this research project were selected pastors of a Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) congregations between 18-65, capable of giving consent. The consent forms were placed on the first page of the survey/questionnaire and burnout inventory. The participants were not required to sign and return consent forms because the researcher designed the survey to be anonymous. However, participants consented to the terms of the surveys by proceeding to take the surveys.

The participants of the study were pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Liberia; this specific group helped answer the research question because there is no realistic alternative way to collect information about how can indigenous Liberian pastors in Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church), who perform pastoral counseling by default, overcome stress and burnout for successful pastoral ministry without seeking information and opinions from a sample of the aforesaid pastors.

## **Procedures**

The 12 pastors participating in the research study answered the survey and burnout inventory on July 2022 at the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Liberia (see Appendix A). The survey and burnout inventory were completely anonymous instruments that lasted 15 to 20 minutes each. The survey and burnout inventory did not include personally identifiable information about the participants, such as first name, last name, email address, and congregation name. The participants were required to use one of two Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) laptop computers provided by the researcher to access survey questions and burnout inventory. Each of the pastors answered the same questions under the same conditions to increase the reliability of the data collected from the pastors. The primary emphasis of the survey questions was on fact-finding.

The researcher also used a standardized burnout inventory adapted from (Copenhagen Burnout Inventory) to test for burnout among pastors. The burnout inventory's primary focus was to measure the stress and burnout levels of Unity Light Ministry Network pastors, who counsel church and community members as part of their pastoral duties.

### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

This intervention plan began with the 12 pastors taking a password-protected, eye-catching, uncluttered, and readable anonymous pastoral counseling survey on one of two designated computers at the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Liberia. The survey focused on two things. First, this survey revealed insights about pastors' experience with counseling church members in their congregations. Second, the survey also explained how these pastors feel about pastoral counseling in their congregations.

This intervention will change the problem of high-stress levels and burnout among pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Church) by suggesting ways to gain the skills necessary to deal with this problem. The researcher used a combination of a pastoral counseling survey and the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) to determine stress levels and burnout among pastors. After taking the pastoral counseling survey, each of the 12 pastors also completed a Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI)<sup>313</sup> that focused on personal burnout, work burnout, and counselor/counselee relationship (clients). The researcher analyzed the burnout of pastors by analyzing the results of the “pastoral Counseling Survey” (See Appendix A) and the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (See Appendix B).

### **Data Collection**

Each of the 12 pastors answered an anonymous survey at Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Liberia, West Africa. The Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) building is the Unity Light Ministries’ national headquarter, International (Kakata, Liberia). Kakata is the capital of Margibi County, the sixth most populous county in Liberia.<sup>314</sup> This pastoral counseling survey includes 15 questions divided into two parts, as follows:

Part 1 consists of 10 questions about the pastor’s experience with counseling church members.

Part 2 consists of 5 questions on how these pastors feel about pastoral counseling in their congregations.

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<sup>313</sup> Tage S. Kristensen, Marianne Borritz, Ebbe Villadsen, and Karl B. Christensen. The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory: A New Tool for the Assessment of Burnout. *Work and Stress*, (2005)19(3):192-207.

<sup>314</sup> 2008 Population and Housing Census, 10.

Each of the 12 pastors will also complete a Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI)<sup>315</sup> that included 19 questions divided into three parts, as follows:

Part 1 Personal Burnout: This section will consist of 6 questions about personal burnout.

Part 2 Work Burnout: This section will consist of 7 questions about work burnout.

Part 3 Clients: This section will consist of 6 questions about the Counselor/Counselee Relationship

The researcher analyzed the ten questions in part 1 of the “Pastoral Counseling Survey,” which deals with the pastors’ experience with counseling church members by putting valid responses into a chart and calculating each question’s frequency distribution and percentage. The researcher then tabulated the data for analysis to interpret the more significant meaning of the data in tables and charts for the statistical data. The researcher then analyzed the five questions in part 2, which deals with how the pastors feel about pastoral counseling in their congregations, based on respondents’ information, for recurring themes or perspectives.

The researcher measured the burnout of Unity Light Ministry Network Church (Unity Community Church) using Copenhagen Burnout Inventory <sup>316</sup> (See Appendix B) which includes 19 questions divided into three parts: Personal Burnout, Work Burnout, and 3 Clients. The researcher tabulated the data for analysis from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory to interpret the more significant meaning of the data in tables, and charts were utilized for the statistical data.

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<sup>315</sup> Tage S. Kristensen, Marianne Borritz, Ebbe Villadsen, and Karl B. Christensen. The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory: A New Tool for the Assessment of Burnout. *Work and Stress*, (2005)19(3):192-207.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid, 192-207.

## **Data Analysis**

The researcher used descriptive statistics to provide simple summaries about the samples and the measures using graphics analysis. Hence, the researcher described what the data showed to reach conclusions that extend beyond the immediate data alone (outside the scope of Unity Light Ministry Network Church) to a more general condition than describing what is going on in the data. An ancillary reason the researchers chose to use descriptive statistics is that it presents quantitative data gleaned from the survey in a more manageable form; each descriptive statistic from the survey respondents reduces lots of data into a simpler summary about a wide range of general performance. Thus, descriptive statistics was more suitable for this research design because it has the potential to provide a powerful summary that may enable comparison across pastors' responses.

The researcher generated a summary description of single variables, called “univariate” analysis associated with the survey sample. Additionally, the researcher used descriptive statistics for the survey data, including frequency and percentage response distributions, and measures of central tendencies including the mean, median, and mode to describe how close the responses are to each other.

The researcher also used summaries of the frequency of individual responses for a variable. The simplest distribution would list every value of a variable and the number of persons who had each value. Simply put, the researcher grouped raw data into various categories according to ranges of values into several frequency distributions or outcomes. Depending on a particular variable, the researcher put all the data values into categories first (number of respondents, frequency in percentages, etc.) into both tables and graphs commonly referred to as a histogram or bar chart.

Before the researcher performed survey data analysis, the respondents received their responses on the computers at the church head office in Kakata, Liberia, into a database structure that supported the survey and the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory that integrate various data measures. The researcher manually checked for data accuracy as part of data screening by checking if all questions in the survey and CBI are answered with complete responses with relevant context information (data, time, place, or errors) about Unity Light Ministry Network Church. The researcher completed the data preparation to ensure that the data collection process did not contribute to inaccuracies that may not assure the overall quality of subsequent analyses. Each respondent of the survey (pastor) answered the survey and Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) by typing directly into computers at Unity Light Ministry's head office.

The researcher analyzed the data to draw broader conclusions about the pastors from what the research gathered from the survey. The researcher could not interview each pastor or form a focused group for triangulation because the survey was anonymous, and all the pastors taking the survey were part of Unity Light Ministry Network Church. Hence, the researcher used information gleaned from the survey data analysis to uncover trends and patterns to make meaningful conclusions. The researcher also used the survey results as a benchmark for future research.

The researcher also measured countless variables of data (Psychographic Data) to get valuable insights from the pastors relating to burnout, such as pastors' opinions and feelings about pastoral counseling. The researcher believed that measuring psychographic data is more important than demographic data because the pastors are homogeneous. Even though the pastors had similar demographic characteristics, they may have different psychographics.

The researcher used numerical skills for consistent methods for measuring responses across the surveys. The researcher also used open-ended questions to solicit feedback on pastors' burnout. The researcher then analyzed the cross-sections of different variables by looking for psychographic patterns to identify an overall theme or trends within the data. The researcher further investigated each pattern to see if the researcher can glean more in-depth insights and confirm that one can apply the pattern in the sample to similar churches/ Christian ministries with reasonable confidence to draw broader conclusions.

### **Chapter Summary**

Many people turned to their pastors for help before considering going to a mental health professional such as a psychiatrist because there is usually less stigma involved in discussing one's problems with one's pastor than with a therapist.<sup>317</sup> Moreover, one's pastor may be one of the few persons that congregants can turn to in resource-poor communities where public mental health centers are less available than in suburban wealthier communities.<sup>318</sup> When considering the counseling portion of pastors' calling, no part of pastors' calling can be regarded as insignificant.<sup>319</sup> Most of the time, raw data may not be very friendly to the Unity Light executives; hence, the researcher used survey data analysis to turn the data into meaningful information in a visual form, such as charts and graphs, that's accessible, intuitive, and possibly interesting to the pastors. The researcher used the survey result to suggest ways to improve the ministry situation to prevent stress and burnout among pastors, who also provide counseling.

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<sup>317</sup> Payne, Jennifer Shepard. "'it's Kind of a Dichotomy': Thoughts Related to Calling and Purpose from Pastors Working and Counseling in Urban Resource-Poor Communities." *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 4 (08, 2017): 1419-35.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.



## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

### **Pastoral Counseling Survey**

A pastoral counseling survey and a Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) on “Counseling by Default” among Liberian pastors were conducted in June 2022 at the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Liberia. The researcher described the research procedure to pastors of the church’s local congregations who agreed to participate in an anonymous pastoral counseling survey and a Copenhagen Burnout Inventory. The researcher further explained the purpose of the research in the recruitment letter and provided an informed consent form to the respondents before taking the survey. The 12 pastors participating in the study were from the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) local congregations. All 12 pastors responded in time, and their results are included in the data analysis.

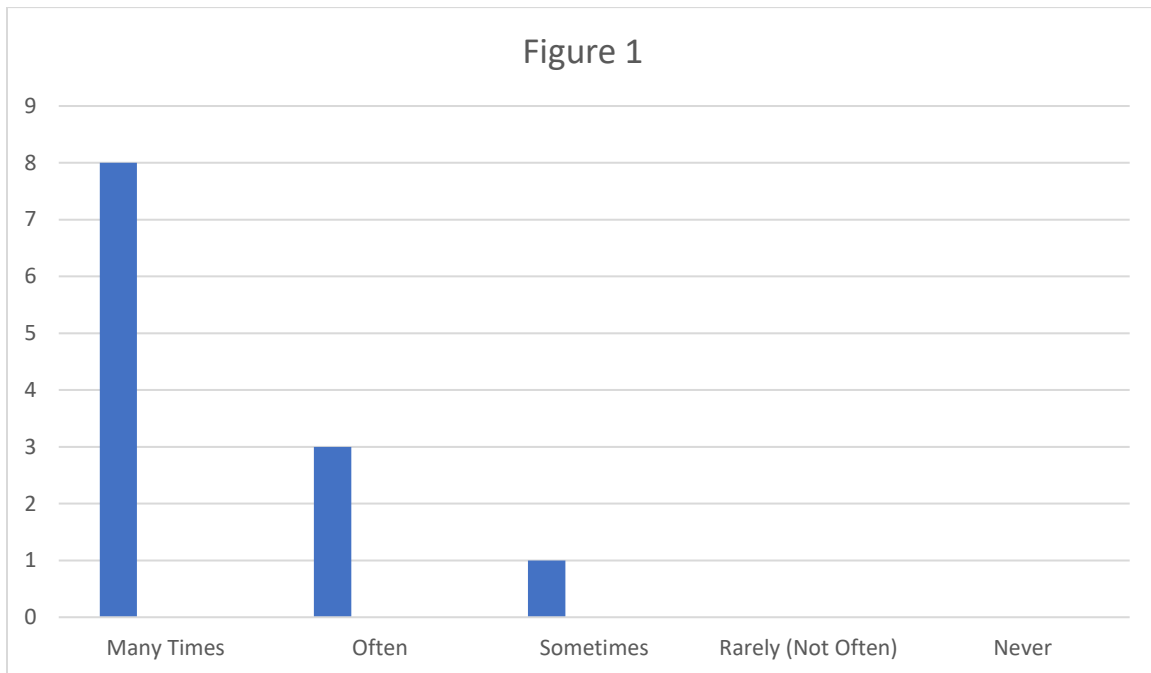
After collecting the data, the researcher concluded that 100% of the pastors had experienced the adverse effects of stress and burnout due to pastoral counseling by default. The pastoral counseling survey provided meaningful awareness of why pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church), who counsel by default, are experiencing stress and burnout. Notwithstanding, one limitation of this pastoral counseling survey and Copenhagen Burnout Inventory was the small sample size of the pastors. Another limitation of the study was the reliability of the data received from the survey depends on the pastors’ willingness to express their honest opinions on how the pastors counsel church members and how they feel about their working environment on both the survey instrument and burnout inventory. A proforma copy of the pastoral counseling survey and Copenhagen Burnout Inventory is provided in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively. The results of the study are presented in Tables 1 through 10 and depicted graphically in Figures 1 to 10.

## Survey: Part 1

### Question # 1, “Do you regularly counsel people in your church?”

**Table 1**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Many Times	8	66.7%
Often	3	25%
Sometimes	1	8.3%
Rarely (Not Often)	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	12	100%



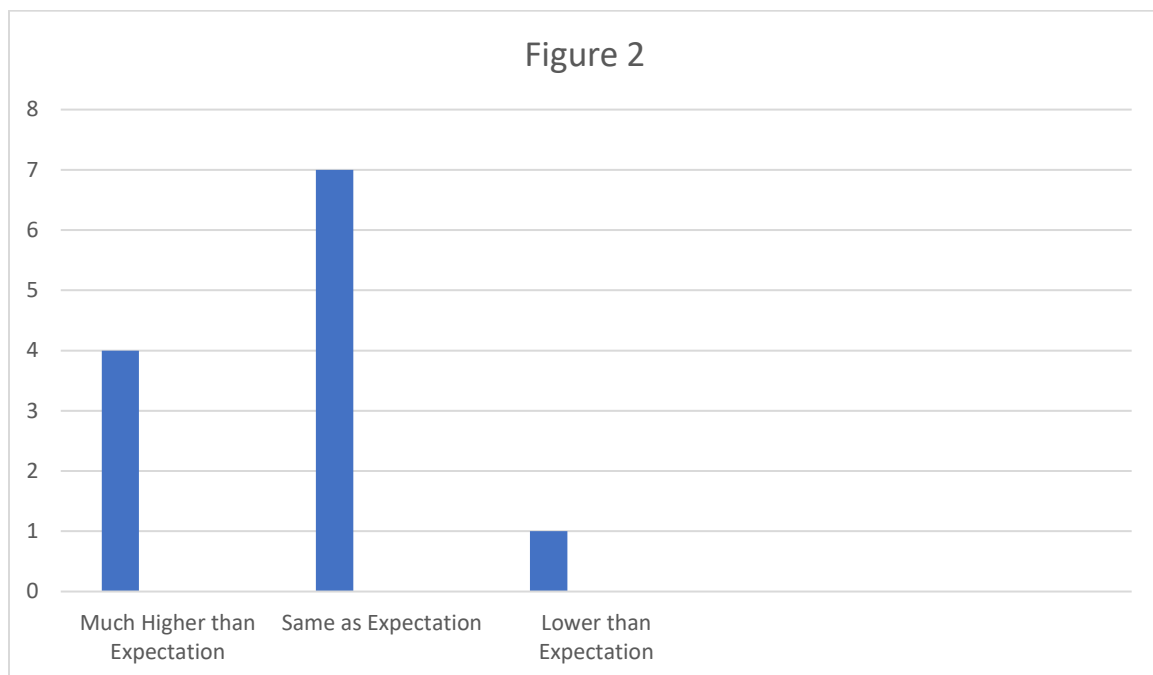
Question 1 of the survey indicates that 66.7 percent of the pastors regularly counsel people in their church many times, and 25 percent of these pastors often counsel people regularly in their churches. As such, 91.7 percent of the pastors regularly counsel church members, while only one pastor sometimes performs pastoral counseling. According to this result, all pastors regularly perform pastoral counseling of church members by default.

**Question # 2, “How much counseling problems do you have in your ministry?”**

**Table 2**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Much Higher than Expectation	4	33.3%
Same as Expectation	7	58.3%
Lower than Expectation	1	8.3%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 2**



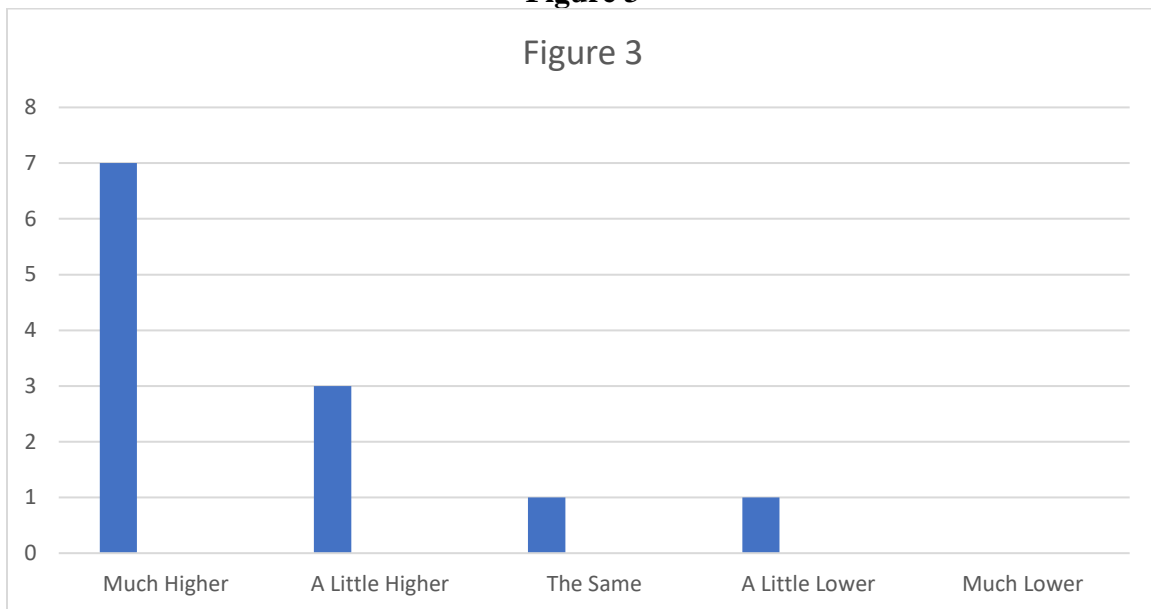
Question #2 suggests that four out of the twelve pastors had much more counseling problems than expected, while seven pastors experienced the same amount of counseling problems as expected. Notwithstanding, one pastor experienced fewer counseling problems than he expected. Most pastors experienced more counseling problems or about the same amount of counseling problems as expected.

**Question # 3, “How do you think the amount of work that you do in your ministry (church) compares to other pastors in your community?”**

**Table 3**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Much Higher	7	58.3%
A Little Higher	3	25%
The Same	1	8.3%
A Little Lower	1	8.3%
Much Lower	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 3**



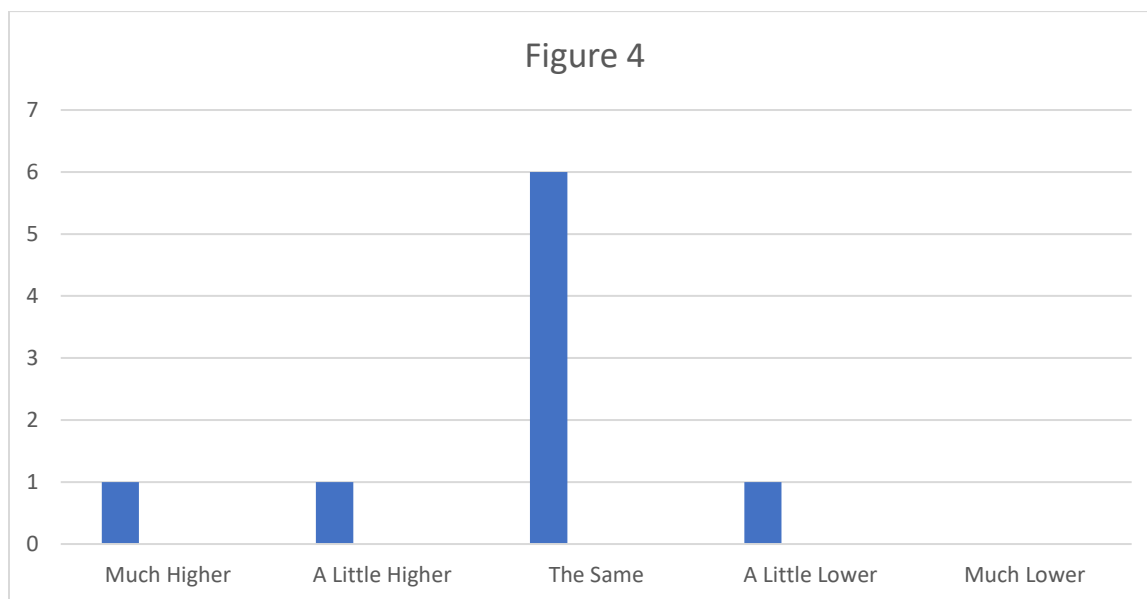
Question # 3 responses indicate that about fifty-eight percent of the pastors believed they did much more work than other pastors in their community, and twenty percent thought they did a little higher job than other pastors. About eighty-three percent of the pastors believed they did more work than other pastors, while about seventeen percent believed they did the same or a little less job than other pastors. According to the survey, most pastors thought they did more work or about the same amount of work compared to other pastors in the community.

**Question # 4, “How do you think your income (salary/benefits) compare with the income of other pastors in your community?”**

**Table 4**

Valid Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Much Higher	1	8.3%
A Little Higher	1	8.3%
The Same	6	50%
A Little Lower	4	33.3%
Much Lower	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 4**



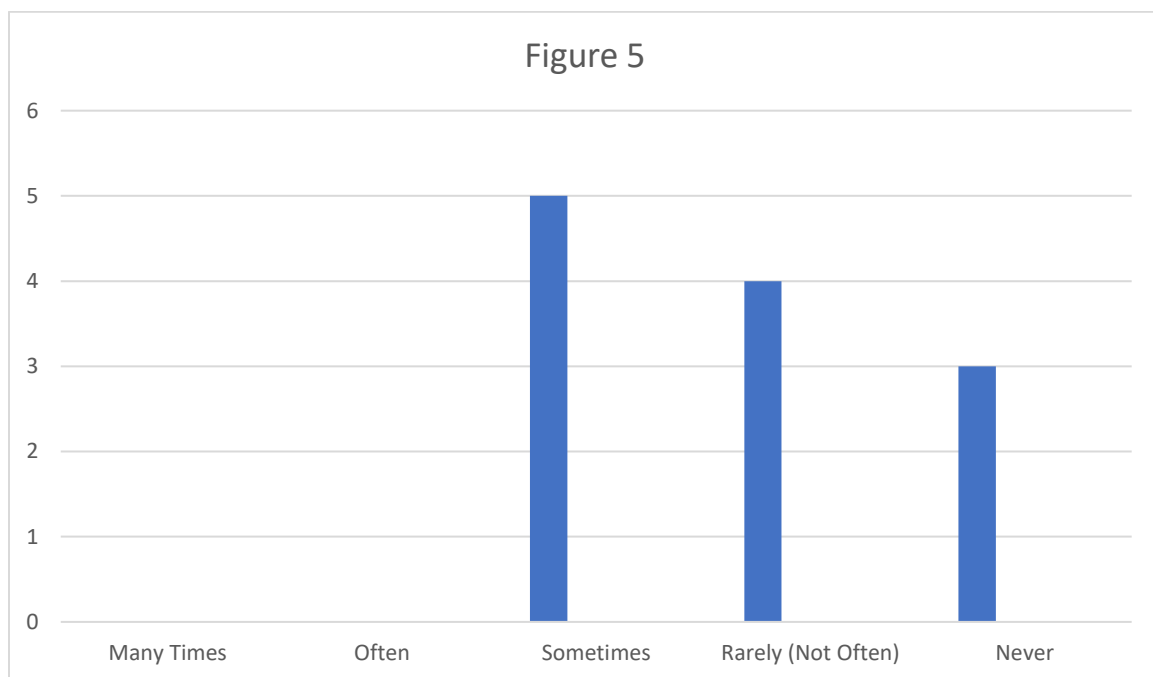
Question #4 suggests that about seventeen percent of the pastors surveyed believed they got higher salaries/benefits from the church, and fifty percent believed their income was the same as other pastors in their community. On the other hand, only about thirty-three percent thought their salary/benefits were a little lower than other pastors. However, no pastor indicated that they received much lower compensation than other pastors. Most pastors thought their income was the same or higher than other pastors in the community.

**Question # 5, “Have you ever thought of leaving your ministry (church) for another church?”**

**Table 5**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Many Times	0	0%
Often	0	0%
Sometimes	5	41.7 %
Rarely (Not Often)	4	33.3%
Never	3	25%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 5**



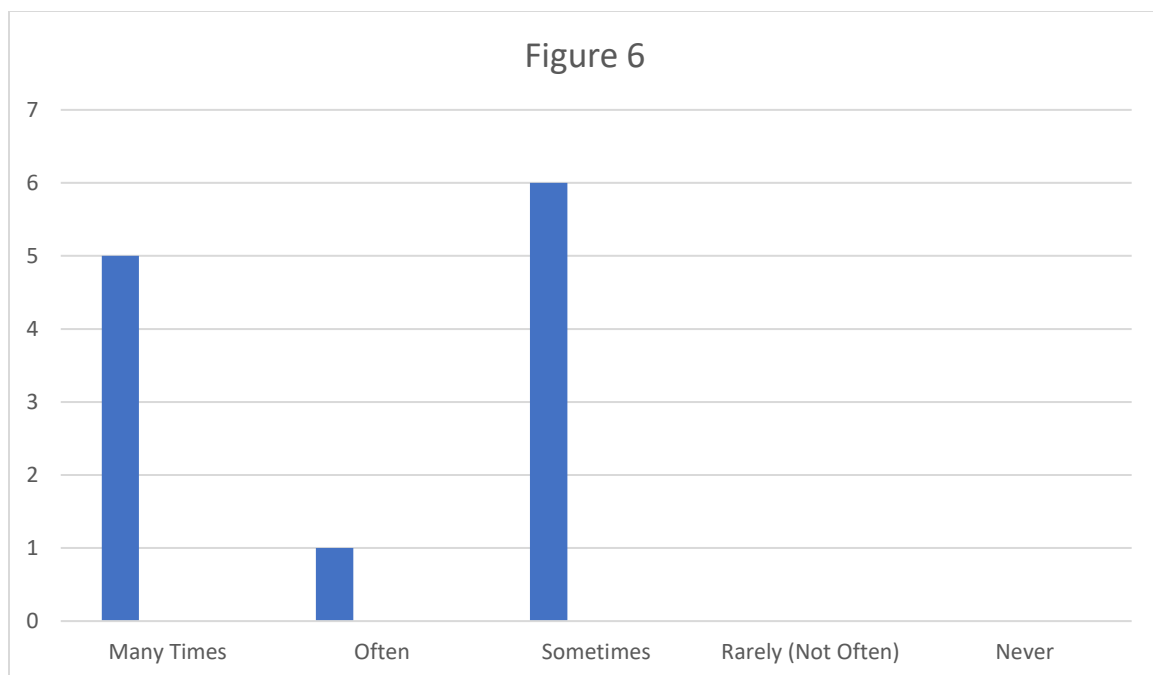
Question #5 indicates that none of the pastors have ever thought about leaving the Ministry many times or often; however, about forty percent thought about sometimes going, while about fifty-eight percent rarely or never thought about leaving the Ministry. Most pastors have sometimes thought about leaving the church; however, some pastors expressed that they never thought about leaving the church.

**Question # 6, “Have you ever experienced stress-related illness?”**

**Table 6**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Many Times	5	41.7%
Often	1	8.3%
Sometimes	6	50%
Rarely (Not Often)	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 6**



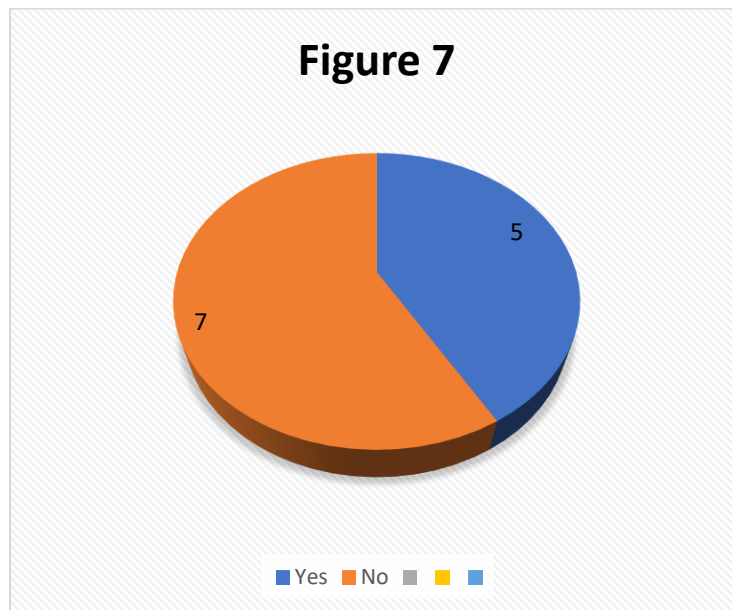
Question #6 indicates that about forty-two percent of the pastors have often experienced stress-related illness. In comparison, about eight percent reported experiencing illness often, and fifty percent experienced stress-related illness sometimes. However, no pastors have rarely or never experienced stress-related illness. According to this result, all pastors have experienced varying levels of stress-related illness.

**Question # 7, “Do you spend enough time with your family outside the church?”**

**Table 7**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	41.7%
No	7	58.3%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 7**



Question # 7 indicates that fifty-eight percent of the pastors do not spend enough time with family outside the church. On the other hand, about forty-two percent of the pastors surveyed believed they spend enough time with their families. Thus, more than half of the pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) reported not spending enough time with their families outside the church. According to the survey, most pastors who counsel by default do not spend enough time with their families outside the church.

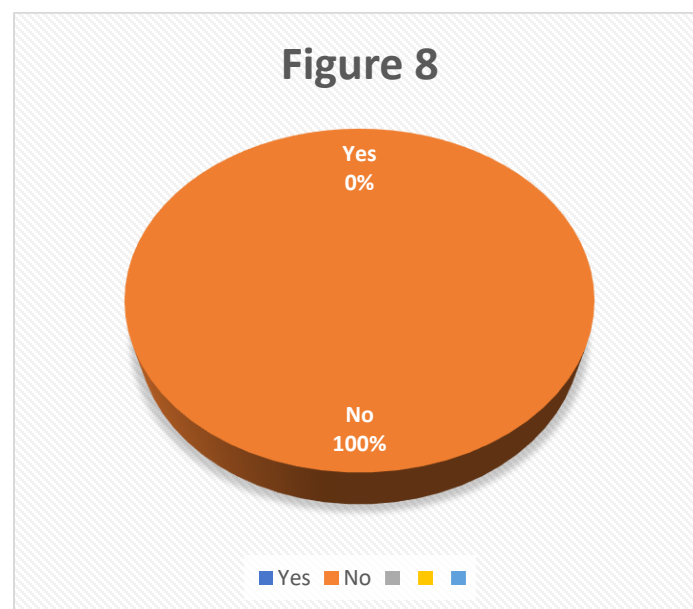


**Question # 8, “Do you have regular vacation time every year?”**

**Table 8**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Yes	0	0%
No	12	100%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 8**



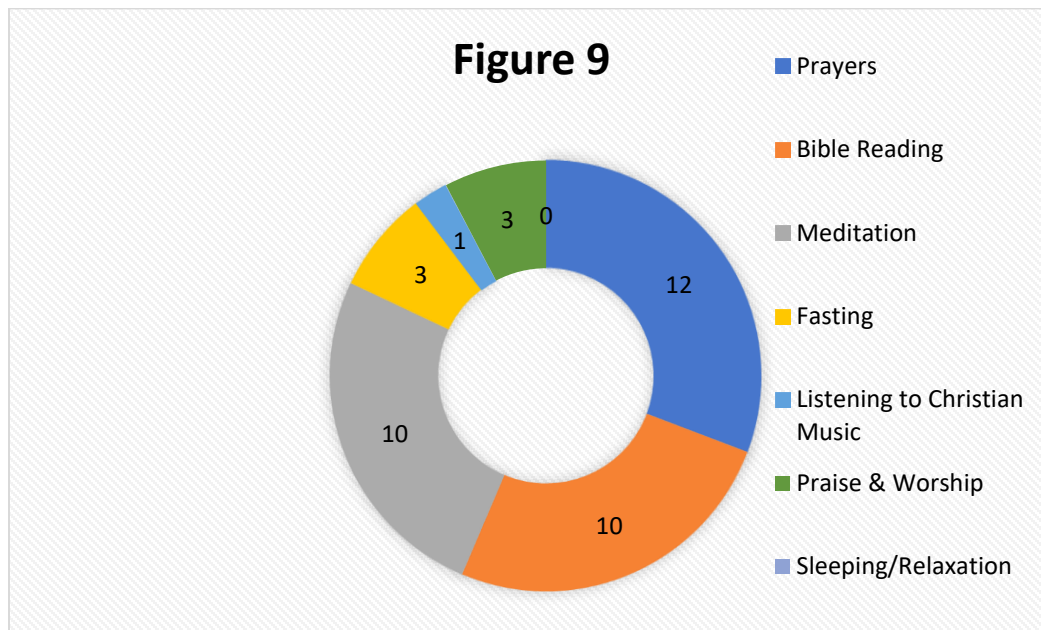
Question #8 indicates that all the pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) do not have regular vacation time every year. Rest is not optional in the Bible; rest is not a suggestion. According to Deuteronomy 5:12-14, “Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God.” God commands us to take a regular day off, and periodically take longer time off to celebrate and rest. Noticeably, none of the pastors’ surveyed indicated that they had regular vacations every year.

**Question # 9, “How do you solve problems in your ministry? (check all that apply)”**

**Table 9**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Prayers	12	100%
Bible Reading	10	83.3%
Meditation	10	83.3%
Fasting	3	25%
Praise & Worship	3	25%
Listen to Christian Music	1	8.3%
Sleeping/Relaxation	0	0%
Total	12	

**Figure 9**



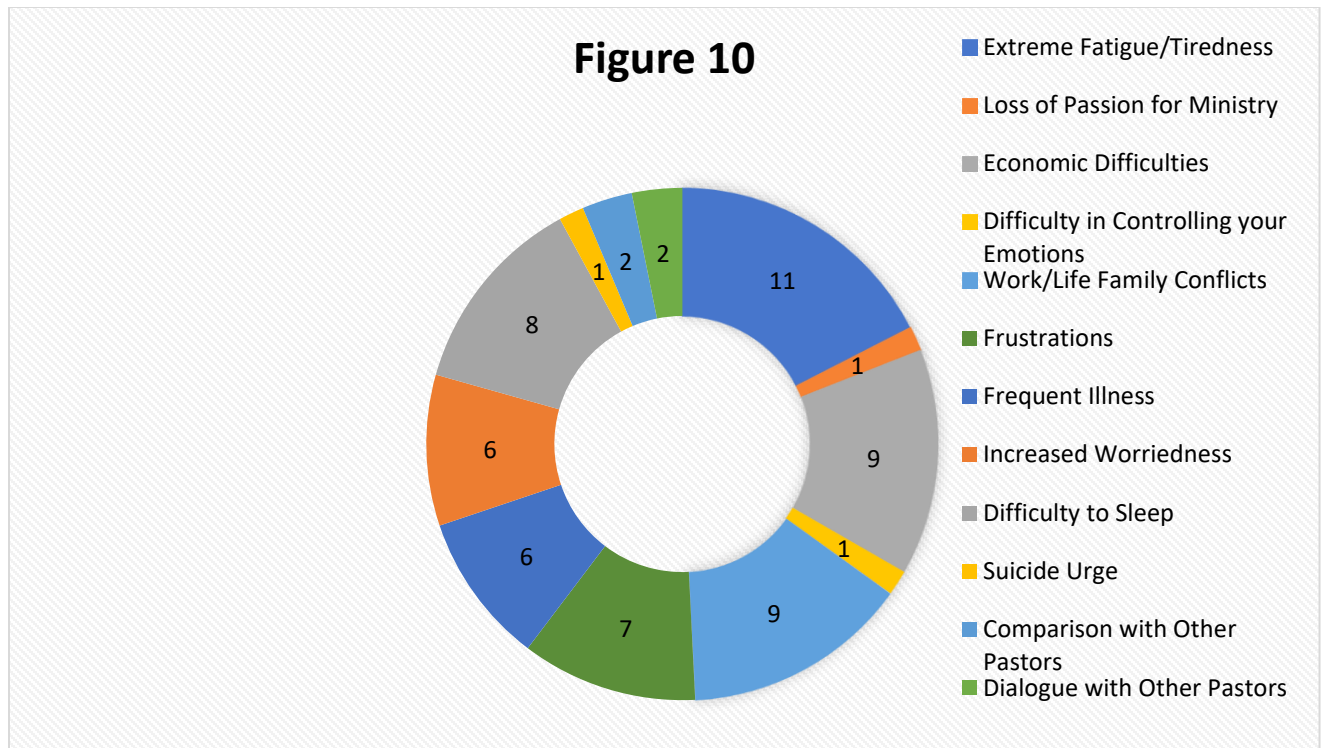
Question #9 indicates that all pastors solve church problems by praying, and most pastors also use Bible reading (10 pastors) and meditation (10 pastors). However, three out of the twelve pastors use fasting and praise & worship, while one of the pastors uses listening to Christian music. Noticeably none of the pastors used sleeping or relaxation to solve their problems.

**Question # 10, “What factors have threatened your pastoral ministry? (check all that apply).”**

**Table 10**

<b>Valid Responses</b>	<b>Frequency (<i>f</i>)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Extreme Fatigue/Tiredness	11	91.6%
Loss of Passion for Ministry	1	8.3%
Economic Difficulties	9	75%
Difficulties in Controlling Your Emotions	1	8.3%
Work/Life Family Conflicts	9	75%
Frustrations	7	58.3%
Frequent Illness	6	50%
Increased Worriedness	6	50%
Difficulty to Sleep	8	66.7%
Suicide Urge	1	8.3%
Comparison with Other Pastors	2	16.7%
Dialogue with Other Pastors	2	16.7%
Total	12	

**Figure 10**



Question # 10 indicates that most of the factors that threaten their pastoral ministry are extreme fatigue/tiredness (11 pastors), economic difficulties (9 pastors), work/family conflicts (9 pastors), difficulty sleeping (8 pastors), frustrations (7 pastors), frequent illness (6 pastors) and increased worriedness (6 pastors).

The pastors believed that comparison with other pastors (2 pastors), dialogue with other pastors (2 pastors), loss of passion for ministry (1 pastor), difficulty in controlling your emotions (1 pastor), and suicide urge (1 pastor) was less likely to threaten their pastoral ministry.

## **Survey Part II**

### **Question #11, “Describe how you perform pastoral counseling in your congregation?”**

Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) pastors use a short-term approach to pastoral counseling to help church members, well as members of their local communities, in an emotional way, deal with any problems that they are capable of handling. This type of counseling tends to focus on a way for church members to seek guidance that draws on Christian biblical traditions and practices. Hence, the pastors offer biblical guidance and spiritual support to church members seeking family, relationship, marital, premarital, or individual counseling in their congregations.

Unity Light Ministry Network pastors, who counsel by default, use a simplistic model of solution-focus approach to counseling that deliberately does three things:

1. “Finds out what the counselees (client) want.
2. Look for what God has already placed into the counselee’s life that is working and encourages him or her to do more of that.
3. Does something different, a new thing that replaces what is not working in the counselee’s life (Kollar, 2011, p.42).”

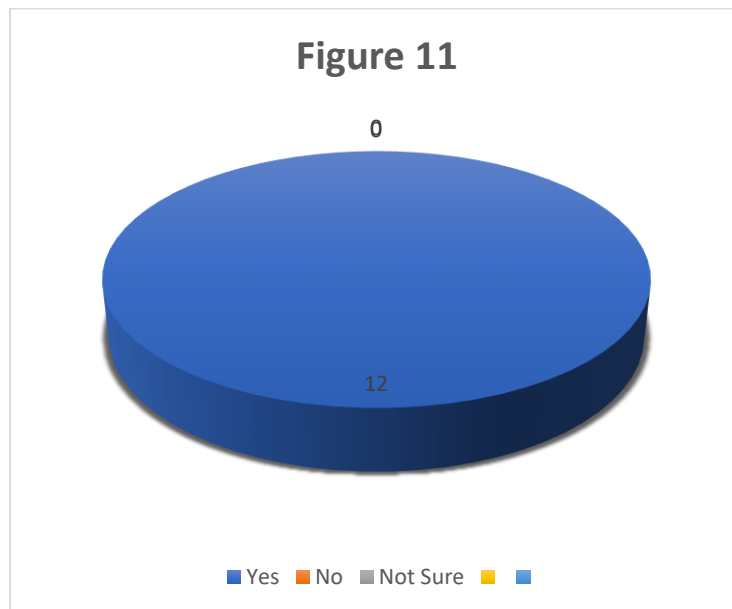
According to the pastors, an overview of Unity Light Ministry problem-focus pastoral counseling is as follows: 1. Pastoral counseling starts with a meeting with the pastor usually after Sunday Church Service to find out what is the church member’s (client) problem and set counseling schedules. 2. In the sessions (usually 3 to 5 sessions), the pastor finds ways to work with the client to find answers to solve the problem. 3. Offers biblical guidance and spiritual support to church members to do something different without imposing their own spiritual/religious views or assessment on clients.

**Question #12, “Is pastoral counseling vital to the growth (or lack of it) of your congregation?”**

**Table 11**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Yes	12	100%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	0	
Total	12	100%

**Figure 11**



All of the pastors agree that pastoral counseling is vital to the growth of their congregations.

According to the survey, the pastors believed that counseling church members do the following things:

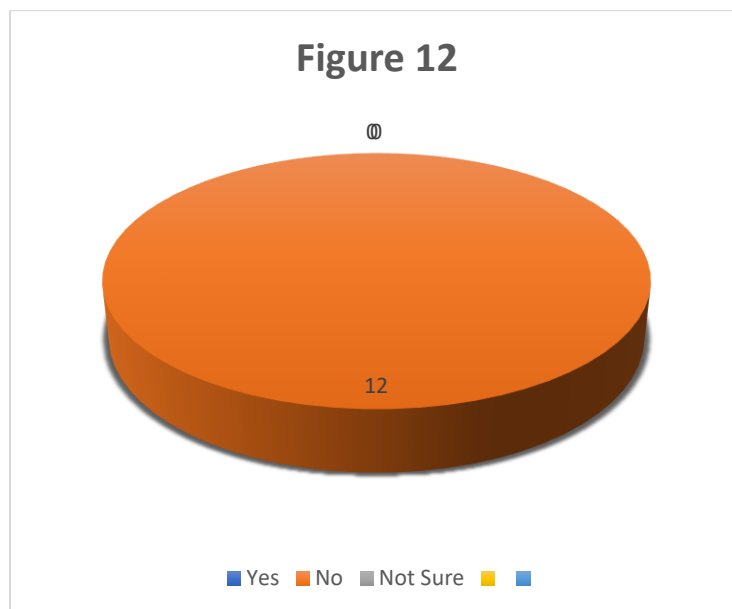
1. Pastoral counseling provides hope and helps members of the congregation (clients) deal with stress.
2. Pastoral counseling provides guidance to church members facing problems in their lives, restores their faith in God, and helps them grow.

**Question #13, “Has your pastoral training adequately prepared you for pastoral counseling in your congregation?”**

**Table 12**

Valid Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	0	0%
No	12	100%
Not Sure	0	
Total	12	100%

**Figure 12**



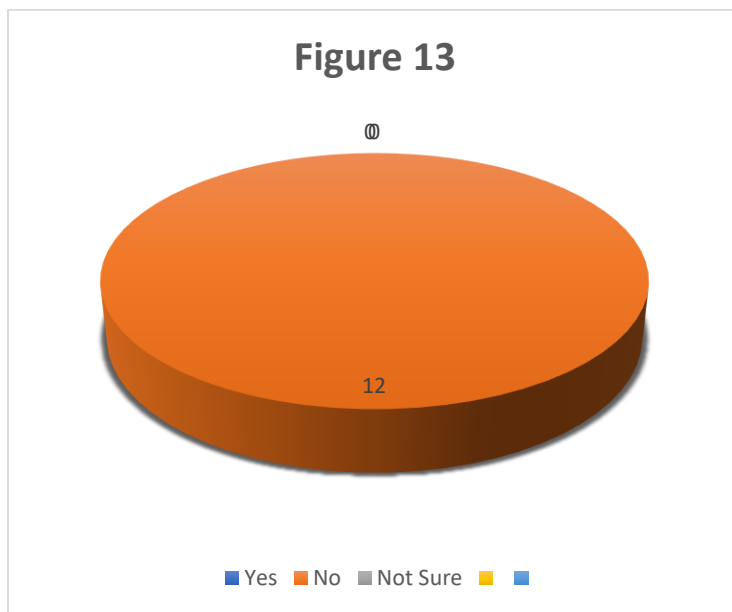
Based on answers from question 13 of the survey, 67 percent of the pastors believed that they did not have adequate training to perform pastoral counseling properly. Only 8 percent believed they had adequate pastoral counseling training. About 25 percent believed that even though they had basic pastoral counseling training, they still needed more training to adequately perform pastoral counseling.

**Question #14, “Do you like or dislike doing pastoral counseling?”**

**Table 13**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Yes	0	0%
No	12	100%
Not Sure	0	
Total	12	100%

**Figure 13**



Based on answers to question 14, 50 percent of pastors do not like to do pastoral counseling. Some of the reasons why they do not like to do counseling are:

1. It takes too much time to counsel church members, and
2. They prefer to preach rather than counsel.

Only 42 percent of the pastor liked to perform pastoral counseling, while 8 percent of the pastor did not like or dislike pastoral training because they felt it was a part of their jobs.



**Question #15, “What can your ministry/church do to improve pastoral counseling in your congregation?”**

Pastoral counseling in Unity Light Ministry Network in Kakata, Liberia is organized around the motif that pastoral counselors will help church members change or cope with things that cannot be changed and work with their clients toward transformation. According to Townsend (2009), transformation requires four elements:

1. “An emotionally charged confiding relationship with a helping person.
2. A healing setting.
3. A rational, conceptual setting scheme or myth that provides a plausible explanation for the client’s symptoms and prescribes a procedure for resolving them.
4. A procedure that requires the active participation of both client and counselor and is believed by both to be effective for restoring health (p.107).

Unity Light Ministry Network pastors that participated in this research study suggested that the ministry/church could improve pastoral counseling as follows:

1. Provide adequate formal training in pastoral counseling for pastors.
2. Encourage church members to become biblical counselors.
3. Organize more biblical counseling training workshops to provide hands-on training for pastors and selected church members.
4. The ministry needs to pay pastors extra for counseling church members.

## Copenhagen Burnout Inventory

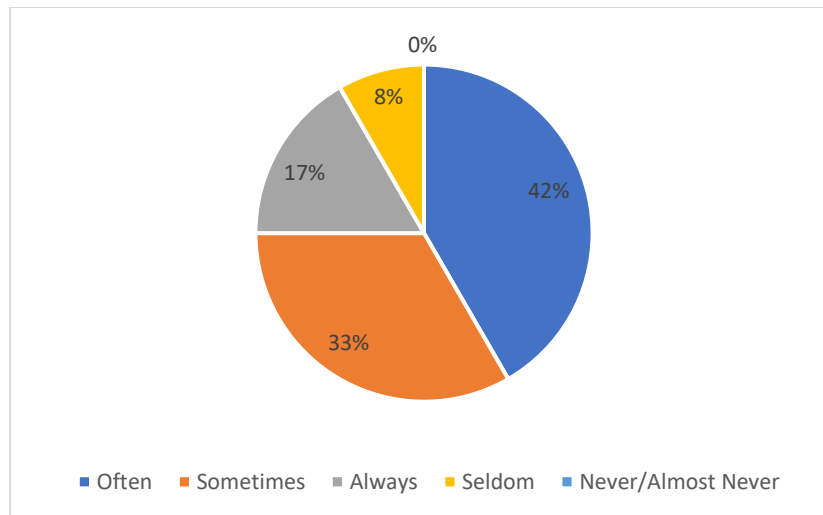
### Part 1: Personal Burnout

#### Question #1, “How often do you feel tired?”

**Table 1**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Often	5	42%
Sometimes	4	33%
Always	2	17%
Seldom	1	8%
Never/Almost Never	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 1**



Ninety-two percent of the Unity Light Pastors who perform pastoral counseling reported that they feel tired sometimes, often, or always, and eight percent seldom feel tired. On the other hand, none of the pastors that responded to the survey was never or almost never tired.

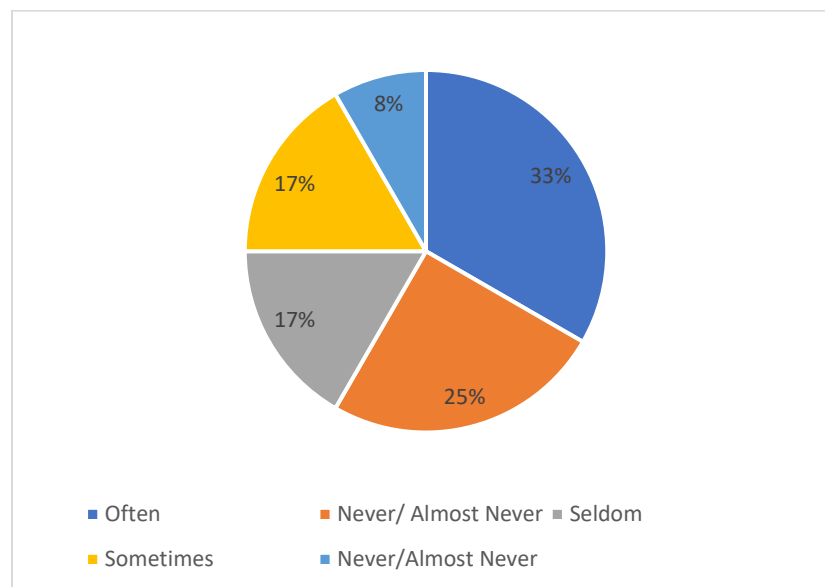
According to this result, all pastors regularly felt tired when performing pastoral counseling of church members.

**Question #2, “How often are you physically exhausted?”**

**Table 2**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Often	4	33%
Never/Almost Never	3	25%
Seldom	2	17%
Sometimes	2	17%
Always	1	8%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 2**



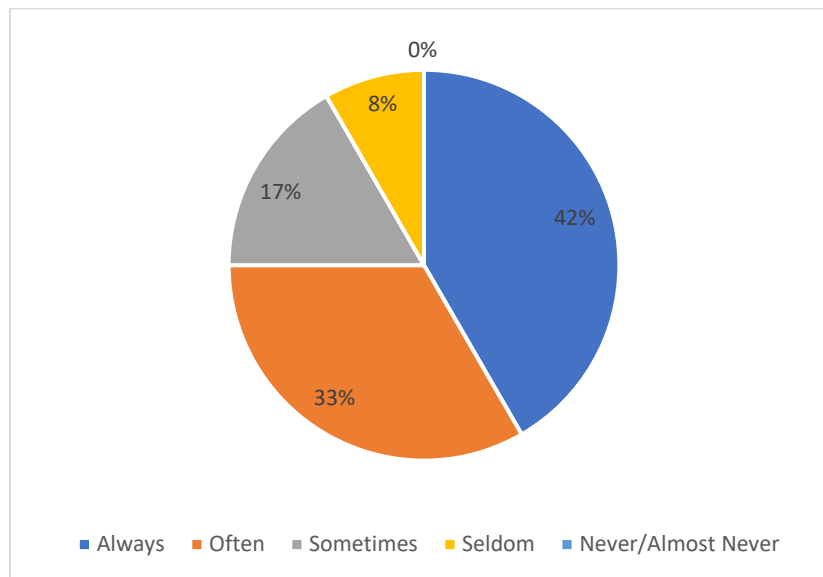
Eight percent were always physically exhausted, while sixty-seven percent were seldom, sometimes, or often physically exhausted. Only twenty-five percent of them were never physically exhausted. Hence, about seventy-five percent of the pastors reported some physical exhaustion. Most of the pastors felt physically exhausted during counseling church members.

**Question #3, “How often are you emotionally exhausted?”**

**Table 3**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Always	5	42%
Often	4	33%
Sometimes	2	17%
Seldom	1	8%
Never/Almost Never	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 3**



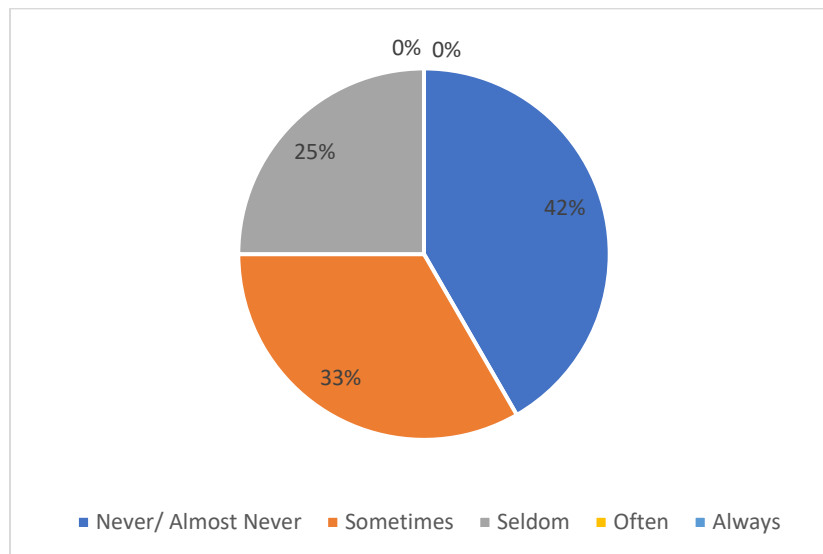
All Unity Light Ministry pastors, who counsel by default, reported that they are emotionally exhausted. Moreover, forty-two percent asserted that they are always emotionally exhausted, and no pastor said they have never been emotionally exhausted. The result indicates that all of the pastors felt physically exhausted during counseling church members.

**Question #4, “How often do you think: ‘I can’t take it anymore?’”**

**Table 4**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Never/Almost Never	5	42%
Sometimes	4	33%
Seldom	3	25%
Often	0	0%
Always	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 4**



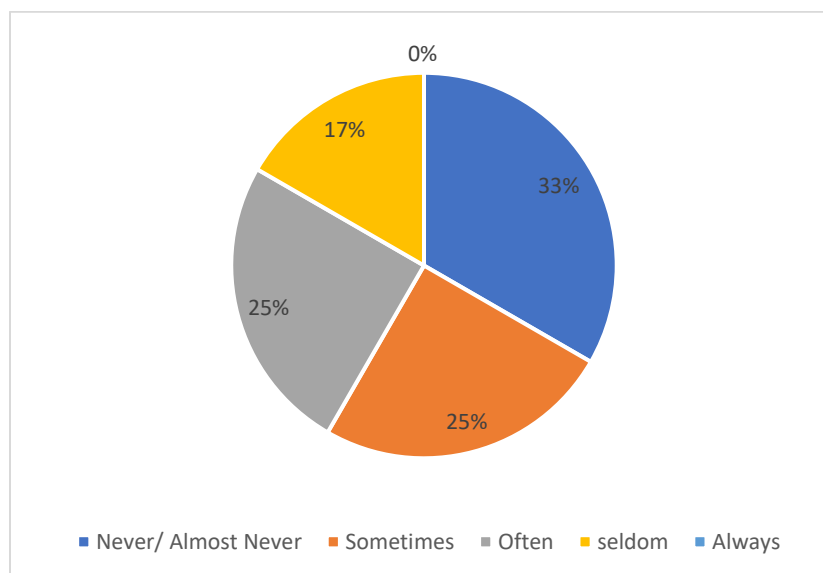
More than half of the pastors often think that “they can’t take it anymore”; however, forty-two percent of these pastors never feel that “they can’t take it anymore.” The findings from Table 4 indicate that most of the pastors at some time thought ‘they couldn’t take it anymore’; however, no pastor always thought that couldn’t take it anymore.

**Question #5, “How often do you feel worn out?”**

**Table 5**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Never/Almost Never	4	33%
Sometimes	3	25%
Often	3	25%
Seldom	2	17%
Always	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 5**



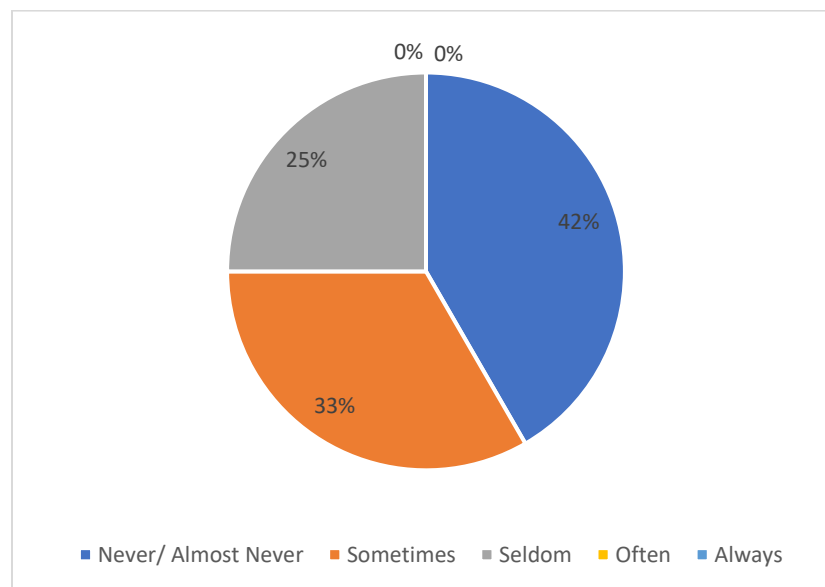
None of Unity Light Pastors, who counsel by default, always felt worn out; however, sixty-seven percent of the pastors felt some degree of being “worn out.” On the contrary, about one-third of the pastors almost never felt “worn out.” The findings from Table 5 indicate that some pastors almost never felt worn out.

**Question #6, “How often do you feel weak and susceptible to illness?”**

**Table 6**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Never/Almost Never	5	42%
Sometimes	4	33%
Seldom	3	25%
Often	0	0%
Always	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 6**



Most pastors (58%) often felt weak and susceptible to illness, while forty-two percent did not feel weak or susceptible to illness. Notwithstanding, none of the pastors often or always felt vulnerable to sickness. Results from Table 6 indicate that some pastors did not always feel weak and susceptible to illness.

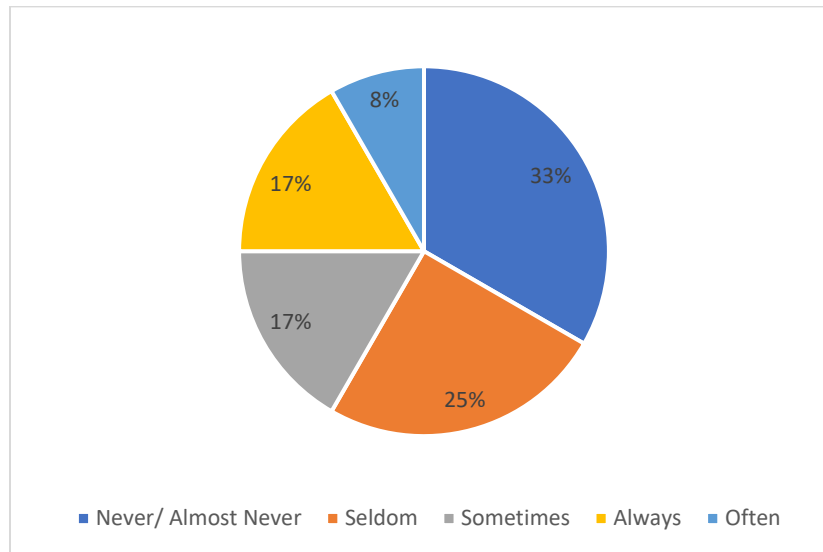
## Part II: Work Burnout

### Question #7, “Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day?”

**Table 7**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Never/Almost Never	4	33%
Seldom	3	25%
Sometimes	2	17%
Always	2	17%
Often	1	8%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 7**



Two-thirds of the pastors reported feeling worn out at the end of the working day; however, the other one-third were rarely worn out after work. However, only twenty-five percent of the pastor often or always felt worn out at the end of every day. The result from Table 7 indicates that most of the pastors did not feel worn out at the end of the working day.

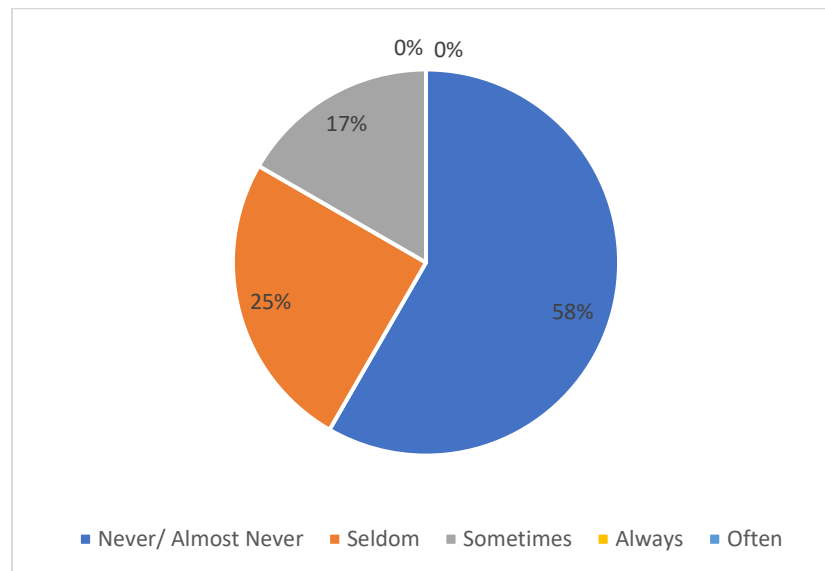


**Question #8, “Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?”**

**Table 8**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Never/Almost Never	7	58%
Seldom	3	25%
Sometimes	2	17%
Always	0	0%
Often	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 8**



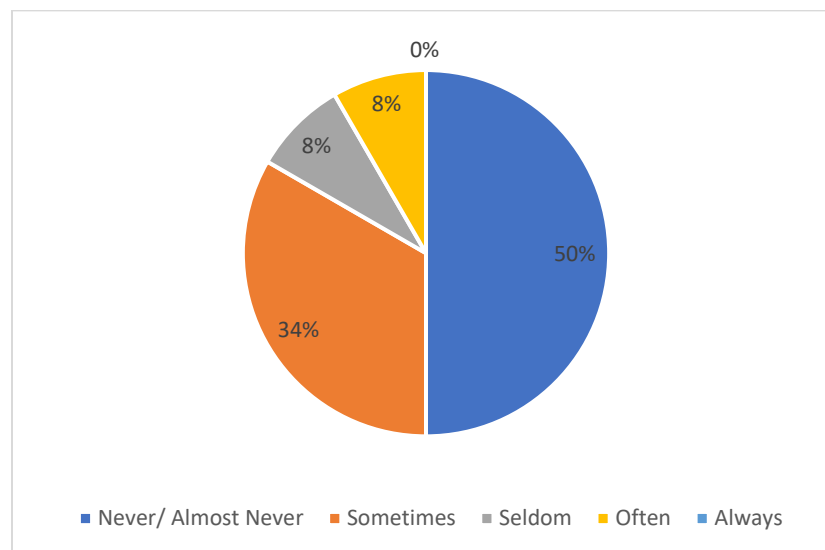
Most Unity Light Pastors did not feel exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work. Furthermore, most Unity Light Pastors did not often or always feel exhausted in the morning before they went to work.

**Question #9, “Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?”**

**Table 9**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Never/Almost Never	6	50%
Sometimes	4	34%
Seldom	1	8%
Often	1	8%
Always	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 9**



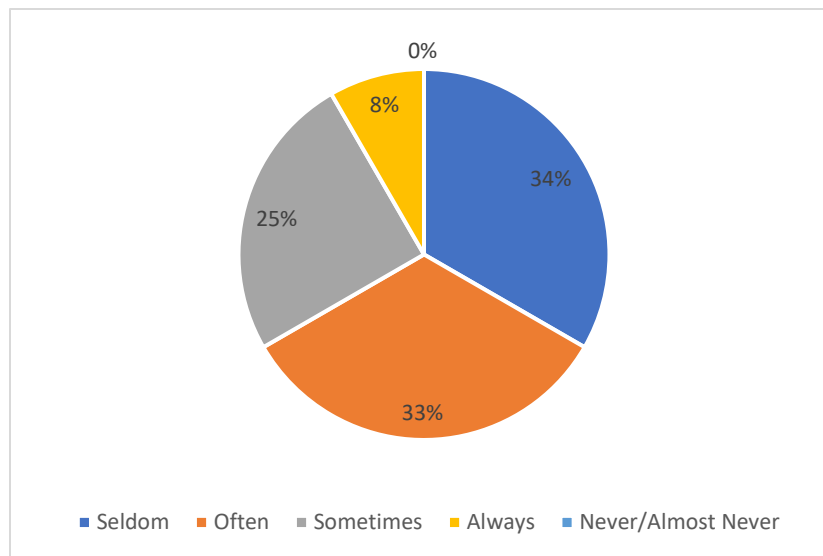
Fifty percent of the pastors surveyed did not feel that every working hour was tiring for them. Results from Table 9 indicate that most pastors did not tired; however, some pastors admitted that they sometimes felt tired but were never always tired with every working hour.

**Question #10, “Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time?”**

**Table 10**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Seldom	4	34%
Often	4	33%
Sometimes	3	25%
Always	1	8%
Never/Almost Never	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 10**



Twenty-five percent of the pastor sometimes have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time, while sixty-seven percent often or seldom have time for family and friends.

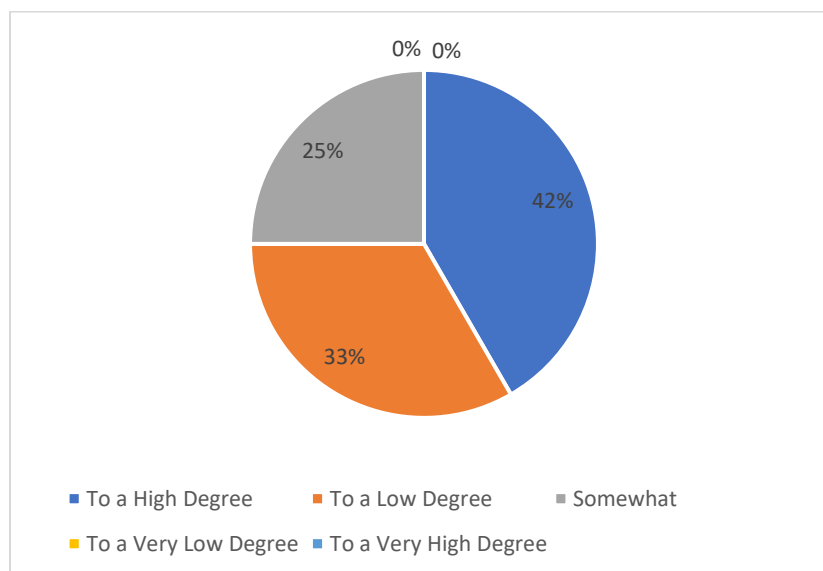
Notwithstanding, Results from Table 10 indicate that none of the pastors reported that they almost never had time for family and friends after work.

**Question #11, “Is your work emotionally exhausting?”**

**Table 11**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
To a High Degree (75%)	5	42%
To a Low Degree (25%)	4	33%
Somewhat (50%)	3	25%
To a Very Low Degree (0%)	0	0%
To a Very High Degree (100%)	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 11**



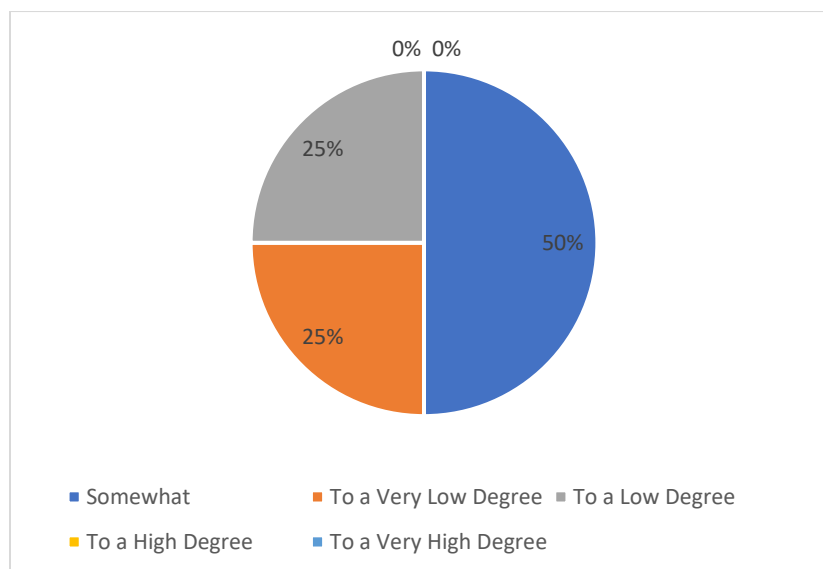
All Unity Light Pastors, who counsel by default, agree that their work is emotionally exhausting; however, results from Table 11 indicate that none of the pastors asserted that their work was emotionally exhausting to a very high or very low degree.

**Question #12, “Does your work frustrate you?”**

**Table 12**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Somewhat (50%)	6	50%
To a Very Low Degree (0%)	3	25%
To a Low Degree (25%)	3	25%
To a High Degree (75%)	0	0%
To a Very High Degree (100%)	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 12**



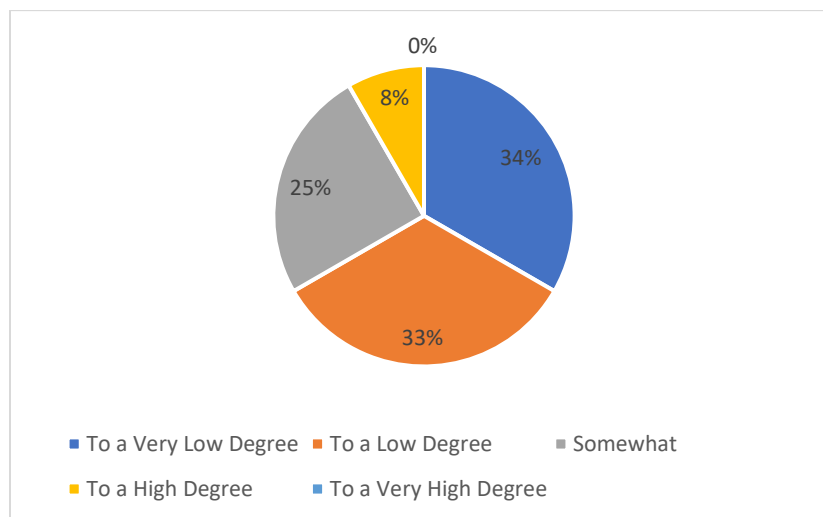
Half of the pastors reported that pastoral counseling somewhat frustrated them, while the other half were frustrated to a low degree and very low degree, respectively. However, none of the pastors reported a high degree or very high degree of frustration with pastoral counseling.

**Question #13, “Do you feel burnout because of your work?”**

**Table 13**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
To a Very Low Degree (0%)	4	34%
To a Low Degree (25%)	4	33%
Somewhat (50%)	3	25%
To a High Degree (75%)	1	8%
To a Very High Degree (100%)	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 13**



Most Unity Light Pastors, who counsel by default, reported low levels of burnout because of their work; only eight percent said a high degree of burnout. Table 13 indicates that none of the pastors asserted that they had experienced a very high degree of burnout while performing pastoral counseling.

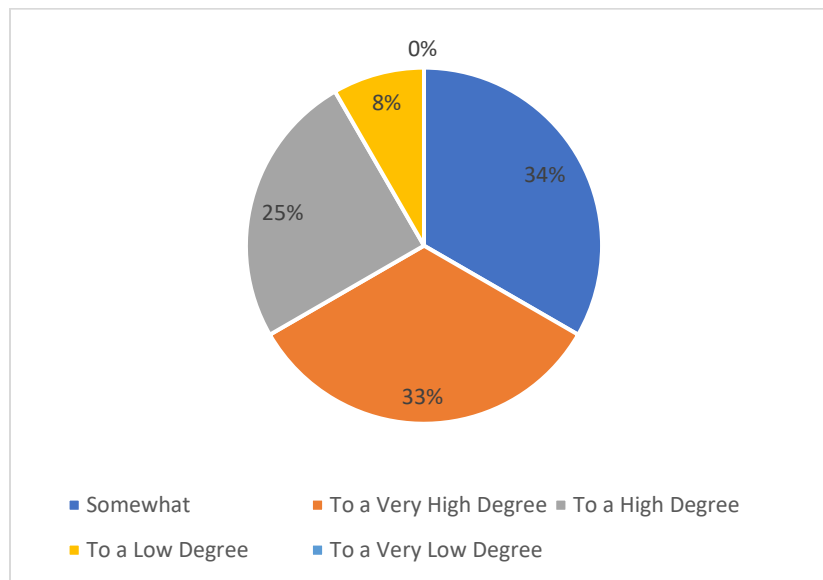
### Part III: Clients (Pastoral Counselor/Counselee Relationship)

#### Question #14, “Do you find it hard to work with clients (counselees)?”

**Table 14**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Somewhat (50%)	4	34%
To a Very High Degree (100%)	4	33%
To a High Degree (75%)	3	25%
To a Low Degree (25%)	1	8%
To a Very Low Degree (0%)	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 14**



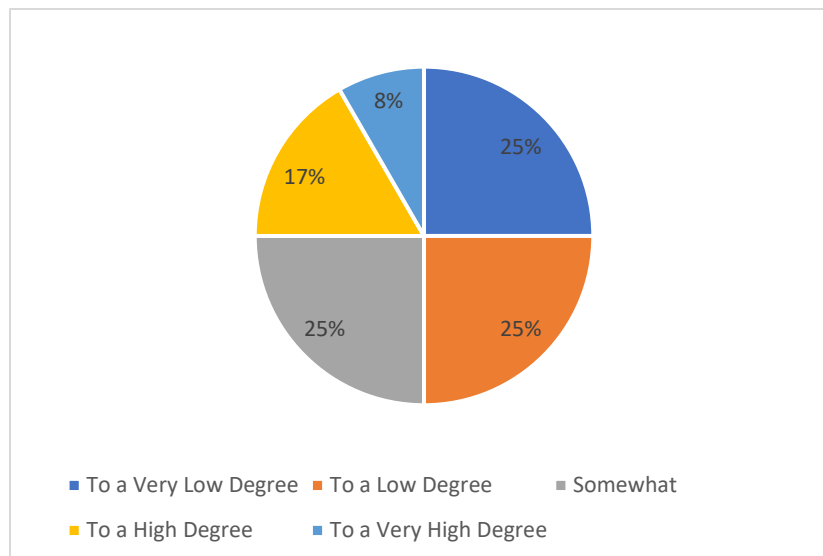
All Unity Light Pastors, who counsel by default, reported that they find it hard to deal with counselees during pastoral counseling. Results from Table 15 also found that only one pastor reported that it was not hard to work with clients during pastoral counseling.

**Question #15, “Does it drain your energy to work with clients (counselees)?”**

**Table 15**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
To a Very Low Degree (0%)	3	25%
To a Low Degree (25%)	3	25%
Somewhat (50%)	3	25%
To a High Degree (75%)	2	17%
To a Very High Degree (100%)	1	8%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 15**



All Unity Light Pastors, who counsel by default, reported that it drains their energy to work with clients (counselees) during pastoral counseling. Half of the pastors assert that they had low-level difficulties with clients, while the other half express some form of problem (25%) and a high degree of difficulty (25%).

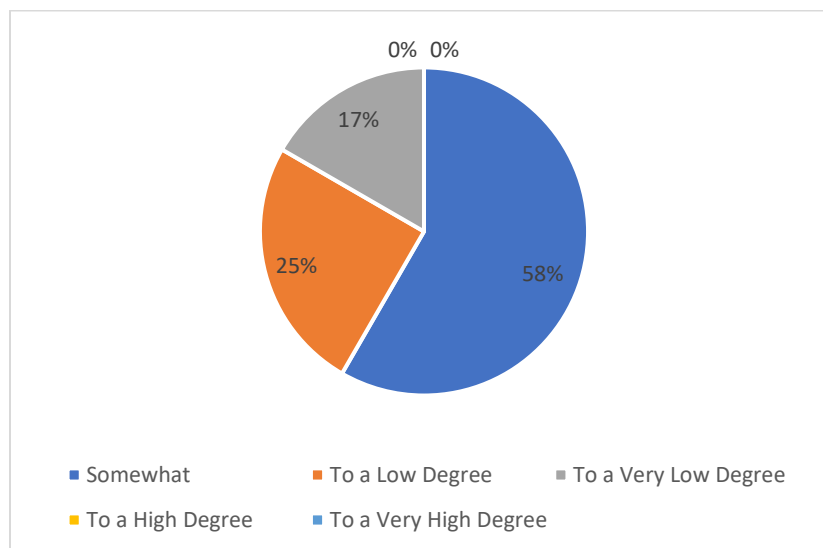


**Question #16, “Do you find it frustrating to work with clients (counselees)?”**

**Table 16**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Somewhat (50%)	7	58%
To a Low Degree (25%)	3	25%
To a Very Low degree (0%)	2	17%
To a High Degree (75%)	0	0%
To a Very High Degree (100%)	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 16**



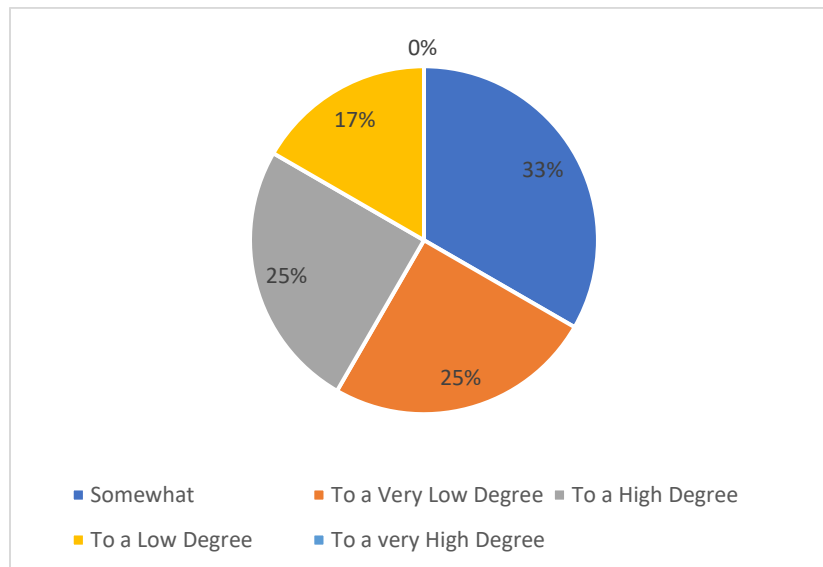
All Unity Light Pastors reported low degrees or somewhat low difficulty levels when performing pastoral counseling. However, results from Table 16 indicate that none of the pastors surveyed had high or very high degrees of problems when counseling.

**Question #17, “Do you feel that you give more than you get back when you work with clients (counselees)?”**

**Table 17**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Somewhat (50%)	4	33%
To a Very Low Degree (0%)	3	25%
To a High Degree (75%)	3	25%
To a Low Degree (25%)	2	17%
To a Very High Degree (100%)	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 17**



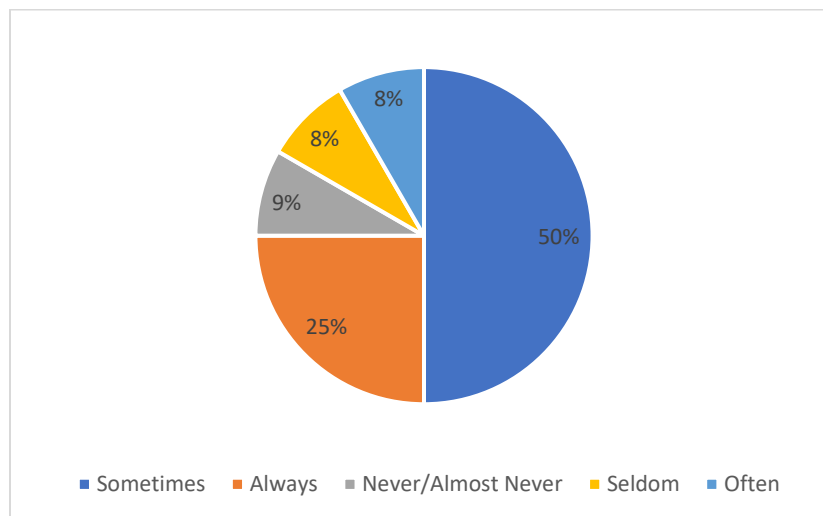
All Unity Light Pastors believe that they give more than they get back when they work with clients (counselees). The results from Table 17 of the survey indicate that none of the pastors experienced a very high degree of difficulty during pastoral counseling.

**Question #18, “Are you tired of working with clients (counselees)?”**

**Table 18**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Sometimes	6	50%
Always	3	25%
Never/Almost Never	1	9%
Seldom	1	8%
Often	1	8%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 18**



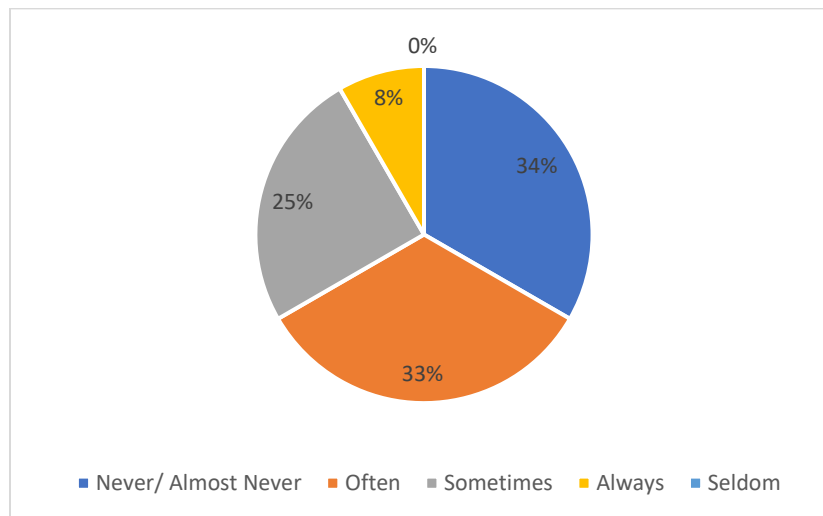
The result from Table 18 indicates that more than half of Unity Light Pastors sometimes feel tired of working with counselees. Hence, few (less than ten percent) pastors do not feel tired of working with counselees.

**Question #19, “Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working with clients (counselees)?”**

**Table 19**

Valid Responses	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Never/Almost Never	4	34%
Often	4	33%
Sometimes	3	25%
Always	1	8%
Seldom	0	0%
Total	12	100%

**Figure 19**



About sixty-six percent of Unity Light Pastors, who counsel by default, are tired of performing pastoral counseling and wonder how long they can continue working with clients. However, thirty-four percent of pastors love to counsel church members and almost never wonder about how long they can continue working with clients. The result of Table 19 indicates that most Unity Light Ministry pastors, who counsel by default, are tired of performing pastoral counseling.

## **Chapter Summary**

The study of burnout among Liberian pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) who counsel by default. The pastoral counseling survey showed that about ninety-two percent (91.7%) of the pastors surveyed counsel by default. All the pastors experienced varying levels of stress-related illness; notwithstanding, all pastors agree that pastoral counseling is vital for church growth because it helps congregants facing problems to find solutions that deepen their relationship with God. Furthermore, the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) indicated that pastors suffered personal and client (counselee)-related burnout; all pastors suffered emotional and physical exhaustion when dealing with counselees during pastoral counseling. No pastor had high levels of work burnout due to pastoral work.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

### INTRODUCTION

Many Liberians turn to their pastors for help before considering going to a professional counselor. Liberian pastors who counsel by default at Unity Light Ministry, who work long hours and believe it takes too much time to do pastoral counseling in addition to other pastoral duties, are more likely to experience burnout. Accordingly, these pastors must work long hours to achieve the expected results.<sup>320</sup> Another problem that can lead to burnout among pastors is that “pastors do not feel as though they are permitted to feel emotions such as sadness, depression, hurt and anger.”<sup>321</sup> The cause of burnout that occurs in pastors, as occupational workers, is not simple enough to express in one word because burnout comes from outside and inside of pastors; burnout typically relates to job stress, strain, and uncertainty.<sup>322</sup> Stress and burnout are not unique to Pastors of Unity Light Ministry.

Today job stress and burnout are a “global phenomenon.”<sup>323</sup> Burnout in pastors does not occur suddenly in Liberian pastors; instead, it tends to start small and progress slowly. According to Maslach,

“The burnout syndrome appears to be a response to chronic, everyday stress (rather than to occasional crises). The emotional pressure of working closely with people is a constant part of the daily job routine. What changes over time is one’s tolerance for the continual stress, a tolerance that gradually wears away under the never-ending onslaught of emotional tensions.”<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Bernice Suzette Patterson, “Hurting Leaders: The Lived Experiences of African-American Clergy and Their Views, Attitudes, and Barriers to Help-Seeking,” *Dissertations*, Paper 212 (2013).

<sup>321</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>322</sup> Ayala Malakh Pines and Elliott Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures* (New York: Free Press London: Collier McMillian) 55-60.

<sup>323</sup> Beverly Potter, *Overcoming Job Burnout: How to Renew Enthusiasm for Work*. Berkeley, CA: Ronin Publishing Company, 1998.

<sup>324</sup> Christiana Maslach, *Burnout: The Cost of Caring* (New York: Malor Books, 1982), 3.

This research on pastoral burnout among Liberian pastors has greatly impacted the researcher's life and Christian ministry. On the one hand, the researcher is optimistic because the impact of burnout on Liberian pastors' life is moderate, as indicated by the results of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory. After all, pastors can still create a healthy work-life balance and meet realistic ministry objectives. On the other hand, burnout can negatively impact the pastor's personal life, resulting in stress, depression, exhaustion, resignation, and eventually burnout. Pastoral burnout among Liberian pastors is challenging to define because burnout in pastors takes many different forms.

Burnout is "to cause, to wear out, or become exhausted by excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources."<sup>325</sup> Clinebell, an expert in pastoral counseling, describes burnout in pastors as "the condition that flies for a moment, like a rocket that soars momentarily after it runs out of fuel."<sup>326</sup> Critical aspects of burnout syndrome are emotional exhaustion, negative and cynical attitudes about one's client, and negative self-evaluation about one's work with clients.<sup>327</sup> It is pivotal for Unity Light Ministry pastors not to experience burnout; when pastors burn out, they experience difficulties in the body, mind, and spirit and are incapable of functioning effectively.<sup>328</sup> Most pastoral burnout occurs because of poor work conditions; hence, pastors should not fall into personal despair because burnout is not evidence of failure.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Marriam Webster. *Third New International Dictionary of English Language Unabridged*, s.v. "Burnout."

<sup>326</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Well Being*, Jong Heon Lee, and Sun Choon Oh, trans. (Seoul: Growth Counseling Institute, 1995), 174.

<sup>327</sup> Maslach et al., *The Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*.

<sup>328</sup> Herbert J. Freudenberger, *Burnout: The High Cost of High Achievement* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1980), 10.

<sup>329</sup> Archibald D. Hart, "How Can We Prevent the Burnout of Pastors?" *Monthly Pastoral Ministry* (November 1996), 100.

## Prevention of Stress and Burnout

Some of the ways that the researcher believes that Pastors of Unity Light Ministry can prevent stress and burnout when performing pastoral are as follows:

1. Seek biblical principles of overcoming burnout.

- A. Jesus Principles- One principle that Jesus used to overcome stress and burnout

was that he told his disciples to go to a quiet place and rest; hence, the change of place and the separation from work helps prevent burnout.<sup>330</sup> Sometimes the pastors need to go to a quiet place and rest before performing pastoral counseling.

- B. Jeremiah Principle- Jeremiah relied on God even when given the assignment to

deliver an unpopular and condemning message to Israel. Sometimes, clients may not want to listen to the pastors during counseling; pastors, like Jeremiah, must continue to rely on God and tell their clients the truth that will inevitably come.<sup>331</sup>

Jeremiah tried to make the people understand that their problem was a lack of belief, trust, and faith in God, along with an absence of fear that caused them to take Him for granted; it is easy to be lulled into a false sense of security, especially when the focus is not on God.<sup>332</sup>

Sometimes Unity Light Pastors need to make their clients understand that they have to rely on God and not be lulled into the notion that pastors can solve all of their problems through counseling even if their focus is not on God.

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<sup>330</sup> James R. Edwards, "The Gospel According to Mark," in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 1978.

<sup>331</sup> GotQuestion.org, "The Life of Jeremiah," retrieved from <https://www.gotquestions.org/life-Jeremiah.html> (accessed January 15, 2023).

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.



- C. Moses Principle- Moses essentially had responsibility for over two million Hebrew refugees. When things began to wear on him, his father-in-law, Jethro, suggested that he delegate responsibility to other faithful men, a lesson that many people in authority over others need to learn.<sup>333</sup> Sometimes, Unity Light Pastors need to delegate other responsibilities to other leaders in the church to prevent stress and burnout.
2. Delegate other leadership duties to avoid working too much.
- Delegation occurs when a leader (manager) gives subordinates the responsibility and authority to make decisions that they would typically make; as such, delegations emphasize the leaders' perspective on power sharing.<sup>334</sup> Unity Light pastors need to delegate some leadership responsibilities to make time for pastoral counseling since they recognize that pastoral counseling provides hope and guidance to church members to help restore their faith in God.
3. Reduce work stressors.
- Unity Light Pastors need to reduce life stressors to prevent stress and burnout. Life stressors are tensions, anxieties, and conflicts that stem from pressures and demands in their personal lives.<sup>335</sup> People must cope with a variety of life stressors because they have a limited capacity to respond to stressors.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> GotQuestion.org, "The Life of Moses," retrieved from <https://www.gotquestions.org/life-Moses.html> (accessed January 15, 2023).

<sup>334</sup> Gary Yukl. *Leadership in Organizations*. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson), 2002.

<sup>335</sup> Don Hellriegel and John W. Slocum. *Organizational Behavior*. (Mason: OH: Southwest Cengage Learning), 2009.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

Unity Light Pastors need to stressors in a way that will not result in negative consequences for the pastoral counselor or the client. The researcher proposes that Unity Light Pastors need to find ways to reduce stress and burnout in the workplace to be more effective in pastoral counseling. According to Hellriegel and some ways to reduce work stressors are:

- A. "Improvement in the physical work environment
  - B. Job redesign
  - C. Changes in workloads and deadlines
  - D. Changes in work schedules, more flexible hours, and sabbaticals
  - E. Greater levels of employee participation, particularly in planning changes that affect them.
4. Modify Behavior and create wellness programs.

The proposes that Unity Light Ministry target improvement targeted at behavior modification to reduce burnout such as:

- A. "Team building
- B. Career counseling and other pastors (employee) assistance programs
- C. Workshops on time management
- D. Workshops on job burnout to help pastors understand its nature and symptoms.
- E. Training in relaxation techniques

One comprehensive remedy for pastors to improve Unity Light Ministry's pastors' ability to cope with stress and prevent burnout is to implement wellness programs that incorporate self-care and health promotion to help pastors make better lifestyle choices.<sup>337</sup> The research asserts that Unity Light Ministry (Unity Community Church) needs to implement the aforesaid measures avoid stress and burnout for a successful pastoral counseling ministry.

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<sup>337</sup> Don Hellriegel and John W. Slocum. *Organizational Behavior*. (Mason: OK: Southwest Cengage Learning), 2009

## Pastoral Counseling in Liberia

Pastoral counseling in Africa, especially in Liberia, must be framed within African life and thought with an appropriate cultural milieu that is manifest in assumptions and practices.<sup>338</sup> Pastoral counseling in the Liberian context assumes a “pervasive, enduring, and central position for religion in life; it assumes that life is holistic and synthetic in all dimensions of life; thus, human, social, and spiritual are connected.”<sup>339</sup> The Liberian view of pastoral counseling is distinctly African perspective based on a unique set of cultural specifics, values, practices, and understanding of the counselor.<sup>340</sup>

The results from the pastoral counseling survey support the research problem that Liberian pastors in Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church), who perform pastoral counseling by default, lack the skills to deal with high levels of stress and burnout in their lives for successful pastoral ministry. According to the Pastoral Counseling Survey (PCS), the researcher found that the majority of the Unity Light Ministry pastors (66.7%) regularly counsel people in their churches and local communities; however, two-thirds (67%) of the pastors also believed that they did not have adequate training to perform pastoral counseling properly. The result of the research study also supports information gleaned from previous studies or published work analyzed in the literature review. Another example is the researcher found that most Liberian pastors prefer to preach rather than perform pastoral counseling even though they believe pastoral counseling is vital to church growth because it provides hope and guidance to church members facing problems in their lives and restores their faith in God.

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<sup>338</sup> Townsend, L. *Introduction to Pastoral Counseling*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., p.66.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

## Overview of CBI

The researcher used the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) three scales to measure personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout of Unity Light Ministry Pastors. The researcher chose CBI because all three scales have very high internal reliability and low non-response rates; moreover, results from these scales indicate very satisfactory reliability and validity for the CBI instrument.<sup>341</sup> The result of the Unity Light Ministry Pastors Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) questionnaire, three sub-dimensions: personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout are as follows:

### 1. Part 1: Personal Burnout

For Part 1 (Questions 1-6), the researcher found from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) that Unity Light Ministry Pastors, who counsel by default, suffer personal burnout. All the pastors reported that they were emotionally exhausted, and almost all the pastors felt tired and were seldom, sometimes, or often physically exhausted. More than half of the pastors felt “worn out” and often thought that “they couldn’t take it anymore.”

### 2. Part II. Work Burnout

For Part II (Questions 1-7), the researcher found from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) that Unity Light Ministry Pastors, who counsel by default, did not suffer pastoral work-related burnout. Most Unity Light Ministry pastors, who counsel by default, did not report high levels of burnout because of their pastoral work.

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<sup>341</sup> Kristensen, Tage S., Marianne Borritz, Ebbe Villadsen, and Karl B. Christensen. The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory: A New Tool for the Assessment of Burnout. *Work and Stress*, (2005)19(3):192-207.

Unity Light Pastors did not often feel exhausted in the morning before they went to work, and the pastors surveyed did not feel that every working hour was tiring for them. However, all Unity Light Pastors agree that pastoral counseling is emotionally exhausting, and most pastors reported that pastoral counseling somewhat frustrated them. While most pastors admit that they seldom have time for family and friends outside church activities, none reported that they almost never had time for family and friends after work.

### 3. Part III. Clients (Pastoral Counselor/Counselee Relationship)

For Part II (Questions 1-6), the researcher found from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) that Unity Light Ministry Pastors, who counsel by default, suffer from client (counselee)-related burnout. All Unity Light Pastors reported that they find it hard to deal with counselees during pastoral counseling, and it drains their energy to work with clients (counselees) during pastoral counseling. All pastors reported low degrees of difficulty levels when performing pastoral counseling; notwithstanding, they believe they give more than they get back when they work with clients (counselees). Hence, more than half of the pastors sometimes feel tired of performing pastoral counseling and wonder how long they can continue working with clients (counselees).

## Recommendations for Unity Light Ministry

Burnout is a stressful state characterized by physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, chronic fatigue, and tiredness.<sup>342</sup> Pastors risk burnout because of inordinate ministerial demands, which may drain their emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical energy reserves and impair their overall effectiveness.<sup>343</sup> As a result, pastors' personal lives may become severely imbalanced, and their spiritual lives ironically dry.<sup>344</sup> Therefore, the researcher asserts that it is essential for Unity Light Ministry pastors, who counsel by default, to understand the link between personal practices and burnout.

Patterson asserts that "pastors do not feel as though they are permitted to feel emotions like sadness, depression, hurt, and anger; hence, these pastors, both men and women, have served as leaders of the community and are perceived as being above struggling with common human issues, mental and emotional stress."<sup>345</sup> Thus, Unity Light Ministry pastors' inability to appropriately express their current mental state also contributes to pastoral burnout.

Based on the results of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBT), Unity Light Ministry Pastors have personal burnout and client (counselee) related burnout due to "counseling by default," even though they believed that pastoral was important for church growth.

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<sup>342</sup> Clinton, T. & Hawkins, R. *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling*, (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Books), 2009.

<sup>343</sup> Chandler, Diane J. "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support System Practices." *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (06, 2009): 273-87.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Bernice Suzette Patterson, "Hurting Leaders: The Lived Experiences of African-American Clergy and Their Views, Attitudes, and Barriers to Help-Seeking," (Dissertations, Western Michigan University, 2013) 207.

However, the CBI results indicated that these pastors did not have work-related burnout attributed to their pastoral duties.

Some ways to improve the Unity Light Ministry Network Church (UCC) counseling programs are as follows:

1. Leaders of Unity Light Ministry need to provide a formal pastoral counseling training program for pastors who counsel by default in Kakata, Liberia.
2. Leaders of Unity Light Ministry also need to organize pastoral counseling workshops on specific counseling topics for pastors and selected church members and teach them how to provide Biblical counseling for church members.
3. Leaders of Unity Light Ministry need to pay pastors extra for pastoral counseling.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

During this research, the researcher learned from implementing this project that pastoral burnout is a serious problem among Unity Light Ministry pastors, who counsel church members by default. The researcher will take the study results to Unity Light Ministry Board and suggest ways to improve the ministry situation to prevent stress and burnout.

Since there is no academic study on avoiding stress and burnout among Liberian pastors who perform counseling of church members as part of their ministerial duties, the results from this study can be applied to indigenous Liberian pastors of small non-denominational Christian ministries, who counsel by default, to help find ways to improve their ministry situation to prevent stress and burnout. However, one issue that emerged during the study that merits future research is that someone should study how to provide a biblical and practical solution to pastoral burnout among Liberian pastors.

## **Research Findings**

This doctoral research study found:

1. Most pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network Church (UCC), who counsel by default, are not educated in counseling, adequately trained, or equipped to conduct pastoral counseling.
2. Even though the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) pastors believe that pastoral counseling is vital to the spiritual growth of their congregations, they do not like to perform pastoral counseling.
3. Pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) believe that pastoral counseling is too time-consuming and want the church to pay them extra to counsel church members.

## **Conclusion**

Many leaders in the Bible, including the Apostle Paul, experienced sufferings at different times when Jewish officials conspired against him because of his conversion and preaching to the Gentiles; Christians prosecuted Jesus and his disciples, and all of those above made many leaders in the Bible to suffer the crises of burnout, but they did their best to overcome it.<sup>346</sup> Pastors need not be ashamed of their burnout, nor should they fall into personal despair and deep depression; rather, they should remember that burnout is not evidence of failure.<sup>347</sup>

Many of the general findings of this study are discussed in the review of the literature chapter, but there are little to no academic studies on avoiding stress and burnout among Liberian pastors who perform counseling of church members as part of their ministerial duties. The result of the pastoral counseling survey showed varying levels of stress within the pastors as they specifically relate to pastoral counseling. However, there was no comparative literature study to assist the researcher in assessing Liberian pastors who counsel church members.

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<sup>346</sup> Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry* (The Alban Institute, 1995), 73.

<sup>347</sup> Archibald D. Hart, "How Can We Prevent the Burnout of Pastors?" *Monthly Pastoral Ministry* (November 1996), 100.



## Chapter Summary

This study of pastoral burnout among Liberian pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church), who counsel by default, was conducted to help the researcher critically analyze the study results. The 12 pastors surveyed provided information on various aspects of pastoral counseling of church and community members. These pastors also responded to questions on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory, which can be divided into three areas: Part I (Personal Burnout), Part II (Work Burnout), and Part III (Pastoral Counselor/Counselee Relationship). These sections are discussed to suggest ways to improve the Unity Light Ministry situation to prevent stress and burnout. Thus, burnout does not necessarily mean failure. Pastors need not be ashamed of their burnout, nor should they fall into personal despair and deep depression because of it; instead, they should remember that burnout is not evidence of their failure.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Archibald D. Hart, "How Can We Prevent the Burnout of Pastors? *Monthly Pastoral Ministry* (November 1996), 100.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 18, 2022

Helen Gibson-Newman  
Richard McFarland

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21-22-1064 Counseling by Default: A Study of Pastoral Burnout Among Liberian Pastors

Dear Helen Gibson-Newman and Richard McFarland,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

(1) It will not involve the collection of identifiable, private information from or about living individuals (45 CFR 46.102).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**Research Ethics Office**



## **Appendix B: Pastoral Counseling Survey**

This survey is performed for the study of “Counseling by Default: A Study of Pastoral Burnout Among Liberian Pastors” for a doctorate in ministry. This doctoral thesis is going to establish that pastors of Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Liberia are experiencing burnout.

### **Part I: Check all that applies.**

#### **1. Do you regularly counsel people in your church?**

☐ Many times ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely (not often) ☐ Never

#### **2. How much counseling problems do you have in your ministry?**

☐ Much Higher than Expectation ☐ Same as Expectation ☐ Lower than Expectation

#### **3. How do you think the amount of work that you do in your ministry (church) compares to other pastors in your community?**

☐ Much Higher ☐ A Little Higher ☐ The Same ☐ A Little Lower ☐ Much Lower

#### **4. How do you think your income (salary/benefits) compare with the income of other pastors in your community?**

☐ Much Higher ☐ A Little Higher ☐ The Same ☐ A Little Lower ☐ Much Lower

#### **5. Have you ever thought of leaving your ministry (church) for another church?**

☐ Many times ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely (not often) ☐ Never

#### **6. Have you ever experienced stress-related illness?**

☐ Many times ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely (not often) ☐ Never

#### **7. Do you spend enough time with your family outside the church?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**8. Do you have regular vacation time every year?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**9. How do you solve problems in your ministry? (check all that apply)**

☐ Prayers ☐ Bible Reading ☐ Meditation ☐ Fasting ☐ Praise & Worship

☐ Listening to Christian Music ☐ Sleeping /Relaxation

**10. What factors have threatened your pastoral ministry? (check all that apply)**

☐ Extreme Fatigue/Tiredness ☐ Loss of Passion for Ministry ☐ Economic Difficulties

☐ Difficulty in Controlling your Emotions ☐ Work/Life Family Conflicts ☐ Frustrations

☐ Frequent Illness ☐ Increased Worriedness ☐ Difficulty to Sleep ☐ Suicide Urge

☐ Comparison with Other Pastors ☐ Dialogue with Other Pastors

**Part II Answer all Questions. Please Give Detail Explanations to Support your Answers.**

1. Describe how you perform pastoral counseling in your congregation?

2. Is pastoral counseling vital to the growth (or lack of it) of your congregation?

3. Has your pastoral training adequately prepared you for pastoral counseling in your congregation?

4. Do you like or dislike doing pastoral counseling?

5. What can your ministry/church do to improve pastoral counseling in your congregation?

## **Appendix C: Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (Kristiansen et. Al., 2005)**

### **Part I: Personal Burnout**

- 1. How often do you feel tired?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 2. How often are you physically exhausted?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 3. How often are you emotionally exhausted?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 4. How often do you think: “I can’t take it anymore”?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 5. How often do you feel worn out?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 6. How often do you feel weak and susceptible to illness?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )

### **Part II: Work Burnout**

- 1. Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 2. Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 3. Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 4. Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time?**  
Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )
- 5. Is your work emotionally exhausting?**  
To a very high degree [Scoring 100%] ( ) To a high degree [Scoring 75%] ( )  
Somewhat [Scoring 50%] ( ) To a low degree [Scoring 25%] ( )  
To a very low degree [Scoring 0%] ( )
- 6. Does your work frustrate you?**  
To a very high degree [Scoring 100%] ( ) To a high degree [Scoring 75%] ( )  
Somewhat [Scoring 50%] ( ) To a low degree [Scoring 25%] ( )  
To a very low degree [Scoring 0%] ( )
- 7. Do you feel burnt out because of your work?**  
To a very high degree [Scoring 100%] ( ) To a high degree [Scoring 75%] ( )  
Somewhat [Scoring 50%] ( ) To a low degree [Scoring 25%] ( )  
To a very low degree [Scoring 0%] ( )

### **Part III: Clients (Pastoral Counselor/Counselee Relationship)**

**1. Do you find it hard to work with clients?**

To a very high degree [Scoring 100%] ( ) To a high degree [Scoring 75%] ( )  
Somewhat [Scoring 50%] ( ) To a low degree [Scoring 25%] ( )  
To a very low degree [Scoring 0%] ( )

**2. Does it drain your energy to work with clients?**

To a very high degree [Scoring 100%] ( ) To a high degree [Scoring 75%] ( )  
Somewhat [Scoring 50%] ( ) To a low degree [Scoring 25%] ( )  
To a very low degree [Scoring 0%] ( )

**3. Do you find it frustrating to work with clients?**

To a very high degree [Scoring 100%] ( ) To a high degree [Scoring 75%] ( )  
Somewhat [Scoring 50%] ( ) To a low degree [Scoring 25%] ( )  
To a very low degree [Scoring 0%] ( )

**4. Do you feel that you give more than you get back when you work with clients?**

To a very high degree [Scoring 100%] ( ) To a high degree [Scoring 75%] ( )  
Somewhat [Scoring 50%] ( ) To a low degree [Scoring 25%] ( )  
To a very low degree [Scoring 0%] ( )

**5. Are you tired of working with clients?**

Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )

**6. Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working with clients?**

Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Seldom ( ) Never/Almost Never ( )